

SOUTH AFRICA'S PLASTICS RECYCLING REACHES NEW MILESTONE

Despite a manufacturing slowdown, recycling continues to outperform a struggling economy, while exposing serious weaknesses in South Africa's waste management system.



2025 DATA
YEAR ENDING
DECEMBER 2025

OVERALL PLASTICS
OUTPUT RECYCLING RATE

30.1%

UP FROM
28.4% IN 2024

PLASTICS SA INDUSTRY FIGURES | YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 2025

**485 000
TONNES**

OF PLASTICS
MECHANICALLY
RECYCLED
DURING 2025

UP 3% FROM 2024 ↗

22%

CIRCULAR PLASTICS
CONTENT IN NEW
PRODUCTS

UP FROM 16%
TEN YEARS AGO

**453 000
TONNES**

DOMESTIC RECYCLATE
CONSUMPTION

A 62% INCREASE
OVER THE PAST DECADE

~111 000

INCOME-GENERATING
OPPORTUNITIES
SUPPORTED BY
PLASTICS RECYCLING

NEARLY 8 000 FORMAL JOBS
+ 103 000 IN THE VALUE CHAIN

ONE OF THE
WORLD'S LEADING
PERFORMERS IN
MECHANICAL PLASTICS
RECYCLING



MANUFACTURING UNDER PRESSURE

Total domestic plastics consumption declined overall

2024 **2.114** MILLION TONNES
DOWN **2.4%**
2025 **2.063** MILLION TONNES

Virgin polymer consumption fell

2024 **1.656** MILLION TONNES
DOWN **2.8%**
2025 **1.610** MILLION TONNES

DECREASED CONSUMPTION ↓

REMAINED RESILIENT ↗

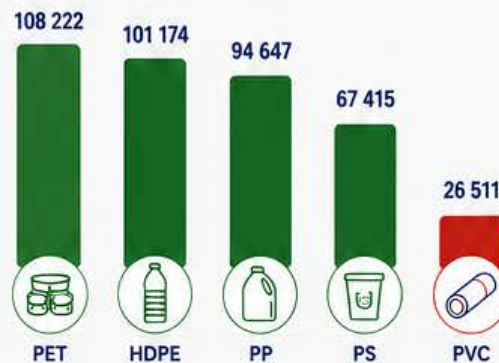


“A decline in virgin polymer consumption is rarely good news. It tells us local manufacturers are producing less, investing less and facing increasing pressure. The plastics industry remains one of South Africa's largest manufacturing sectors, so when manufacturing slows, our entire economy feels it.”

– Anton Hanekom, Executive Director, Plastics SA

RECYCLING GROWTH ACROSS MAJOR POLYMERS

TONNES RECYCLED IN 2025



PET continued its impressive growth, while HDPE, polypropylene and polystyrene also recorded increases.

PVC recycling declined slightly but remains an important part of our recycling landscape.

FORMAL COLLECTORS AND MRFS: THE CRUCIAL “MISSING LINK”

Formal collectors, MRFs and buy-back centres supplied

70%

(NEARLY 340 000 TONNES)
of recyclables into the recycling system during 2025.



They are the gatekeepers of South Africa's recycling system – ultimately determining what gets recycled and what ends up in landfill.



They deserve a permanent seat at the table whenever waste management strategies are developed.

A BROKEN WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



Large volumes of recyclable material are lost every day due to poor waste collection, contamination and inadequate sorting.

“South Africa still has a broken waste management system. Our recyclers cannot recycle material they never receive. Every day thousands of tonnes of valuable recyclable material are unnecessarily lost to landfill.”

– Anton Hanekom

PROTECT LOCAL RECYCLING – BUY LOCAL



Support local products that contain recycled plastic.



Every purchase creates demand for recyclate, supports jobs and grows our circular economy.



Together we can build a stronger, more sustainable South Africa.

Plastics | SA

These figures represent the entire South African plastics industry, including packaging, building and construction, agriculture, mining, automotive, consumer goods and all other plastics applications. Sector-specific analysis will be released later this year.

Executive Summary is freely available on the website www.plasticsinfo.co.za. Full report will only be released later in the year.