

# The value of plastic waste

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The value of plastic waste is multifaceted and depends on various factors, including the type of plastic, its quality, and the recycling infrastructure in place.



Ironically, plastic is often perceived as an environmental culprit, yet plastics have immense value when they can be effectively recycled. The recycling process allows for the transformation of used plastics into new products, reducing the demand for virgin plastic production. This not only conserves resources but also contributes to environmental sustainability.

In a country where unemployment is rife, recycling offers economic opportunities in the value chain. Collecting, sorting, and processing plastics creates jobs and supports a circular economy.

The recycled materials can also be used in other manufacturing processes, providing raw materials for various industries.

From an environmental impact perspective, the value of plastics waste lies in mitigating pollution by reducing plastic waste destined for landfills. In fact, recycling has the potential to decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

The end of plastic packaging's lifecycle plays an important role in Mpact's philosophy of a circular economy, where materials are designed for recycling and collected by Mpact's recycling operations to produce recyclate for packaging or secondary applications. This approach aims to create a sustainable and regenerative system that reduces waste and promotes resource efficiency. Mpact takes responsibility for the end of life of packaging by subscribing to the Extended Producer Responsibility legislation.

Mpact's Innovation and Design Centres are instrumental in keeping abreast with the latest packaging trends, innovations, technologies, consumer preferences, and evolving market demands. Investing in research and technology to address plastic waste issues has led to breakthroughs in waste management and recycling processes at Mpact.

However, much needs to be done to raise awareness about responsible consumption and waste management practices. Educating individuals and businesses about reducing, reusing, and recycling plastics contributes to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious society.

While plastic waste has inherent value, its realisation depends on effective waste management systems, infrastructure, and public participation in recycling initiatives. As societies continue to prioritise sustainability, the value of plastics waste in contributing to a circular and environmentally conscious economy is likely to increase.

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Mpact is the largest paper and plastics packaging and recycling business in Southern Africa. Our integrated business model is uniquely focused on closing the loop in plastic and paper packaging through recycling and beneficiation of recyclables.

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