TEPPFA Glossary

Introduction

This glossary about primary and secondary raw material terminology, based on EN 14541, was developed by TEPPFA to provide plastic pipes and fittings experts with a document listing commonly used terms in the industry and to decrease the market's confusion between biobased and biodegradable.

virgin material[1]

Plastics material in the form of pellets, granules, powder, floc, etc. that has not been subjected to use or processing other than that required for its initial manufacture.

Clarifications:

Does not contain any reworked plastics material and/or plastics recyclate.

Sometimes also referred to as "primary material" or "primary plastics feedstock".

It is understood that the addition of additives such as stabilisers and pigments is still resulting into a virgin (plastics) material.

reworked material[1]

Plastics material from rejected unused products or trimmings capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it.

Clarifications:

Reworked material does not change the status of the feedstock.

This definition does not cover the conditions for the use of reworked material, which can be found in the applicable product standard.

Previously referred to as "own reprocessed material".

pre-consumer material[1]

Plastics material diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process, excluding reworked (plastics) material.

Clarifications:

Previously referred to as "post-industrial material".

Different categories of pre-consumer material may be considered in the applicable product standard.

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post-consumer material[1]

Plastics material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product which can no longer be used for its intended purpose.

Clarifications:

This includes returns of material from the distribution chain.

Different categories of post-consumer material may be considered in the applicable product standard.

recyclate[1]

Plastics material resulting from the recycling of pre-consumer and post-consumer plastics products.

Clarifications:

Also referred to as "secondary raw material" or "recycled plastics" or "regenerate".

Recycling can be chemical, physical or mechanical.

recycled content[1]

Proportion, by mass, of recyclate in a product.

recycling[1]

Processing of plastics products into recyclate, for the original purpose or for other purposes, excluding energy recovery.

mechanical recycling[1]

Processing of plastics products into recyclate without significantly changing the chemical structure of the material.

chemical recycling[1]

Conversion to monomer or production of new raw materials changing the chemical structure of plastics products/materials by cracking, gasification or depolymerisation, excluding energy recovery and incineration.

micronised material[1]

Plastics material finely ground into powder.

compound/formulation[1]

Clearly defined homogenous mixture of substances used for the manufacture of the product.

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Clarifications:

In general, the term "compound" is used for polyolefins and the term "formulation" for PVC.

For metals and when dealing with water and food contact regulations the term "composition" is often used instead of compound/formulation.

granulate[1]

Relatively small particle produced in various sizes and shapes in operations such as cutting, grinding and granulation.

Clarification:

Often also referred to as "pellet" or "granules".

batch[1]

Definite quantity of some commodity manufactured or produced under conditions that are presumed uniform.

Clarification:

Batch can apply to material and products.

contaminant[1]

Unwanted substance or material.

agreed specification

Specification of the relevant material characteristics agreed between the supplier of the virgin material or recylate and the pipe and/or fitting manufacturer.

Clarification:

The agreed specification is often considered in the context of certification by a third-party organisation.

biobased plastics[2]

Plastics fully or partially made from biological resources, rather than fossil raw materials. They are not necessarily biodegradable or compostable.

biodegradable plastics[2]

Plastics that biodegrade in certain conditions at their end of life. Compostable plastics - a subset of biodegradable ones – typically decompose in industrial composting facilities, and first need to be collected.

bio-attributed plastics[3]

Plastics with attributed bio-based content. The determination of bio-based content can be done via feedstock attribution.

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References

[1] EN 14541-1:2021 CEN/TC 155/WG 25 N 2025: Plastics pipes and fittings – Utilisation of thermoplastics recyclates – Vocabulary

[2]European Commission Directorate-General for Environment definitions available on https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/plastics/biobased-biodegradable-and-compostable-plastics_en#what-are-biobased-biodegradable-and-compostable-plastics

[3]Plastics Europe glossary available on https://plasticseurope.org/glossary/

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