



They are figures that at least make you think. According to an OECD report published last year, the amount of plastic waste worldwide is set to almost triple within 40 years. In "Global Plastics Outlook: Policy Scenarios to 2060," extensive computer simulations project an increase in waste volumes from 353 million tons in 2019 to 1014 million tons in 2060. According to the models, 20 and 50 percent would be burned and landfilled, but only 17 percent recycled. In the same period, global

plastics consumption will increase from 460 million tons to an almost unimaginable 1231 million tons. The consequence would be further severe increases in plastic pollution of the environment and water, and a devastating climate balance – unless far-reaching countermeasures are taken.

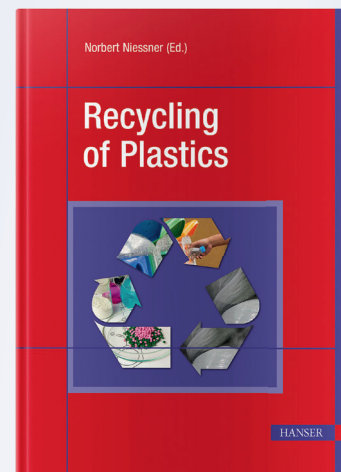
Figures that Require Action – and Payment

This scenario – the data pool with future growth spurts, particularly in the developing and emerging economies of Africa and Asia, should be taken seriously – let's not beat about the bush: it is a threat. But it doesn't have to come to that, since the OECD report outlines an international concerted action, flanked by regulatory and fiscal measures, to limit plastics consumption, push the global recycling rate to 60 percent and put an end to environmental littering. But it also imposes obligations on industry: if the plan is to succeed, it must consider a more qualitative growth focusing on long-life products that conserve resources. Products that are unavoidably ephemeral will require a functioning circular economy.

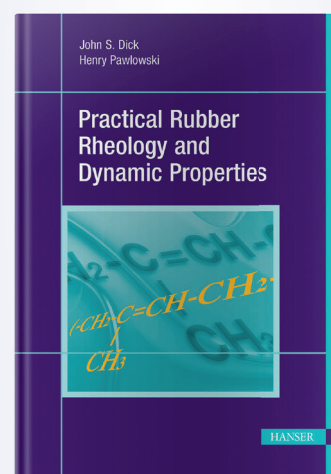
Implementing this ambitious package of measures should only impact global GDP (gross domestic product) by 0.8 percent compared to the baseline value. That sounds solvable. However, there is a catch: the bulk of the costs would have to be borne by the non-OECD countries, since it is first and foremost they who would have to make considerable investments in an efficient waste management system. So, in the service of the good cause, governments from OECD countries with a social conscience or other financial backers with a penchant for philanthropy should step up to the plate.

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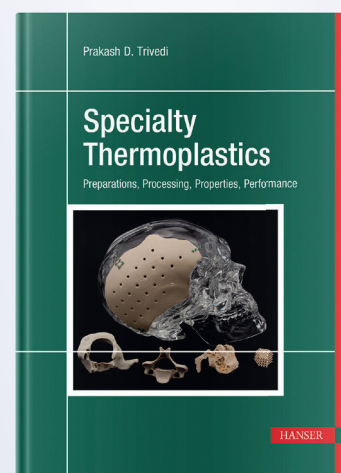
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