

Building a circular economy for plastics



Key messages

- Plastics help enable sustainability and will continue to play a key role in our society.
- Creating a circular economy for plastics is critical to help eliminate plastic waste in the environment.
- Effective public policies and regulations such as recycling mandates, extended producer responsibility and mass balance are necessary to address the plastic waste challenge and advance a circular economy.

Introduction

Plastics are essential in creating solutions for everyday sustainable living. As lightweight, hygienic and durable materials, they play a vital role in products used around the globe, every day. Innovative plastic materials help to keep food fresh longer so it can be safely stored and transported long distances, reducing food waste. These materials also provide safe, high-quality solutions for healthcare. Plastics are key to a low carbon future, from the latest automotive components that enable vehicle lightweighting, to integral components for wind turbines and solar panels.

We recognize the pressing need to eliminate plastic waste in the environment and the importance of transitioning toward a circular economy for plastic. The evolving global landscape, including societal aspirations, consumer awareness and new regulations, is driving circularity commitments and spurring demand for recycled content. Solutions are needed to keep valuable materials circulating in the economy through recycling and reuse. Circularity is critical to helping end plastic waste while conserving our natural resources, and it offers strong economic, social and climate benefits.

LyondellBasell is leading change, fostering innovative products and technologies that will unlock a circular and low carbon economy. We are actively working to advance the circular economy through investments that improve access to waste plastic feedstocks, develop critical recycling infrastructure and deliver technology solutions that maximize value from waste. Our efforts address needs across the circular value chain for plastics, creating a unique perspective for both the opportunities and challenges associated with the transition from a linear to a circular economy.



Our position

To unlock the full value of plastics, critical gaps must be addressed so these resources are circulated back into the economy after use. This will require collaboration across the value chain and supportive government policies and incentives. We believe in the power of collaboration across regions and the public/private sector to enable solutions that help meet broad societal development and climate ambitions. By working together with industry associations, governments and value chain members, we are developing a systematic approach to deliver meaningful progress, ensure maximum impact and advance an economy that enables plastic waste to be transformed into more sustainable solutions for our customers.

To that end, we support the following science-based public policies and legislative solutions to help drive the transition to plastic circularity. While such measures may be applied at the international, regional, national or local level, they should all take into account local conditions to maximize effectiveness.

- Mandates on recycled plastic content to be used in products and packaging to help increase and stabilize demand for recycled plastics.
- Legislation that recognizes advanced recycling as a manufacturing process, facilitating investments in advanced recycling capacity expansions.
- Legislation that recognizes and allows for the use of third party certified mass balance accounting systems to track the attribution of recycled or renewable-based content to new products.
- Legislation that counts both recycled and renewable-based plastics towards circularity targets.
- When making policy and regulatory decisions on preferred materials for given applications, governments should consider the potential impacts of the material over the product life cycle. For example, a proposed material substitution may alleviate concerns in one part of the product life cycle while at the same time creating new and unforeseen problems at other stages of the product life cycle.
- Standardization and simplification of recycling systems, standards and labeling. This would greatly reduce recycling system inefficiencies and consumer confusion stemming from a myriad of inconsistent recycling standards, rules and labels.
- Financial and regulatory support for the development, introduction and scale up of innovative solutions needed to complement existing recycling and sorting technologies.
- A United Nations Global Plastics Agreement that effectively combats pollution by enabling a transition to plastic circularity. It should address the full lifecycle of plastics, promoting both sustainable production and consumption of plastics. However, its primary focus should be on ending plastic pollution rather than restricting or regulating the production or use of plastic or plastic additives. The Agreement should also enable innovative technology and design solutions to optimize the environmental and societal benefits of plastics.

About us

We are LyondellBasell (LYB) – a leader in the global chemical industry creating solutions for everyday sustainable living. Through advanced technology and focused investments, we are enabling a circular and low carbon economy. Across all we do, we aim to unlock value for our customers, investors and society. As one of the world's largest producers of polymers and a leader in polyolefin technologies, we develop, manufacture and market high-quality and innovative products for applications ranging from sustainable transportation and food safety to clean water and quality healthcare. For more information, please visit www.lyb.com or follow [@LyondellBasell](https://www.linkedin.com/company/lyondellbasell) on LinkedIn.