

Total Corbion PLA outlines most favorable end-of-life options for PLA bioplastics

Total Corbion PLA has released its whitepaper outlining its position on the preferred end-of-life options for PLA bioplastics. The whitepaper also clarifies where PLA products and applications can significantly contribute towards the circular economy.

Plastics bring many benefits to society, combining excellent functional properties with low costs. They enable safe, hygienic and transparent packaging for food, and they help with lightweighting in the transportation sector to drive down energy consumption. However, mismanagement of plastic waste has led to unacceptable levels of plastic pollution in the environment.

“While the benefits of bioplastics have been known for a while, there are still questions throughout the supply chain on how best to dispose of them after use”, explains François de Bie, Senior Marketing & Supply Chain Director at Total Corbion PLA. *“This position paper is intended for all interested parties throughout the value chain in order to inform not only on the best disposal routes for PLA bioplastics, but also to guide how best to design new products for optimal end-of-life solutions”,* de Bie continues.

Efficient waste collection and management are key to the European Commission’s goal of a resource-efficient Europe and its vision to move from the current linear to the envisioned circular economy. The EU Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) defines a five-step waste hierarchy ranking the treatments of waste based on their ability to conserve resources. *“At Total Corbion PLA we believe in the longer run it is beneficial for our planet to actively pursue end-of-life options higher up in the pyramid.”* Explains Floris Buijzen, Senior Product Market Manager at Total Corbion PLA. *“The ultimate goal is to avoid plastics entering the environment and PLA bioplastics can play a vital and important role in achieving that goal”,* Buijzen continues.

Compostability is an end-of-life option that should only be used for specific applications and can help to efficiently manage the biggest fraction of the municipal waste stream: bio-waste. Industrially compostable plastics can help to separately collect organic waste, divert larger volumes of bio-waste to organic recycling and reduce conventional plastic contamination in the bio-bin, ultimately reducing microplastics in compost.ⁱ In other words: compostable plastics should offer a co-benefit such as increasing the amount of food waste collected to be composted, or reducing the amount of fossil plastics ending up in the food- and garden waste. In Europe, only 16% of the theoretical potential of food waste that is generated is captured.ⁱⁱ Compostable plastics can

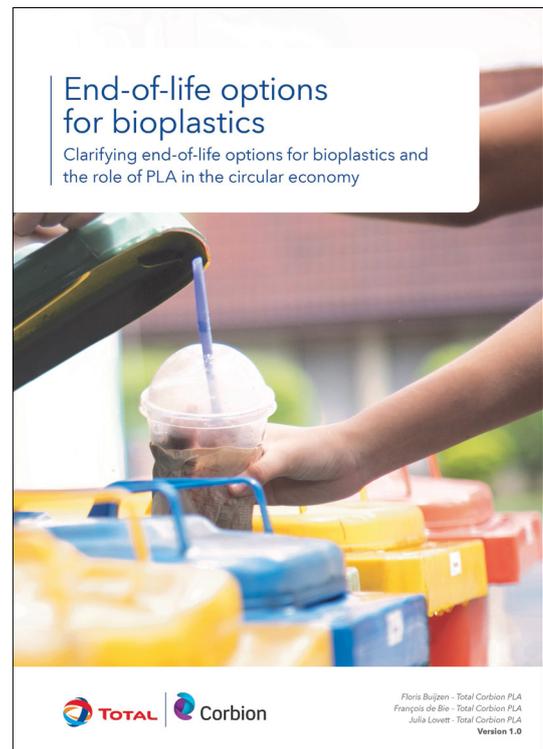
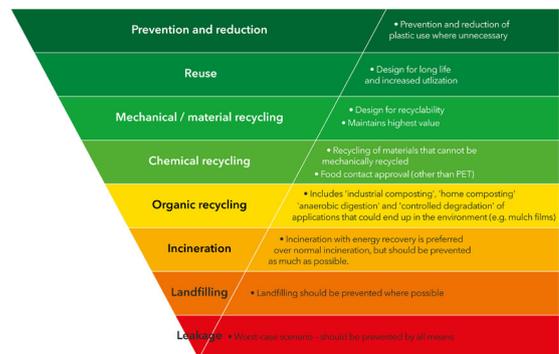


Photo 1. Total Corbion PLA’s whitepaper on end-of-life options for bioplastics



© Total Corbion PLA, adapted from Boston Consulting Group (2019) A circular solution to plastic waste.

Fig. 1: The pyramid of plastic waste management, adapted for bioplastics

play a crucial role in helping to tap into this untapped potential.

The whitepaper also states Total Corbion PLA's position that mechanical and chemical recycling should become viable, economically feasible and commonly used end-of-life solutions for PLA-based products. Prime examples of relevant applications include trays, bottles and drinking cups. Total Corbion PLA is committed to developing the recycling value chain together with specialized PLA recycling companies to stimulate demand for rPLA, thereby increasing recycling rates for PLA-based products. Total Corbion PLA uses this paper as a platform to pose the open invitation for parties throughout the recycling value chain to collaborate together to close the loop for PLA recycling.

To download the paper, please visit the Total Corbion PLA website www.total-corbion.com/downloads.

ⁱ European Bioplastics, *Criteria for switching products to certified compostable plastics*

ⁱⁱ Biobased Industries Consortium (2020) *Bio-waste generation in the EU: Current capture levels and future potential*

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Photos available to download here (link valid 7 days from publication date):

<https://we.tl/t-rdkAjHrgAF>

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About Total Corbion PLA

Total Corbion PLA is a global technology leader in Poly Lactic Acid (PLA) and lactide monomers. PLA is a biobased and biodegradable polymer made from annually renewable resources, offering a reduced carbon footprint versus many traditional plastics. The Luminy® PLA portfolio, which includes both high heat and standard PLA grades, is an innovative material that is used in a wide range of markets from packaging to consumer goods, fibers and automotive. Total Corbion PLA, headquartered in the Netherlands, operates a 75,000 tons per year PLA production facility in Rayong, Thailand. The company is a 50/50 joint venture between Total and Corbion. www.total-corbion.com

About Total

Total is a broad energy company that produces and markets fuels, natural gas and low-carbon electricity. Our 100,000 employees are committed to better energy that is more affordable, more reliable, cleaner and accessible to as many people as possible. Active in more than 130 countries, our ambition is to become the responsible energy major. www.total.com

About Corbion

Corbion is the global market leader in lactic acid and its derivatives, and a leading supplier of emulsifiers, functional enzyme blends, minerals, vitamins, and algae ingredients. We use our unique expertise in fermentation and other processes to deliver sustainable solutions for the preservation of food and food production, health, and our planet. Our solutions help differentiate products in markets such as food, home & personal care, animal nutrition, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and bioplastics. In 2019, Corbion generated annual sales of € 976.4 million and had a workforce of 2.138 FTE. Corbion is listed on Euronext Amsterdam. For more information. www.corbion.com

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