



THE RIGHT ANSWER FOR COST AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT PLASTIC RECYCLING

Valencia, 21st March 2019 - *Approximately 70% of European plastic waste (18.5 Mt/year) is not being recycled due to technical or economic reasons and is thus sent to landfill (27%) or incinerated (42%). This situation affects negatively the environment in terms of pollution and greenhouse gases emissions, as well as social perception regarding waste management, consumer's products industry and policy makers.*

Integrated catalytic recycling of plastic residues into added-value chemicals (iCAREPLAST) project is set to address the cost and energy-efficient recycling of a large fraction of today's non-recyclable plastics and composites from urban waste. iCAREPLAST project has been funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme within the SPIRE (Sustainable Process Industry through Resource and Energy Efficiency) initiative. The project with a budget of 7.9 M€ is coordinated by José M. Serra, Research Professor at the Instituto de Tecnología Química (ITQ), joint centre of Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) and Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV). The consortium brings together 10 leading European research/academic institutions and industries from 5 different countries^(**) and an advisory board composed of 3 multinationals and a representative of the European regional authorities.

In this research project, heterogeneous plastic mixtures will be converted into valuable chemicals (alkylaromatic) via chemical routes comprising sequential catalytic and separation steps. This multistage process will also yield carbon char and a pure captured CO₂ stream as products, whilst it will present improved economic sustainability, operational flexibility and lower CO₂ footprint thanks to:

- (i) the energetic valorisation of gas by-products through innovative oxycombustion units integrated with efficient heat recovery,
- (ii) the use of AI predictive control and real time optimisation. iCAREPLAST aims to demonstrate the whole technology for plastic waste valorisation in a pilot plant able to process >100 kg/h of plastic.

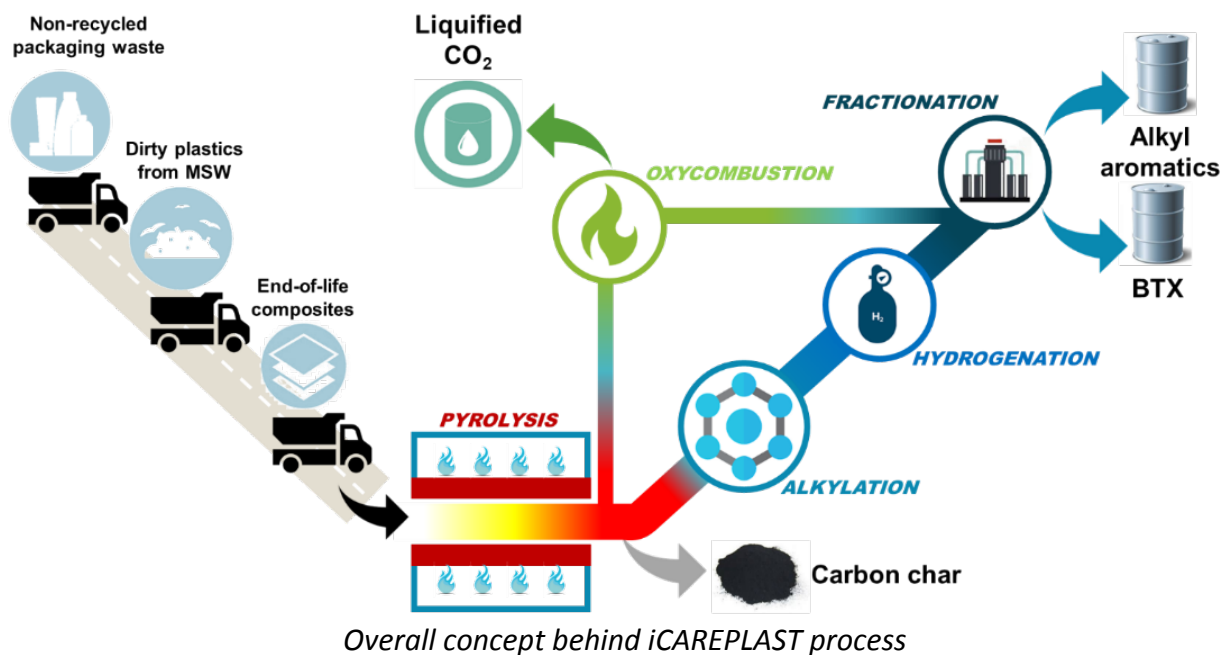
iCAREPLAST solution will enforce circular economy by substantially increasing the amount of recycled plastics to produce commodity products that can be used for virgin-quality polymers

production or as raw materials for other processes in petrochemicals, fine chemicals, automotive and detergent/surfactants industries. As a result of its initial exploitation 250,000 t of plastic waste could be treated which otherwise would have become landfill, converting it into 1,500 t of alkylaromatics and 1,000 t of aromatics. Additionally, liquid and gaseous streams of rich-hydrocarbons (including CO₂), and solid subproducts (char) will be also recovered and valorised to maximise material and energy balance of the overall process, thus minimising environmental footprint and ensuring economic sustainability.

iCAREPLAST: The key to close the plastic recycling loop

iCAREPLAST combines pyrolysis, catalytic treatment, membrane separation technologies and oxy-fuel combustion systems to obtain high added-value chemical in an energy efficient and environmental friendly context. To ensure sustainability of the process, IA-based advanced control of the pilot plant will be applied that aim at harmonising economic and environmental targets, making use of meaningful indicators defined taking into account LCA (life cycle assessment) and LCC (life cycle cost) analyses.

The nature of the project required the involvement of industrial and scientific stakeholders, the participation of citizens and policy makers that should be aware of project potential environmental advantages, so a special communication effort will be directed to raise social acceptance.



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(**) Project Partners: AGENCIA ESTATAL CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTIFICAS, UNIVERSITAT POLITECNICA DE VALENCIA, TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITAET BRAUNSCHWEIG, IPOINT-SYSTEMS GMBH, LABORATORIO

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