



Plastics in a circular economy

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Plastic waste is the single largest source of Denmark's CO₂ emissions from waste incineration. Today, large amounts of plastic waste go up in smoke instead of being reused or recycled. It is the government's target to reduce plastic consumption and improve reuse and recycling of plastics.

Plastic is a material that is used in many different contexts, and in many cases it is indispensable. It is a lightweight material, thereby saving fuel in the shipping of goods. Plastic packaging also shields against damage and extends, for example, the shelf life of food, so that food waste is avoided. Plastic makes everyday life easier and is part of virtually every part of our lives – from electronics to clothing and toys.

With the many positive qualities plastic has as a material, the goal is not to avoid using plastic altogether, but to use it in a smarter way. The problems with plastic arise when it is overused, designed inappropriately, ends up as pollution in nature or incinerated rather than reused or recycled.

In order to reduce consumption and improve the reuse and recycling of plastics, the government will, among other things:

- Introduce a ban on certain single-use plastics
- Reduce the amount of specific forms of plastic take-away packaging by 50 %
- Require recycling of a minimum of 60 percent of collected plastic waste
- Establish a research mission on recycling and reduction of i.a. plastic waste

Facts about plastics in a circular economy

- In 2019, approximately 514,000 tonnes of plastic waste was generated in Denmark. Only about 25 percent of this was collected for recycling. It is estimated that only approximately half of the amount of plastic waste collected was actually recycled, while the rest was incinerated.
- Incineration of both Danish and imported waste containing plastic emits approx. 1.3 million tonnes of CO₂ per year.
- The amount of plastic waste collected for recycling has increased from 89,000 tonnes in 2014 to 122,000 tonnes in 2019, which is primarily due to more plastic waste being collected from households.