

International Energy Agency
Photovoltaic Power Systems Programme





Advances in Photovoltaic Module Recycling

Literature Review and Update to Empirical Life Cycle Inventory Data and Patent Review





What is IEA PVPS TCP?

The International Energy Agency (IEA), founded in 1974, is an autonomous body within the framework of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The Technology Collaboration Programme (TCP) was created with a belief that the future of energy security and sustainability starts with global collaboration. The programme is made up of 6.000 experts across government, academia, and industry dedicated to advancing common research and the application of specific energy technologies.

The IEA Photovoltaic Power Systems Programme (IEA PVPS) is one of the TCP's within the IEA and was established in 1993. The mission of the programme is to "enhance the international collaborative efforts which facilitate the role of photovoltaic solar energy as a cornerstone in the transition to sustainable energy systems." In order to achieve this, the Programme's participants have undertaken a variety of joint research projects in PV power systems applications. The overall programme is headed by an Executive Committee, comprised of one delegate from each country or organisation member, which designates distinct 'Tasks,' that may be research projects or activity areas.

The 25 IEA PVPS participating countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, and the United States of America. The European Commission, Solar Power Europe, the Smart Electric Power Alliance, the Solar Energy Industries Association, the Solar Energy Research Institute of Singapore and Enercity SA are also members.

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What is IEA PVPS Task 12?

Task 12 aims at fostering international collaboration in safety and sustainability that are crucial for assuring that PV grows to levels enabling it to make a major contribution to the needs of the member countries and the world. The overall objectives of Task 12 are to 1. Quantify the environmental profile of PV in comparison to other energy technologies; 2. Investigate end of life management options for PV systems as deployment increases and older systems are decommissioned; 3. Define and address environmental health & safety and other sustainability issues that are important for market growth. The first objective of this task is well served by life cycle assessments (LCAs) that describe the energy-, material-, and emission-flows in all the stages of the life of PV. The second objective is addressed through analysis of including recycling and other circular economy pathways. For the third objective, Task 12 develops methods to quantify risks and opportunities on topics of stakeholder interest.

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INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY PHOTOVOLTAIC POWER SYSTEMS PROGRAMME

Advances in Photovoltaic Module Recycling

Literature Review and Update to Empirical Life Cycle Inventory Data and Patent Review

IEA PVPS Task 12 Sustainability

Report IEA-PVPS T12-28:2024 June 2024

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
|----------|--|
| BIL | Bipartisan Infrastructure Law |
| BOS | Balance-of-system |
| CN | Canada |
| CNG | Compressed natural gas |
| CdTe | Cadmium telluride |
| CIGS | Copper indium gallium selenide |
| COD | Certificate of destruction |
| COR | Certificate of recycling |
| c-Si | Crystalline silicon |
| DE | Germany |
| DOE SETO | U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office |
| EIT | European Institute of Innovation and Technology |
| EOL | End of life |
| EP | European patent |
| EPO | European Patent Office |
| EU | European Union |
| EU PVSEC | European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference |
| EVA | Ethyl vinyl acetate |
| FE | Ferrous |
| FR | France |
| GB | Great Britain |
| IEA | International Energy Agency |
| IRA | Inflation Reduction Act |
| JB | Junction box |
| JP | Japan |
| KR | Korea |
| LCA | Life cycle assessment |
| LCI | Life cycle inventory |
| LNG | Liquid natural gas |
| MORE PV | Materials, Operation, and Recycling of Photovoltaics |
| MSDS | Material Safety Data Sheets |
| NF | Non-ferrous |



| NREL | National Renewable Energy Laboratory |
|---------|--|
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PCT | Patent Cooperation Treaty |
| PV | Photovoltaic |
| PVPS | Photovoltaic Power Systems Programme |
| R&D | Research & development |
| SEIA | Solar Energy Industries Association |
| SERI R2 | Sustainability Electronics Recycling International Responsible Recycling |
| TCP | Technology Collaboration Programme |
| US | United States |
| WEEE | Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment |
| WIPS | Worldwide Intellectual Property Service |



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Global cumulative installed solar photovoltaic (PV) capacity exceeded 1 TW in 2022, and deployment is expected to accelerate over the next decade. With PV industry scale-up there is increasing recognition that the volume of defective, damaged, and spent modules will expand rapidly in the decades ahead. Module management is becoming a pressing concern for owners and operators of solar generation systems. Development and optimization of collection, triage, repair, refurbishment, reuse, and recycling pathways are needed to convert PV materials into assets that contribute to the circular economy and improve environmental responsibility, rather than creating new waste streams.

PV modules that cannot be repaired or refurbished have reached end of life (EOL) and can often be recycled. A 2016-2017 IEA PVPS Task 12 study funded by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and EPRI reviewed PV recycling technologies in Europe, including four commercial glass and metal recyclers that process batches of PV modules on a periodic basis and one pilot-scale recycling process customized for PV modules.^{1,2} Heath et al. showed that recovery of high-value materials like silicon and silver at high purity is needed to improve the economics of recycling.³ New commercial and demonstration-scale recycling options for PV modules have emerged in the past few years, including some that claim to recover silicon and silver. Limited public data are available on recycling processes for pilot or commercial facilities.

The objective of this study was to identify advances in PV recycling technology that have the potential to be affordable, technically feasible, and environmentally responsible. A survey of recyclers, literature review, and patent search identified industry trends and advances in PV recycling processes. Additionally, leading recyclers supplied life cycle inventory (LCI) data and process flow diagrams for facilities that use advanced recycling treatments to separate PV materials with high quality and yield.

Research Overview

The research team identified 177 recyclers and PV recycling equipment manufacturers globally through press releases, existing connections, past studies, and online search. Invitations to participate in the LCI survey were sent to 24 recyclers that are applying best available or new PV recycling technologies on a commercial or pilot scale. A questionnaire was developed to understand current practices and recycling treatments.

Six recyclers provided information and life cycle inventory data. A seventh LCI case was prepared based on a combination of a recycler LCI response and data previously published by

¹ Life Cycle Inventory of Current Photovoltaic Module Recycling Processes in Europe. IEA PVPS Task 12, IEA PV Power Systems Programme. Report IEA-PVPS Task 12-12:2017. ISBN 978-3-906042-67-1.

² Insights on Photovoltaic Recycling Processes in Europe: A Survey-Based Approach. EPRI, Palo Alto, CA: 2017. 3002008846.

³ G.A. Heath, T.J. Silverman, M. Kempe, M. Deceglie, D. Ravikumar, T. Remo, H. Cui, P. Sinha, C. Libby, S. Shaw, K. Komoto, K. Wambach, E. Butler, T. Barnes, and A. Wade, "Research and development priorities for silicon photovoltaic module recycling supporting a circular economy." Nature Energy 5, 502-501 (2020).



Task 12.⁴ Whereas only one of five recycling processes in the 2016-2017 IEA PVPS Task 12 report was customized for PV modules, all seven recycling facilities evaluated in the current study are dedicated to treating PV modules.

LCI data were analyzed across the respondents to compare material recovery rate and energy consumption. To facilitate comparison, a consistent system boundary was applied at the point in each process where a cell fraction (including metals) is separated from the glass and polymers. Subsequent steps to recover silicon and metals like silver, as well as purification steps were not included in the side-by-side analysis to facilitate comparison because not all recyclers responding to the LCI survey performed this function. The system boundary was slightly different for First Solar, as intermediate stage LCI data were not available prior to cadmium and tellurium recovery.

The research team also identified relevant patents and literature on the topic of PV recycling. The global patent search identified 456 relevant patents on recycling PV components, processing methods, and recovered materials. The search relied on DEPATISnet⁵ and a 2018 IEA PVPS Task 12 report that used the Worldwide Intellectual Property Service (WIPS). The literature search revealed 569 relevant results identified through Scopus, SciFinder, Google, and ResearchGate. Statistical evaluations were carried out to identify trends in patents and literature by year, country, recycling treatment method, organization, author, and so on.

Results

Five European recyclers and First Solar (US) shared data for recycling capacities between 1 000 t/yr to 50 000 t/yr. A seventh LCI case was modelled based on a combination of a recycler LCI response and previously published data.⁴

- First Solar Inc., Tempe, U.S.
- Reiling Glas Recycling GmbH & Co. KG, Marienfeld, Germany
- LuxChemtech GmbH, Freiberg, Germany
- Flaxres GmbH, Dresden, Germany
- ROSI SAS, Grenoble, France
- Envie 2E Aquitane, Saint-Loubès, France and ROSI SAS, Grenoble, France, combined processes (modelled using ROSI LCI response and previously published data⁴)
- Tialpi S.r.l., Mottalciata, Italy

Most of the LCI survey results rely on input from companies that are scaling up new technologies. Many data gaps still exist that could not be fully resolved by the data provided or information from the expert interviews. For example, each LCI assumes a significantly different input mix (module type), making direct comparisons challenging. The capacity of the processes varies from 1 000 t/yr (LuxChemtech) to 50 000 t/yr (Reiling), and the amount of material

⁴ R. Frischknecht, K. Komoto, T. Doi 2023, Life Cycle Assessment of Crystalline Silicon Photovoltaic Module Delamination with Hot Knife Technology, IEA PVPS Task 12, International Energy Agency (IEA) PVPS Task 12, Report T12-25:2023. ISBN 978-3-907281-41-3.

⁵ DEPATISNET is an online service of the German patent agency (DPMA): <u>https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?window=1&space=main&content=basis&action=basis</u>



processed annually varies from a test batch size of 7.5 t for Flaxres' pilot line to 41 921 t/yr for First Solar's commercial facilities. Some of the data are projections of expected values for facilities under construction, such as for ROSI's pilot plant in Grenoble, whereas data for established facilities represent actual data. One of the LCI cases (Envie & ROSI) is a modelling result based on preliminary data.

Despite these challenges, the results provide useful insights for a variety of recycling approaches at different levels of development and the associated recovery rates and energy consumption.

Material Recovery

Material output was normalized to 100% for each recycler, such that the cumulative material fractions sum to the weight of one module or one ton of input. The percentages for cables, frames, junction boxes, and non-ferrous metals differ between the respondents largely because of differences in the types of modules that were processed. One main difference is glass recovery rates. Tialpi, Reiling, and Flaxres recover similar percentages of glass, and LuxChemtech and ROSI, with and without Envie, can achieve slightly higher glass outputs. First Solar modules are glass-glass construction, resulting in a higher percentage of glass output. There are also differences in the mixed fractions and dust produced in each process. Mechanical processes (such as Reiling's crushing step, Tialpi's use of a blade to remove the glass, and ROSI's mechanical sortation) tend to produce more dust than water-jet and thermal processes. Pyrolysis fully removes the foil fraction, effectively increasing the relative amounts of the other outputs in the two ROSI LCI cases.

Energy Consumption

Energy consumption data were not yet available for the ROSI LCI cases. Reiling and Flaxres are the most efficient in terms of energy consumption. The chemical and water-jet processes developed by LuxChemtech consume a moderate amount of electricity, but it is still more than twice the consumption of Reiling's facility. Tialpi results are in the same energy consumption range as the LuxChemtech process. First Solar's LCI data include recovery of cadmium and tellurium, resulting in higher electricity consumption than the other LCI cases presented.

Recycling Survey and LCI Key Findings

- Mechanical recycling is still the benchmark. Mechanical recycling is optimized for costs, capacity, and output but frequently includes some downgrading of material quality. Reiling's improved, pure-mechanical process for silicon-based modules represents a fully commercial, best available technology that sets a benchmark for maturity, cost, and low energy consumption. However, it does not allow recovery of silicon and silver.
- Innovative technologies offer improved recycling quality. New technologies in pilotstage demonstrations offer excellent recycling quality in terms of yield and purity of the fraction and economic value opportunities. Innovative approaches include light pulse treatment, water-jet cleaning, pyrolysis, and chemical treatment. Recyclers have demonstrated full recovery of aluminum frames, cables, junction boxes, interconnectors, silicon, and silver. Envie & ROSI, ROSI, LuxChemtech, Tialpi and Flaxres separate a glass fraction that can offer the flat glass industry a future source of usable cullet as a secondary raw material, saving melting energy. Improving the quality of recovered materials offers upcycling opportunities that can offset the cost of recycling and advance PV circularity.
- Strong thin-film recycling experience. First Solar operates a proprietary recycling system for its own thin-film module technology that has achieved over 90% material recovery through continuous process improvements in recent years. Some emerging recycling technologies are expected to be applicable to thin-film modules of any kind,



as well as silicon-based modules, though some additional special treatment might need to be added.

Facilities dedicated to PV recycling. There has been a dramatic shift since the 2016-2017 IEA PVPS Task 12 study in terms of the number of recyclers that accept PV modules and in terms of the development and demonstration of recycling treatments and processes customized for PV modules. The first commercial PV module recycling plants with advanced treatments to separate materials with high quality and yield are being planned and constructed to support the growing supply of end-of-life modules.

Patent and Literature Review Key Findings

Global interest in PV recycling is rising as evidenced by steep increases in publications, patents, and research. The number of publications and patent applications coincides with growth in the global PV market and the introduction of PV waste policies in several regions.

Nearly 80% of patents target recycling processes for silicon-based modules, cell metals, polymers, glass, or devices. Thin-film and emerging technologies comprise the remaining patent space. Patents typically focus on recovering valuable material, toxic materials, or semiconductor materials, though some address glass and polymers. Technical approaches include mechanical, chemical, and thermal treatments, or combinations of treatment methods.

Patent filings and ownership correlate with major production locations and major PV installation markets. Top regions for patent applications are People's Republic of China, United States, South Korea, Japan, and Europe. People's Republic of China owns the most patents with 141, followed by 85 in Japan, 79 in South Korea, 54 in the U.S., and 33 in Germany. Most patents are filed by universities, research institutions, and module manufacturers. There are few applications by recyclers, professional waste treatment companies, and equipment manufacturers because the current waste stream in most regions is still too small to justify significant investments in dedicated recycling technologies.

Published literature is primarily comprised of journal articles and conference papers. PV recycling is viewed as an important topic globally. The U.S. has the most publications, followed by Italy and People's Republic of China, but developing countries and emerging markets like Ghana, South Africa, and Mexico are also publishing papers about PV recycling. Most studies are authored by research institutions and universities, frequently in collaboration with PV manufacturers, equipment providers, and recycling companies. Of the top 25 publishing organizations, only one was a recycler, First Solar. Results for individual leading authors show that U.S. authors hold the most publications, followed by authors in Italy and People's Republic of China. This result follows the same trend as the total number of publications by country.

How to Apply Results

Solar PV system asset owners and operators, as well as utility integrated resource planners can use the knowledge and perspectives in this study to inform module management strategies and enable a circular economy for energy materials as an integral part of the clean energy transition in cooperation with authorities, take back systems and recyclers. Commercial recyclers and researchers within the international solar PV community and related disciplines can use the LCI data to support work that further improves recycling quality and improves economic value. LCI data for PV module recycling can be used by researchers in full life cycle assessments for PV. Identifying gaps in treatment technologies and operating experience also helps in shaping research and development (R&D) priorities.



1 STUDY OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Global cumulative installed solar photovoltaic (PV) capacity exceeded 1 TW in 2022, and deployment is expected to accelerate over the next decade. With PV industry scale-up there is increasing recognition that the volume of defective, damaged, and spent modules will expand rapidly in the decades ahead. Module management is becoming a pressing concern for owners and operators of solar generation systems. Development and optimization of collection, triage, repair, refurbishment, reuse, and recycling pathways are needed to convert PV materials into assets that contribute to the circular economy and improve environmental responsibility, rather than creating new waste streams.

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The objective of this study was to identify advances in PV recycling technology that have the potential to be affordable, technically feasible, and environmentally responsible. A survey of recyclers, literature review, and patent search identified industry trends and advances in PV recycling processes. Additionally, six leading recyclers supplied life cycle inventory (LCI) data for facilities that use advanced recycling treatments to separate PV materials with high quality and yield. A seventh approach, the combined recycling processes of Envie and ROSI, was modelled using LCI data from a recent IEA-PVPS report on the Japanese NPC recycling process.^{9,10}

⁶ Life Cycle Inventory of Current Photovoltaic Module Recycling Processes in Europe. IEA PVPS Task 12, IEA PV Power Systems Programme. Report IEA-PVPS Task 12-12:2017. ISBN 978-3-906042-67-1.

⁷ Insights on Photovoltaic Recycling Processes in Europe: A Survey-Based Approach. EPRI, Palo Alto, CA: 2017. 3002008846.

⁸ G.A. Heath, T.J. Silverman, M. Kempe, M. Deceglie, D. Ravikumar, T. Remo, H. Cui, P. Sinha, C. Libby, S. Shaw, K. Komoto, K. Wambach, E. Butler, T. Barnes, and A. Wade, "Research and development priorities for silicon photovoltaic module recycling supporting a circular economy." Nature Energy 5, 502-501 (2020).

⁹ R. Frischknecht, K. Komoto, T. Doi 2023, Life Cycle Assessment of Crystalline Silicon Photovoltaic Module Delamination with Hot Knife Technology, IEA PVPS Task 12, International Energy Agency (IEA) PVPS Task 12, Report T12-25:2023. ISBN 978-3-907281-41-3.

¹⁰ Information provided by ROSI



1.2 Survey of Photovoltaic Module Recyclers

This section presents survey results for PV recyclers that process PV modules on a commercial or pilot level. The circular economy has grown significantly since the previous 2016–2017 survey. Several organizations are now involved, although the scale of PV waste streams is still moderate compared to other electronic waste streams worldwide. Significant growth of PV waste streams is expected after 2030 in the major PV markets, which will require construction and scale-up of recycling plants and dedicated-equipment suppliers.

1.3 Approach

The list of recyclers to survey was developed via the following:

- An update of the 2016–2017 survey list of recyclers
- Online research at the following:
 - o Enfsolar: https://de.enfsolar.com/directory/service/manufacturers-recycling
 - Google: "PV module recycling" OR "PV panel recycling" OR "Solar module recycling"
 OR "Solar panel recycling"
 - Bing: "PV module recycling" OR "PV panel recycling" OR "Solar module recycling" OR "Solar panel recycling"
 - Press releases (e.g., PV magazine, international issues)
 - o DEPATISnet survey on patent applicants
 - Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA): <u>www.seia.org</u>
 - Wer liefert was: <u>https://www.wlw.de</u>
 - Stiftung EAR: <u>https://www.stiftung-ear.de</u>
 - o List of universal waste companies accepting PV modules in California
 - Participant lists from recycling webinars and workshops as identified
- Expert interviews (e.g., PV CYCLE, Take-e-way, SENS eRecycling, Soren)
- Lists of U.S. recyclers from previous EPRI studies

1.4 Survey Results

The research team identified 177 recyclers or PV recycling equipment manufacturers, whereas the 2016–2017 NREL/EPRI study included about 25 companies.¹ The recyclers mentioned in a recent IEA PVPS Task 12 report have been included in the list of recyclers and equipment manufacturers.¹¹

Figure 1 shows the recyclers' regional distribution, and Table 1, shown on page 16, compares results of the 2022 survey with previous findings and organizations contacted. The results are consistent with PV market growth, growing waste streams, and upcoming legislative frameworks in many countries. As expected, the European PV waste market grew significantly,

¹¹ International Energy Agency. Photovoltaic Power Systems Programme. Status of PV Module Recycling in Selected IEA PVPS Task12 Countries. IEA-PVPS-T12-24. 2022. <u>https://iea-pvps.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Report-IEA-PVPS-T12-24_2022_Status-of-PV-Module-Recycling.pdf</u>.



and the European Union's Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive further developed collection and waste treatment rules for PV in the last five years. In response, mechanical, thermal, and chemical treatments customized for PV modules have emerged to improve recycling yield and quality.

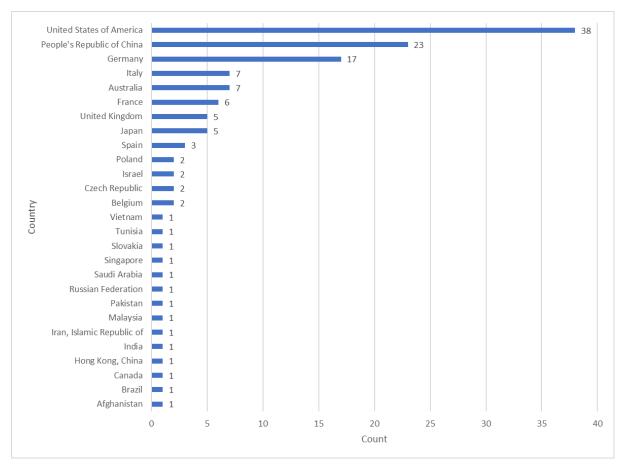


Figure 1: Geographical distribution of recyclers and pilot lines



Table 1: Current and previous results of inquiries to PV module recyclers and recyclers contacted in this study

| | 2015 | 2016 | | 2022 | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| Contacts | 8 recyclers (1 declined) | | | 24 (18 did not respond or declined request) | |
| Locations | Belgium: 1 Germany: 6 | Belgium: 1Japan: 1EFrance: 1Switzerland: 10 | | Australia: 2 Belgium: 1 Germany: 5 Italy: 3 | Japan: 1 France: 2 United States: 10 |
| Technologies | E-waste recyclers: 2 Laminated glass recyclers: 6 | E-waste recyclers: 2 General waste treatment companies: 2 Laminated glass recyclers: 5 Metal recyclers: 2 PV module recyclers (pilot stages): 5 | | Crushing/mechanical separation: 17 Hot knife: 2 Infrared heating: 1 Light pulse annealing: 2 Pyrolysis: 2 | |
| Questionnaires sent to recyclers | 7 | 9 | | 9 (after confirmation of acceptance) | |
| Respondent feedback on questionnaires | 7 | 7 | | 6 | |
| Face-to-face or online discussions | 3 | 2 | | 7 | |
| Data sets received | 2: Anonymous, Germany Exner Trenntechnik, Germany | 5: Anonymous, Germany Exner Trenntechnik, Germany (stopped) Maltha, Belgium (stopped) Nike, Italy Sasil (now Tialpi), Italy | | 6:* First Solar Inc, U.S. Flaxres, Germany LuxChemtech, Germany Reiling, Germany ROSI SAS, France Tialpi, Italy (partial) | |

* While not a recycler, NPC provided data to Task 12 in a separate study. These data were used along with the 6 recycler-provided datasets.

The information found during the search for recyclers is not always consistent; some links (including some provided by Enfsolar or SEIA, for example) do not work, and validation is frequently impossible for missing contact links or blocked or non-existent URLs. Though this study identified many recyclers that seem to accept PV modules and PV recycling equipment manufacturers, additional information about the companies is limited. Specifically, details about recycling activities, plant capacities, treatment processes, and outputs are rarely published, and it is unclear whether recyclers also perform waste treatment and disposal or downstream processing. Some of the listed recyclers may actively collect PV waste and some may test the condition of the module, sort modules for reuse or recycling, or perform pre-treatments like cable, frame, or junction box repair or removal. The residual modules are then processed either in-house or by a third party or landfilled. Few details are available in the public domain.

The official Eurostat statistics in Figure 2 illustrate the EU PV recycling market's development. According to the rules set in the WEEE, the member states representing the main PV markets predominantly provide the statistical data. Due to differences in the national transpositions of the WEEE and different reporting practices, the numbers might not be fully consistent. Expert interview results indicated that a huge international market already exists for used modules



(decreasing the waste stream) and that not all PV waste may be reported, despite being properly treated. Therefore, the Eurostat statistics may underestimate the waste stream's size.

The first IEA PVPS Task 12 study on PV recycling life cycle inventory was started in 2015 and was continued in 2016 during the early stages of mandatory PV recycling in the EU, which was part of the recast of the WEEE in 2012.^{12,13} Collection and recycling of PV modules has been established in the meantime, and the EU member states report annually via Eurostat. An example of the PV waste collection results reported is shown in Figure 2.

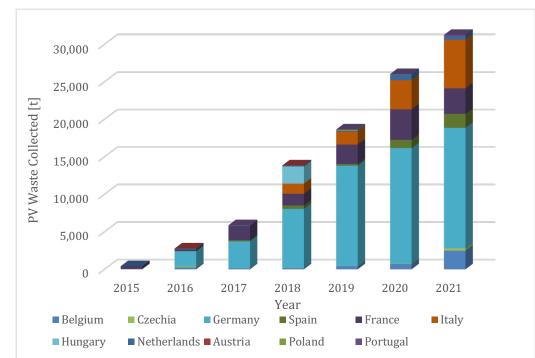


Figure 2: PV waste collected in Europe, according to Eurostat 2015–2021¹⁴

Some of the recyclers have stopped their recycling activities since the 2016–2017 survey, including the following:

 Veolia stopped mechanical treatment activities (which used technology reportedly supplied by La Mia Energia from Italy, EU project PV Morede) in Rousset, France. However, Veolia cooperates with ROSI SAS and Flaxres GmbH, Germany, on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Raw Materials project ReProSolar using flash lamp annealing for PV module separation.

¹² https://iea-pvps.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/LCI_of_Current_European_PV_Recycling_ WambachHeath_2017_by_Task_12.pdf.

¹³ <u>https://iea-pvps.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Life Cycle Assesment of Current Photovoltaic</u> <u>Module Recycling by Task 12.pdf.</u>

¹⁴<u>https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASELEE_custom_1388102/default/table?la</u> ng=en,

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASELEEOS_custom_4287260/default/table?l ang=en (accessed June 2, 2024.)



- Maltha Groep no longer recycles PV modules. Maltha now concentrates on glass recycling and is therefore still interested in glass cullet processing from PV modules.
- Exner Trenntechnik GmbH was sold to Wilhelm Geiger GmbH & Co. KG group and now concentrates on metal recycling.
- PV CYCLE and Soren also cooperate with the recycler Galloo in Belgium, but the companies did not provide any information.

Many other companies entered the PV waste market in recent years, and the research team identified 177 companies via the sources mentioned above. It can be assumed that several other companies worldwide have started PV recycling activities and that the study's list may not be exhaustive because companies rarely publish their activities internationally. Appendix A, Table A1: Global PV Recyclers has a full list of global PV recyclers.

The team identified 38 U.S. recyclers, though recycling in the United States is not yet mandatory.¹⁵ The recyclers provide few details in published literature or on their company web sites about their activities and the treatment processes they apply. According to expert interview results, there is a range of definitions for PV module recycling. While some recyclers recover over 80% of the material, PV modules are frequently picked up only for cable and frame removal prior to landfill disposal. This could change in the future if recycling costs become competitive with landfill disposal costs and if laws and regulations are implemented. Additionally, the 2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)¹⁶ designated \$10 million to fund research that advances reuse and recycling of solar energy technologies. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 offered tax credits to spur domestic manufacturing, which could in turn drive recycling demand to treat manufacturing waste streams. In July 2023, the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Energy Technologies Office (DOE SETO) announced \$20 million in funding for Materials, Operation, and Recycling of Photovoltaics (MORE PV) in July 2023, including \$8 million of BIL funding.¹⁷ DOE SETO's action plan for PV system end-of-life management¹⁸ established a recycling cost-reduction target of less than \$3 USD/module (or less than \$150 USD/ton) by 2030 to compete with the cost of U.S. landfill disposal. The action plan also outlines research and development (R&D) priorities.

1.5 Recyclers Contacted

Table 2 presents a detailed list of contacted recyclers. The following criteria were applied during selection:

- Commercial activity with significant market share in a region.
- Best available technology application or innovative recycling processes demonstrated at least at pilot level.
- Potential willingness to support the study.

¹⁵ Starting July 1, 2025, Washington state will become the first state to require PV module manufacturers to offer and finance PV module take-back and reuse or recycling for products sold within or into the state, as of July 1, 2017.

¹⁶ Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Homepage | Department of Energy.

¹⁷ DOE-FOA-0002985: Materials, Operation, and Recycling of Photovoltaics (MORE PV)

¹⁸ DOE Releases Action Plan For Photovoltaic Systems End-Of-Life Management | Department of Energy.



Of the 26 recyclers contacted for this study, several European and one American recycler responded. Many recyclers were quite reluctant to provide information, and predominantly European waste treatment companies participated. An explanation might be that a mandatory recycling system is already being established in Europe per the WEEE, and Europe has more-mature collection and recycling systems.

| Recycler | Country | Technology | Comment | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| <u>Reiling</u> | Germany | Mechanical | Commercial, new recycling center under construction | | | |
| <u>Flaxres</u> | Germany | Light pulse | Pilot, subsequent steps not yet implemented | | | |
| LuxChemtech | Germany | Water jet, light pulse, chemical | Pilot, not all subsequent steps are implemented yet | | | |
| <u>First Solar Inc.</u> | Germany; United States; Vietnam; Malaysia | Mechanical and chemical | Recently upgraded recycling in progress in Germany, V4 under development; contact via First Solar Inc., U.S. | | | |
| ROSI SAS | France | Pyrolysis, mechanical, and chemical | Pilot, under construction | | | |
| <u>Tialpi</u> | Italy | Thermal, mechanical, and chemical | Pilot plant of 1 000 tons per year in Italy | | | |
| <u>NPC</u> ~ | Japan | Mechanical, hot knife | Equipment manufacturer | | | |
| ~ NPC provided data to Task 12 in a separate study. | | | | | | |

Table 2: Participating recyclers

The research team observed increasing activity in PV waste R&D, policy development, and legislative actions in many regions, such as Africa, Asia, Australia, India, Europe, the United States, and South America. This observation was confirmed by the increasing number of publications from these regions (see Literature Search Results section).



2 RESULTS OF THE LIFE CYCLE INVENTORY SURVEY AND ASSOCIATED EXPERT INTERVIEWS

2.1 First Solar Inc., Tempe, U.S.

First Solar is one of the top-ten PV producers, with its CdTe thin-film modules (<u>www.firstsolar.com</u>). First Solar operates four recycling plants worldwide for its own end-oflife products, with a total treatment capacity of about 50 000 tons per year. The plants are in Ohio, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Germany, fully covering First Solar's global recycling demand. The recycling processes applied allow a very high recovery of more than 90%, according to the company's 2022 environmental report. The proprietary recycling process has been continuously improved in recent years.

As shown in Figure 3, First Solar removes the junction box first. Then they shred the laminate and use a hammer mill process to separate the glass from the polymers and semiconductor material. A buffer stores the polymer and semiconductor fraction in separate containers. Then a leaching process using water and chemicals recovers Cd and Te from the glass. These metals precipitate from the solution, such that they can be recovered and further purified by third parties. An evaporator recirculates the water, producing a Na₂SO₄ residue. In a final step, First Solar separates the ethyl vinyl acetate (EVA) from the glass. The polymer is incinerated or landfilled depending on the country, and it can also be used to produce rubber products. Recovered glass is used in the glass industry.

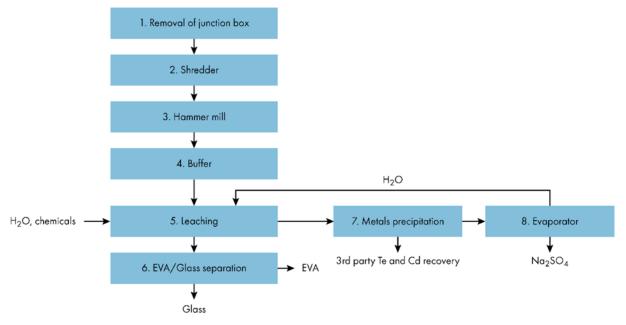


Figure 3: First Solar CdTe module recycling process; all steps 1–8 are included in the LCI comparison except the third party recovery treatments



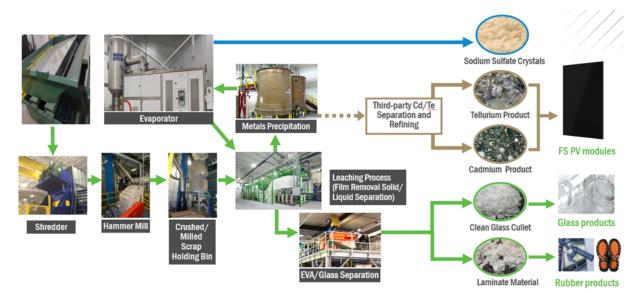


Figure 4: First Solar third-generation recycling technology based on a continuous flow process (Credit: First Solar Inc.)

For knowledge protection reasons, First Solar could not provide detailed data on the subsequent treatment and chemical use.

The LCI data provided show a recycling rate of the output fractions that total about 97.2% relative to the total mass of the input. Deviations in the international reporting systems prevent the outputs from totalling 100%. Table 3 shows the LCI results.

Table 3: LCI results for First Solar's recycling processes based on a 2022environmental report

| Company | npany First Solar Inc., Perrysburg, USA | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Name | CdTe m | CdTe module recycling | | | | |
| Time period | 2021 wit | th updates from 202 | 2 sustainability report and some LCI data of 2012 | | | |
| Geography | USA, Ma | alaysia, Vietnam, Ge | ermany | | | |
| Technology | Mechan | ical and chemical tre | eatment | | | |
| Representativeness | | | | | | |
| Date | 11/20/20 |)22 | | | | |
| Collection method | Data fro | m recycler | | | | |
| Comment | Several | national and regiona | al electricity mixes, partly from renewables | | | |
| | Original values | | | | | |
| Plant | Unit | Amount | Comment/reference | | | |
| Capacity | t/yr | 50 000 | Estimates cum. capacity of 4 plants | | | |
| Type of plant | | 4 recycling plants | Mechanical and chemical treatment | | | |
| Location | , , , , | | Recycling sites: Perrysburg, Ohio; Kulim, Malaysia; Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and Frankfurt/Oder, Germany | | | |
| Module type processed | | CdTe double glass modules | First Solar CdTe modules | | | |
| Time period | period 2021 | | Data from 2022 sustainability report | | | |
| Mechanical and chemical treatment | | | | | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 41 921 | First Solar CdTe modules | | | |



| Components/fuels | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|----------------|---|--|--|
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 265 | As of 2012 in Frankfurt/Oder, based on IEA-PVPS Task 12 report, table 3.7 | | |
| CNG/LNG ¹⁹ | kWh/t | Not applicable | | | |
| Diesel/oil consumption | l/t | Not applicable | | | |
| Output | , | • | Specify and indicate utilisation, subsequent treatment | | |
| Cables | % | | Not provided, recovered during pre-treatment | | |
| Frame | % | | Not provided, recovered during pre-treatment | | |
| Junction boxes | % | | Not provided, recovered during pre-treatment | | |
| Semiconductor | % | 0.4 | Specialized Cd and Te refiner | | |
| Metals | % | 1.5 | Metal recycler | | |
| Glass cullet | % | 87 | Glass manufacturer | | |
| Polymer | % | 3 | Incineration with energy recovery | | |
| Polymer | % | 5 | Rubber material production, landfill or incineration | | |
| Other materials | % | 0.3 | Encapsulant | | |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | % | Not applicable | Water, recirculated ²⁰ | | |

2.2 Reiling Glas Recycling GmbH & Co. KG, Marienfeld, Germany

Reiling is a family-owned recycling company that started recycling PV modules around 2010, at the boom of the PV industry in Germany (www.reiling.de). It currently operates four glassrecycling plants where crystalline silicon (c-Si) PV modules are accepted. Reiling also provides logistic services. The plants are located in Marienfeld, Torgau, Osterwedding, and Burgbernheim, Germany. The current capacity is about 10 000 t/yr. A new plant dedicated to recycling crystalline-silicon-based PV modules is located in Münster, with a capacity of 50 000 t/yr. The technology used is based on a mechanical treatment originally used for laminated glass from the building and automotive industries. The treatment plants' free capacities were used to process the PV modules in discrete batches. As the PV waste stream increased, Reiling performed several R&D projects to improve the mechanical treatment process's yield and efficiency. The results are deployed in the new Münster plant that started in 2023. In 2022, Reiling recycled about 4 200 tons of PV modules. The LCI results presented in this report include a simplification of the shredding and separation process by which the aluminum in the frames is extracted automatically after crushing.²¹ Reiling succeeded in increasing the yield of glass cullet by 6% compared to 2017 with moderate electrical energy consumption. In Münster, electricity from Reiling's own PV plant is used to operate the recycling process, and modules are tested for reuse (second life) potential. Figure 5 shows the process, and Figure 6 shows an example of the different output fractions obtained.

¹⁹ Compressed natural gas (CNG) or liquid natural gas (LNG) fuels

²⁰ The amount of recirculated water used or consumed was not reported.

²¹ Before the new process was implemented, the frames and junction boxes had been removed semiautomatically before crushing.



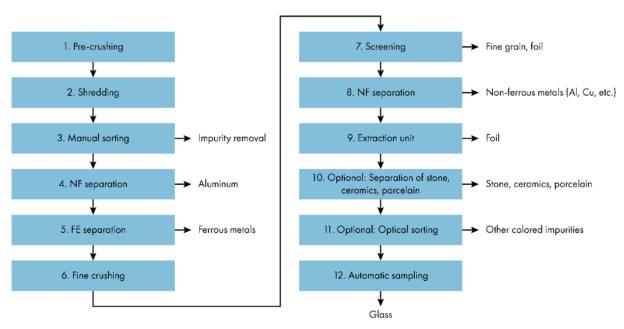


Figure 5: Reiling mechanical recycling process; all steps are included in the LCI comparison



Figure 6: Images of PV module materials at intermediate steps in Reiling's recycling process: foil removal, FE metals removal, NF metals removal, optical sorting, and glass product (Credit: Reiling Group)

After mechanical pre-crushing and shredding steps to extract the aluminum frame, Reiling separates ferrous (FE) metals,²² such as screws, that may be present from the frames. A fine crushing step then makes the glass and foil more accessible for subsequent screening. Reiling then performs a second separation of non-ferrous (NF) metals,²³ such as AI and Cu from the interconnectors. They then extract the polymer fraction from the glass. Treatments typically performed for other glass-based products (but optional for PV modules) include separation of stone, ceramics, and porcelain and optical sorting, such as x-ray sortation, to remove colored impurities. Reiling performs a final quality check. Cross contamination has been an issue with

²² Ferrous metals: iron-based alloys

²³ Non-ferrous metals: other metals, such as Al, Sn, Cu, Mg and their alloys



the existing process, and the resulting output fractions are of low purity, sometimes resulting in downcycling.

The company is certified according to Specialist Waste Management Company, DIN ISO 9001:2015, DIN ISO 50001, Declaration of Compliance with the Minimum Wage Act, and so on. A certificate of destruction will be issued on customer's request.

Reiling is one of the top-two PV module recyclers in Germany (along with First Solar) and concentrates on c-Si PV modules and amorphous silicon modules only. Table 4 shows the LCI data for Reiling.

| Company | Reiling | Glas Recycling Gmb | H & CO. Kg |
|-------------------------|---------|--|---|
| Name | LCI of | cryst. Si and ASI - P∖ | / module recycling |
| Time period | 2022 | | |
| Geography | Germa | ny | |
| Technology | Mecha | nical processing | |
| Representativeness | Individ | ual real processes dis | screte batches |
| Date | 8/31/20 |)22 | |
| Collection method | Data fr | om Reiling Glass Red | cycling |
| Comment | Germa | n Electricity mix | |
| | | - | |
| Plant | Unit | Amount | Comment/reference |
| Capacity | t/yr | 10 000 | New plant in Münster: approx. 50 000 t/a |
| Type of plant | | Glass recycling plant | New: plant especially for PV-recycling |
| Location | | Marienfeld, Osterwedding Torgau, and Burgbernheim, Germany | |
| Module type processed | | Cryst. Silicon and silicon based thin film | |
| Time period | | 2022 | |
| Step 1 | | | specify, e.g. modules processed |
| Total input | t/yr | 4 200 | New plant in Münster started in 2023, 50 000 t/a |
| Components/fuels | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 60 | In Münster: The plant is operated completely electrically. Electricity from own PV installation is used. |
| CNG/LNG | kWh/t | 0.36 | Forklift |
| Diesel/oil consumption | l/t | 2.5 | Wheel loader |
| Output | Output | | Specify and indicate utilisation, subsequent treatment |
| Cables | % | 0.65 | Cable recycler |
| Frame | % | 11.5 | Metal recycler (AI) |
| Junction boxes | % | 0.35 | Electronic scrap recycler |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0.2 | Metal recycler |

Table 4: LCI data for Reiling's mechanical PV module recycling process



| Non-ferrous metals | % | 1.2 | Metal recycler |
|--|---|-----|-------------------------|
| Polymers/foils | % | 14 | Incineration |
| Glass cullet | % | 64 | Foam glass, glass fiber |
| Mixture of glass cullet, foil and metals | % | 6.6 | Other utilization |
| Dust | % | 1.5 | Other utilization |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | % | | |
| Total Output | % | 100 | |

2.3 LuxChemtech GmbH, Freiberg, Germany

LuxChemtech was founded in 2019 as a successor of Loser Chemie. It operates two facilities in Germany, including its headquarters in Freiberg, Saxony, where it is active in many valuable material recovery areas, such as lithium, indium, gallium, selenium, tellurium, silver, silicon, and so on (www.lc-freiberg.de). The plant is equipped with several blasting units, saws, crushers, mills, and other mechanical processing equipment, universal etching lines, silicon ingot growing furnaces, and an analytical laboratory. The plant is located in the former factory of Sunicon GmbH, a subsidiary of SolarWorld AG, a former manufacturer of PV wafers, cells, and modules.

LuxChemtech performs R&D for PV recycling of any type, including c-Si, copper indium gallium selenide (CIGS), and CdTe. In addition to its chemical recycling facilities, it is building a pilot demonstration plant at its site in Tangermünde, an old Hanse town close to Schwerin in northern Germany. The Tangermünde plant's targeted capacity is about 1 000 t/yr.

A high-pressure water-jet and a light-pulse treatment process are under construction. Figure 7 shows the recycling steps for modules constructed with a single glass plate. LuxChemtech uses a high-pressure water jet to remove the polymers, cells, and metals from the glass plate. This produces very pure glass, which may stay intact during the process. Then they filter polymer material from the water before recirculating the water. The next steps separate non-ferrous metals from the polymers and separate copper from silicon in an etching bath.

The LCI data provided for the water-jet treatment and chemical recovery processes in Table 5 are based on batch processing of several tons of modules of different types and performance measurements in 2022. The Step 1 water-jet process produces a polymer/foil fraction that is 11.13% of the total input by weight. In Step 2, only the polymer/foil fraction is treated. The polymers are separated from the semiconductor materials and metals, and approximately 3.3% of the Step 2 input material by weight is recovered silicon, silver, indium, tin, and copper.



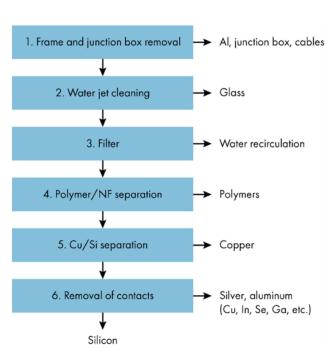


Figure 7: Example of LuxChemtech's water-jet and chemical recycling processes for c-Si PV modules (thin-film recovery indicated in brackets in Step 6); steps 1–5 are included in the LCI comparison



Figure 8: Clean glass cullet collected after water jet treatment (left) and separated polymer fraction with metal and solar cell fragments prior to further recycling (right) (Credit: LuxChemtech GmbH)

For knowledge protection reasons, LuxChemtech did not provide detailed data on the subsequent treatment and chemical use, but the main chemicals in use and consumptions are indicated. The silver in the solar cell fragments is dissolved in acid and then electrolyzed. Table 5 summarizes the results.

Table 5: LCI data for LuxChemtech's water-jet and chemical recovery process



| Company | LuxChe | emtech GmbH | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Name | LCI of | LCI of PV module recycling | | | |
| Time period | 2021/2 | | 3 | | |
| Geography | Germa | | | | |
| Technology | | et treatment and ch | emical treatment | | |
| Representativeness | - | | in continuous or discrete batches | | |
| Date | 10/21/2 | · | | | |
| Collection method | | om recycler | | | |
| Comment | | · | | | |
| Comment | Germa | ny | | | |
| Plant | Unit | Amount | Comment/reference | | |
| Capacity | t/yr | 1 000 | Demonstrator | | |
| Type of plant | | | | | |
| Location | | Tangermünde, Saxony-Anhalt | | | |
| Module type processed | | Cryst. Silicon | No amorph. Silicon, compound semiconductor modules in similar process steps | | |
| Time period | | 2022/2023 | | | |
| Step 1 | | | Water jet cleaning | | |
| Total input | t/yr | | Demonstrator, 1 000 tons/year under construction, (100 modules/hour) | | |
| Components/fuels | | | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 130 | Own PV plant, not optimized, 2t/h | | |
| Water | m³/t | | Recirculated, not disclosed | | |
| CNG/LNG | kWh/t | No | Transportation only | | |
| Diesel/oil consumption | l/t | No | Transportation only | | |
| Output | | | Specify and indicate utilisation, subsequent treatment | | |
| Cables | % | 0.42 | To cable recycler | | |
| Frame | % | 11.07 | 90% very pure 10 % with impurities, to AI recycler | | |
| Junction boxes | % | 0.39 | To e-waste recycler | | |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0 | Some with ferrous metals, e.g. back rails from Avancis modules to metal recycler | | |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 4.05 | Nearly 100% silicon, (indium, tin), silver, see below, 98% used | | |
| Polymers/foils | % | 11.13 | To own mechanical/chemical treatment | | |
| Glass cullet | % | 72.5 | 0.5% of total glass amount (100%) as pieces on wires and/or pieces at frame | | |
| Mixture of glass cullet, foil and metals | % | 0 | | | |
| Dust, other | % | 0.44 | To incineration | | |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | % Small amounts of filter cloth | | Small amounts of filter cloth | | |
| Step 1 Output | % | 100 | | | |
| Step2 | | | Chemical and mechanical separation and purification treatment | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 120 | Polymer fraction from waterjet treatment | | |



| Components/fuels | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|--|
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | | |
| Chemicals | kg/t | | Not disclosed |
| NaOH | kg/t | 2 | Maximum amounts, depend on input type |
| СНЗЅОЗН | kg/t | 1 | Maximum amounts, depend on input type |
| HCI | kg/t | 1 | Maximum amounts, depend on input type |
| H2O2 | kg/t | 1 | Maximum amounts, depend on input type |
| CNG/LNG | kWh/t | | Transportation only |
| Diesel/oil consumption | l/t | | Transportation only |
| Output | | | Yield Assumption 90% |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 0.027 | Silver to metal recycler, indium, tin to metal recycler |
| Copper | % | 0.45 | Interconnectors for metallurgy |
| Silicon | % | 2.826 | Battery electrodes, sputter targets, metallurgy |
| Other semiconductors | | 0 | Depending on module type In, Ga, Se, Te, Cd to metal recycler |
| Polymers/foils | % | 0 | Incineration, recycling planned for 2025+ |
| Dust | | | |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | % | 0.5 | Depending on input quality, waste water purification, auxiliary materials, sludge disposal ²⁴ |

LuxChemtech also has access to the light-pulse technology used to separate thin-film PV modules with glass/glass construction and expects similar results to the ones Flaxres reported achieving with its proprietary technology (see Flaxres technology details in next section). LuxChemtech successfully began separating thin-film modules with a pulsed laser scanner and now also utilizes tube lamp light-pulse technology for c-Si modules.

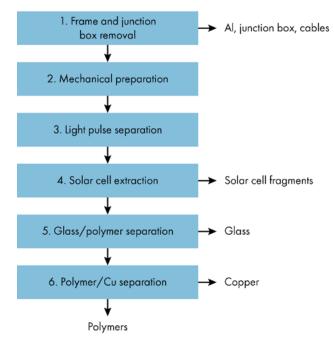
2.4 Flaxres GmbH, Dresden, Germany

Flaxres is a young company founded in 2017 to develop a mobile and sustainable process for separating composite materials such as PV modules (<u>www.flaxres.com</u>). Flaxres's large-scale flashing unit FLAXTHOR® exposes the solar module to one or more very short, high-intensity light pulses to heat light absorbing material layers to enable delamination. Flaxres's web page describes the process as follows: "The light travels through the transparent glass and polymer layer and is then converted into thermal energy by the light-absorbing layer (e.g., silicon wafer). The photovoltaic cells heat up in less than a small fraction of one second. Thermal treatment of the boundary layers results to separation of the material. With the help of preceding and subsequent process steps, the photovoltaic module is separated into glass, aluminum, polymers, silicon with silver, junction box with cable and bus bars." Flaxres states on its web page: "The glass is very clean and can be easily recycled as flat glass, the aluminum and copper can be used by aluminum or copper manufacturers. The solar cell fragments can be processed by 3rd parties to recover silver, and silicon." In these other treatment processes (for example, LuxChemtech's), silver, silicon, and even aluminum compounds from the aluminum metallization are recovered. The polymers can be incinerated, landfilled, or recycled,

²⁴ The amount of recirculated water used or consumed in the water-jet process was not reported.



depending on the legal framework. Figure 9 shows the process, and Figure 10 shows the Flaxres pilot line. Flaxres will offer a mobile line on a truck for PV recycling service.



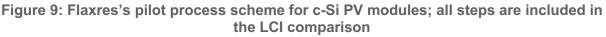




Figure 10: Flaxres light pulse PV recycling pilot line (Credit: Flaxres GmbH)

The light–pulse process is also successfully applied to separate thin-film modules, such as CdTe, CIGS, or other non-PV applications.

The LCI data provided by Flaxres is based on a mass test of 7.5 tons carried out in 2022, which is representative for the pilot process implemented. Table 6 shows the results.

| Table 6: Flaxres's | LCI results from | a mass test in its | pilot line in 2022 |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | | | |

| Company | FLAXRES GmbH, Blumenstr. 80, 01307 Dresden |
|---------|--|
| | |



| Name | LCI of PV module recycling | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Time period | 2022 | | | | | | |
| Geography | Germany | | | | | | |
| Technology | Light p | ulse technol | logy | | | | |
| Representativeness | Individu | ual real proc | cesses in continuous or discrete batches | | | | |
| Date | 10/10/2 | 022 | | | | | |
| Collection method | Data fro | om recycler | | | | | |
| Comment | Nationa | al Electricity | mix (please modify if needed) | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Mass test | | | | | | | |
| Input | | | | | | | |
| Total input | t | 7.5 | Silicon based modules, mass test | | | | |
| Components/fuels | | | | | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh | <1.0 | Overall consumption per solar panel | | | | |
| CNG/LNG | kWh/t | 0 | | | | | |
| Diesel/oil consumption | l/t | 0 | Only for equipment transportation > mobile equipment (2 trucks) | | | | |
| Output [weight %] | | | Specify and indicate utilisation, subsequent treatment | | | | |
| Cables | % | 1 | | | | | |
| Frame | % | 17 | | | | | |
| Junction boxes | % | 1 | | | | | |
| Ferrous metals | % | | | | | | |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 3 | Silicon wafer | | | | |
| Polymers/foils + bus bars | % | 12 | Includes silicon residues; target is to separate polymers by wind sifter | | | | |
| Glass cullet | % | 66 | | | | | |
| Mixture of glass cullet, foil and metals | % | | | | | | |
| Dust | % | | Negligible | | | | |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | % | | Negligible | | | | |
| Output [kg] | | | Specify and indicate utilisation, subsequent treatment | | | | |
| Cables | t | 0.075 | | | | | |
| Frame | t | 1.284 | | | | | |
| Junction boxes | t | 0.075 | | | | | |
| Ferrous metals | t | | | | | | |
| Non-ferrous metals | t | 0.219 | Silicon wafer | | | | |
| Polymers/foils + bus bars | t | 0.897 | Includes silicon residues; target is to separate polymers by wind sifter | | | | |
| Glass cullet | iss cullet t 4.902 | | | | | | |
| Mixture of glass cullet, foil and metals | t | | | | | | |
| Dust | t | | Negligible | | | | |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | t | | Negligible | | | | |

2.5 ROSI SAS, Grenoble, France

ROSI is a French startup company founded in 2017 that focuses on recovering silicon, as suggested by its slogan, "Return of Silicon." The company states on its homepage (www.rosi-



<u>solar.com</u>): "ROSI is a company offering innovative solutions for recycling and revalorization of raw materials in the photovoltaic industry. Its technologies allow to recover high purity silicon and other metals currently lost during the production of photovoltaic cells and at the end-of-life of solar panels." Its two main activities are silicon kerf recovery and c-Si PV module recycling.

ROSI partners with Soren (France's PV take-back system, a PV CYCLE successor) and collaborates with Envie to provide high-value recycling in France. In Spring 2023, ROSI put a PV recycling plant in operation close to Grenoble, France, which uses a batch pyrolysis process and a proprietary silicon and silver recovery process. Data from Envie are not included in the LCI data for ROSI. A pre-treatment at Envie is not a pre-requisite of ROSI's process. ROSI can fully treat both any end-of-life crystalline silicon PV module or partially separated module.

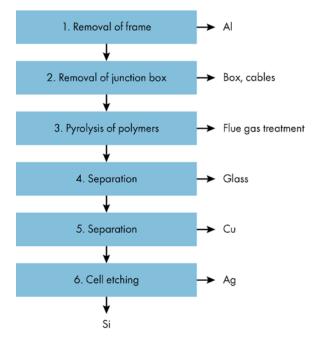


Figure 11 shows ROSI's process sequence for treating full modules.

Figure 11: ROSI's PV module recycling process, including pyrolysis and chemical treatment; steps 1–5 are included in the LCI data comparison

Table 7 lists the LCI data for ROSI's full module 6-step treatment process. After frame, junction box, and cable removal, ROSI performs pyrolysis of the polymers. The flue gas is treated with an afterburner to make sure the combustible gases resulting from pyrolysis undergo complete combustion (such as transforming carbon monoxide to carbon dioxide). The gases after the afterburner are then washed by a wet scrubber before eventually being discharged into the atmosphere. The scrubber captures pollutants by absorption including acid gases of the HF type (due to the presence of fluorine in the backsheet). The pyrolysis of the polymers gives easy access to high-quality and high-yield glass, metals, and solar cell fragments. High quality clean glass cullets are obtained after pyrolysis. The copper interconnectors and solar cell fragments can be separated using existing mechanical separation technology, such as screening or sortation by density. ROSI developed a process to detach the silver fingers and pads from the broken cell fragments using a soft chemical etching process that was not disclosed. The reported outputs are typical compositions, and some values may not agree. For example, "Cell fragments: Silicon cell with aluminum paste and silver finger" in Table 7 has a value of 3.4%, whereas the silicon and silver outputs from the chemical treatment step are 2.78% and 0.07%, respectively, which only totals 2.85%. The absence of aluminum may explain the discrepancy, along with potential yield losses during processing, such as etching



of silicon or incomplete recovery of silver. The silicon obtained is 99.999 – 99.9999% pure (5-6N). The energy consumption shown in the table includes fuel for the heaters and electricity for chemical treatment. Electricity consumed during junction box and cable removal and for fans and controls during pyrolysis is not included, as it has not yet been measured.

Table 7: ROSI's pilot process with steps for cable, junction box, and frame removal,pyrolysis, and chemical treatment to recover silver and 5-6N silicon

| Company | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Name | ROSI SA | ROSI SAS, Grenoble, France | | | | |
| Time period | 2022/23 | 2022/23 | | | | |
| Geography | France | | | | | |
| Technology | | | | | | |
| Representativeness | Individua informatio | | ontinuous or discrete batches (please enter right | | | |
| Date | 02.11.202 | 22 | | | | |
| Collection method | Data fron | n recycler | | | | |
| Comment | French E | lectricity mix | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Plant | Unit | Amount | Comment/reference | | | |
| Capacity | t/yr | 3 000 | Input: full module with AI frame and JB | | | |
| Type of plant | | | | | | |
| Location | | La Mure, FR | | | | |
| Module type processed | | Crystalline silicon | | | | |
| Time period | | Nov-22 | Operation from Q1 2023 on | | | |
| Step 1 - Removal JB and | cable | | | | | |
| Total input t/yr 3 000 | | | Full module with AI frame and junction box | | | |
| Components/fuels | | - | | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | | Not disclosed | | | |
| Output | | | Specify and indicate utilisation, subsequent treatment | | | |
| Cables | % | 0.85 | To cable recycler | | | |
| Frame | % | 7.79 | To Al recycler | | | |
| Junction boxes | % | 4.3 | To e-waste recycler | | | |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0 | To metal recycler | | | |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 0 | Aluminum frame and cable | | | |
| Module without Al frame JB and cable | % | 87.06 | | | | |
| Step 2 - Pyrolysis | | | | | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 2611.8 | Full module with glass, without aluminum frame and junction box | | | |
| Components/fuels | | | | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | | Not disclosed, fans and controls | | | |
| Chemicals | kg/t | | Not disclosed | | | |
| Propane | MWh/t | 1.73 | | | | |
| Output | | | Specify and indicate utilisation, subsequent treatment | | | |
| Cables | % | 0 | Already removed before pyrolysis | | | |



| Frame | % | 0 | Already removed before pyrolysis | | |
|--|-------|-------|--|--|--|
| Junction boxes | % | 0 | Already removed before pyrolysis | | |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0 | | | |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 0.87 | Copper ribbon, send to next refiner if needed | | |
| Polymers/foils | % | 0 | Polymers are pyrolyzed | | |
| Glass cullet | % | 71.42 | | | |
| Mixture of glass cullet, foil and metals | % | | | | |
| Cell fragments | % | 3.4 | Silicon cell with aluminum paste and silver finger | | |
| Dust | % | 0 | In sludge cake | | |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | % | 2 | 2wt% of PV input end up as sludge cake | | |
| | t/t | 1.47 | H2O | | |
| | t/t | 0.26 | CO2 | | |
| Step3 - Chemical treatmer | nt | | | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 102 | Cell fragments | | |
| Components/fuels | | | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 27.6 | | | |
| Chemicals | kg/t | | Not disclosed | | |
| Water | m³/t | | Not disclosed | | |
| Output | | | Specify and indicate utilisation, subsequent treatment | | |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 2.78 | Silicon | | |
| | % | 0.07 | Silver | | |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | kg/t | 19.5 | Mineral waste | | |

2.6 Envie 2E Aquitane, Saint-Loubès, France and ROSI SAS, Grenoble, France, Combined Processes

Envie 2E Aquitane started a new PV module recycling line in Saint-Loubès, France, in October 2022 serving the collection system operated by Soren. They accept any non-bent crystalline silicon PV module with a single and intact glass pane. Within Soren's take-back system the modules are presorted according to these criteria. Double glass modules, highly bent modules, and modules with broken glass are collected separately and transported to other recyclers, such as ROSI. Additionally, Envie partially processes deformed modules or ones with broken glass and removes the junction boxes and frames.²⁵ The residual output is collected separately and processed elsewhere. These modules, therefore, are not included in the combined process LCI data presented in this section. ROSI is capable of processing heavily damaged modules using the full recycling process described in Section 2.5.

Envie treats up to 3 000 tons per year of c-Si PV modules with NPC equipment from Japan. Details of the NPC process and the equipment are presented in a recent IEA-PVPS Task 12 report.⁹ In Envie's process, the modules pass an incoming inspection and sortation (modules in good condition are further tested for potential reuse, e.g., electroluminescence, sun

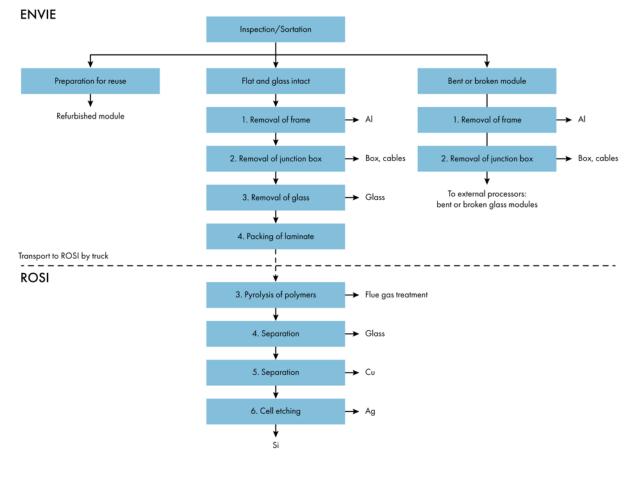
²⁵ Information provided by ROSI



simulator current-voltage curves, high potential isolation²⁶). Envie's target is to prepare around 5% of the input modules for reuse.²⁷ Modules accepted for reuse form the first sortation class shown in Figure 12.

The second sortation class is comprised of modules with intact glass and no more than moderate deformation. These modules are treated with the NPC process by removal of junction boxes, cables, and frames. The front glass is cut-off by applying the hot blade technology. The polymer part of the module laminate with copper interconnectors and solar cells is packed and transferred to ROSI by truck (representing about 15% of the overall input module weight, according to ROSI²⁷). The other outputs are further treated by glass, electronic scrap, and metal recyclers. The combination of Envie's and ROSI's treatment steps is shown in Figure 12. The laminates from Envie enter ROSI's process in ROSI's Step 3, "Pyrolysis of polymers" (shown in Figure 11 in Section 2.5).

The third sortation class is comprised of modules with broken glass and severe deformation. The junction box and the frames may be removed by Envie, and the rest is processed by third parties that were not disclosed.



²⁶ Wet leakage testing, such as what is performed on representative samples during certification tests, is not performed on all modules due to the high cost. Instead, high voltage isolation testing is performed to confirm that the module has sufficient insulation resistance at the rated operating voltage.

²⁷ According to information provided by Soren, France



Figure 12: Envie's process (with NPC technology) and subsequent treatment at ROSI (Section 2.5); the LCI data of NPC⁹ and steps 3–5 of ROSI's process are included in the LCI model

Envie did not participate in the survey, therefore the LCI results are modelled with data obtained from press releases^{28,29} and the LCI report about NPC technology.⁹ It is assumed that Envie's processes are carried out like the ones described in the NPC report.

The polymer/foil output fraction is estimated to be 15% of the input module weight. This material is packed, e.g., on pallets, and transported to ROSI for further treatment. The transport distance is 688 km. An average diesel consumption of 35 litres per 100 km for trucks carrying a 25-ton load is assumed, which is equivalent to 1.4 litres diesel per ton of laminate per 100 km.

The material mass allocation table in the NPC report is modified in this report to be consistent with the data reported by ROSI. The results are shown in Table 8.

| | | Service | Glass | Aluminum | Copper | Laminate | Sum |
|--|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Current study | Envie & ROSI Output (2.5) (1t module input) | 1 | 0.7147 | 0.0779 | 0.0085 | 0.15 | |
| LCI values of NPC study ⁹ | NPC Table 3.1 | 1 | 0.692 | 0.146 | 0.009 | 0.14 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Infra- structure | Table 3.5 for 1kg output | 8.54E-01 | 8.54E-03 | 8.54E-01 | 1.20E+00 | 3.42E-02 | |
| Envie | Table 3.1 for 1 kg module | 8.54E-01 | 6.10E-03 | 6.65E-02 | 1.02E-02 | 5.13E-03 | 9.42E-01 |
| Electricity | NPC Table 3.5 for 1kg output | 2.99E-02 | 2.99E-04 | 2.99E-02 | 4.19E-02 | 1.20E-03 | |
| Envie | Table 3.1 for 1 kg module | 2.99E-02 | 2.14E-04 | 2.33E-03 | 3.56E-04 | 1.80E-04 | 3.30E-02 |
| Chromium steel 18/8 | Table 3.5 for 1kg output | 6.92E-05 | 6.92E-07 | 6.92E-05 | 9.60E-05 | 2.77E-06 | |
| Envie | Table 3.1 for 1 kg module | 0.00E+00 | 4.95E-07 | 5.39E-06 | 8.16E-07 | 4.16E-07 | 7.12E-06 |
| Waste | Table 3.5 for 1kg output | 1.36E-02 | 1.36E-04 | 1.36E-02 | 1.91E-02 | 5.45E-04 | |
| Envie | Table 3.1 for 1 kg module | 1.36E-02 | 9.72E-05 | 1.06E-03 | 1.62E-04 | 8.18E-05 | 1.50E-02 |
| Transport average | Table 3.5 for 1kg output | 8.54E-01 | 8.54E-03 | 8.54E-01 | 1.20E+00 | 3.42E-02 | |
| Envie | Table 3.1 for 1 kg module | 8.54E-01 | 6.10E-03 | 6.65E-02 | 1.02E-02 | 5.13E-03 | 9.42E-01 |

Table 8: Allocation table for input modules according to NPC report⁹ (referred to as Table 3.1. and 3.5) and "Envie" data used in the combined Envie & ROSI process)

²⁹ <u>https://rreuse.org/unique-site-for-the-re-use-of-solar-panels-launched-in-gironde-by-envie-and-soren/</u>

²⁸ <u>https://www.envie.org/magasin-reseau-envie/envie-aquitaine-2e-saint-loubes-1/</u>



The LCI data Table 9 for Envie's process steps are based on the NPC LCI data, and the subsequent treatments at ROSI are listed in Table 10. Similar to ROSI's LCI data in Table 7, the reported outputs in Table 10 are typical compositions, and some values may not agree.

Table 9: Modelled Envie LCI data with functional unit of 1 t of module input and data taken from the recent IEA PVPS Task 12 report⁹

| Company | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--|---|--|--|--|
| Name | Envie 2 | Envie 2E Aquitaine, Saint-Loubès, France | | | | |
| Time period | | 2022/2023 - Start Oct 2022 | | | | |
| Geography | France | | | | | |
| Technology | | | | | | |
| Representativeness | Process | s by NPC, Japan | | | | |
| Date | 08/27/2 | | | | | |
| Collection method | | | and press releases and IEA-PVPS Task12 | | | |
| Comment | | Electricity mix (please | | | | |
| | | | , | | | |
| Plant | Unit | Amount | Comment/Reference | | | |
| Capacity | t/yr | 4 000 | Input: full module with Al frame and junction box (JB) | | | |
| Type of plant | | | | | | |
| Location | | Saint-Loubès, FR | | | | |
| Module type processed | | crystalline silicon | | | | |
| Time period | | 2022/2023 | | | | |
| Step 1 Test for reuse | | | | | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 3 000 | | | | |
| For reuse | t/yr | 150 | Currently 5% target | | | |
| Sortation for NPC treatment | | 2 850 | NPC treatment, assumption: 15% to Rosi after processing, as of NPC report | | | |
| Components/fuels | | | <u>, </u> | | | |
| Water | m³ | | Not disclosed | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | | Not disclosed | | | |
| Output | <u> </u> | | | | | |
| Module for NPC process | % | 95 | Bend or broken glass share not disclosed and not included | | | |
| Step 2 - Removal of cable, jui | nction bo | x and frame | | | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 2 850 | Full module with AI frame and junction box | | | |
| Components/fuels | <u> </u> | | | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 2.32921 | Frame | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 0.35615 | J-box, cables | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 21.54594 | Glass | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 0.18 | Laminate with interconnectors and cells | | | |
| Consumables (18/8 steel) | t | 5.39E-06 | Frame | | | |
| Consumables (18/8 steel) | t | 8.24E-07 | J-box, cables | | | |
| Consumables (18/8 steel) | t | 4.99E-07 | Glass | | | |
| Consumables (18/8 steel) | t | 4.16E-07 | Laminate with interconnectors and cells | | | |
| Waste | t | 1.06E-03 | Frame | | | |
| Waste | t | 1.62E-04 | J-box, cables | | | |
| Waste | t | 9.80E-05 | Glass | | | |
| Waste | t | 8.18E-05 | Laminate with interconnectors and cells | | | |
| Transport tkm 6.65E-03 | | 6.65E-03 | Frame | | | |
| Transport | tkm | 1.02E-03 | J-box, cables | | | |



| Transport | tkm | 6.15E-04 | Glass |
|----------------------------|--------|----------|--|
| Transport | tkm | 8.54E-01 | Laminate with interconnectors and cells |
| Output | | | |
| Cables | % | 0.85 | To cable recycler |
| Frame | % | 7.79 | To Al recycler |
| Junction boxes | % | 4.3 | To e-waste recycler |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0 | To metal recycler |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 0 | |
| Module without Al frame | % | 87.06 | |
| Step 3 - Hot Knife | | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 2481.21 | Full module with glass, without aluminium frame and junction box |
| Components/fuels | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 0 | Not disclosed, fans and controls |
| Output | | | |
| Cables | % | 0 | |
| Frame | % | 0 | |
| Junction boxes | % | 0 | |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0 | |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 0 | |
| Polymers/foils | % | 0 | |
| Glass cullet | % | 72.06 | To glass company after cleaning |
| Laminate: foil and metals | % | 15.0 | To Rosi |
| Laminate | t/yr | 427.50 | For transport to Rosi |
| Step 4 - Transport to Rosi | | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 427.5 | Laminate |
| Transport distance | | 688 | km |
| Components/fuels | | | |
| Diesel | I | 4 118 | 1.4 I per ton load and 100 km, 25 t truck, 10.4 kWh/I |
| Diesel | kWh | 42 824 | |
| Pallets | pieces | 855 | Estimated: about 0.5 tons/pallet |
| Stretch foil | | | Not disclosed |
| Tension strip | | | Not disclosed |

Table 10: Modelled ROSI data (Section 2.5) with laminate input in the pyrolysis (Step 3) after pretreatment at Envie

| Company | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| Name | ROSI SAS | Grenoble, France | | | |
| Time period | 2022/2023 | | | | |
| Geography | France | | | | |
| Technology | | | | | |
| Representativeness | Individual r | Individual real processes in discrete batches | | | |
| Date | 08/11/2023 | 08/11/2023, With IEA NPC and Envie data of 30.07.2023 | | | |
| Collection method | Data from recycler and Publications | | | | |
| Comment | French Electricity mix (please modify if needed) | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Plant | Unit | Amount | Comment/Reference | | |
| Capacity | t/yr | 428 | Input: laminate without frame, JB and glass, equivalent to 2850 t/yr of full modules | | |
| Type of plant | | | | | |
| Location | Saint-Honoré, FR | | | | |



| Module type processed | | crystalline silicon, laminates w/o glass | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Time period | | March 2023 | Operation from Q1 2023 on |
| Step 1 - Pyrolysis | | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 428 | Input: laminates without glass, equivalent to 2850 t/y of full modules entering to NPC machine at Envie site |
| Components/fuels | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 0 | Not disclosed, fans and controls |
| Chemicals | kg/t | | Not disclosed |
| Propane | MWh/t full module treatment | 1.73 | Estimated value, still includes glass heating as in full process |
| Output | | | Specify and indicate utilisation, subsequent treatment |
| Cables | % | 0 | Already removed at Envie |
| Frame | % | 0 | Already removed at Envie |
| Junction boxes | % | 0 | Already removed at Envie |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0 | Already removed at Envie |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 0.85 | Copper ribbon, send to next refiner if needed |
| Polymers/foils | % | 0 | Polymers are pyrolyzed |
| Glass cullet | % | | Already removed at Envie |
| Mixture of glass cullet, foil and metals | % | | Not applicable |
| Cell fragments | % | 3.18 | Silicon cell with aluminium paste and silver finger |
| Dust | t/yr | | Not disclosed |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | t/yr | | Not disclosed |
| Step 2 - Chemical treatment | | | |
| Total input | t/yr | 90.63 | Cell fragments |
| Components/fuels | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t full module treatment | 27.6 | |
| Chemicals | kg/t | | Not disclosed |
| Water | m³/t | | Not disclosed |
| Output | | | |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 3.11 | Silicon |
| | % | 0.07 | Silver |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | kg/t | 19.5 | Mineral waste |
| Waste water | | | Not disclosed |

The process to produce the laminate fraction processed at Envie results in a fine-grained solar cell residue after pyrolysis at ROSI. The fine fragments are difficult to recycle and require modification of the mechanical separation and chemical recovery of silicon and silver, creating additional recycling costs with potential impact on yield and quality.

2.7 Tialpi S.r.l., Mottalciata, Italy

Tialpi is located in the Piedmont region of northern Italy. Its predecessor, FRELP, participated in the first IEA PVPS Task 12 LCI study in 2016-2017 (<u>https://www.frelp.info/</u>). Tialpi has built a pilot plant with a capacity of about 3 000 tons per year if operated continuously (three shifts/day) to recycle up to about 97% of the module mass, broken down as follows:



- 15% aluminum
- 60% high-quality glass, cullet size 2–10 mm
- 5% secondary-quality glass, cullet size 0.1-2 mm
- 10% plastics, including backsheet
- 7% silicon, copper, and silver (mixture to be separated in Steps 3 and 4 under development)

Tialpi first removes the frames, cables, and junction box. Then they use a blade to cut off the glass like NPC does, but they heat the full module via infrared lights to 140–212°F (60–100°C) while the blade stays about room temperature. The process can be used for single-pane modules with intact or broken glass with a throughput of 1 t/hr. After being cut, the glass is crushed and collected in two qualities, high-quality cullet (0.08–0.39 in. [2–10 mm]) and fines (<0.08 in. [<2 mm]) with higher impurity levels. Tialpi then treats the foils with liquid nitrogen before heating the materials and performing sieving and electrostatic separation to extract glass residues and copper. The company's targets describe the following phases:

- Phase 1: Recovery of aluminum; recovery of high-purity, low-iron glass
- Phase 2: Separation of silicon
- Phase 3 (under development): Acidic leaching to enhance silicon quality (99% purity)
- Phase 4 (under development): Electrolysis for copper and silver recovery

Tialpi expects a total energy consumption of 50–250 kWh per ton input of end-of-life modules. Figure 13 presents the process scheme including Steps 5 and 6 (representing Phases 3 and 4), which are still under development. The preliminary data are based on an interim solution, in which silicon and EVA are sent to an aluminum production facility as an additive, and the backsheet is blended with other plastic. In this case, the total energy consumption is about 136 kWh/t. Further refinement steps under development comprise removal of polymer residues by pyrolysis, electrostatic separation and etching of the solar cells with nitric acid to recover high-purity silicon and, finally, electrolysis to recover silver and copper. Since Phases 3 and 4 are still under development, the preliminary (research) life cycle inventory data for Steps 5 and 6 are not shown in this study but the process steps are indicated in Figure 13.



Tialpi S.r.l. – Mottalciata, Italy

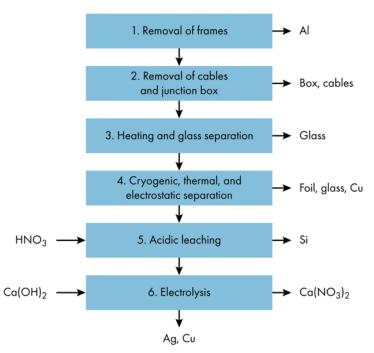


Figure 13: Tialpi process scheme for its 3 000 tons/year pilot plant; steps 1–4 are included in the LCI, and 5 and 6 are under development

Table 11 lists the LCI data for Tialpi's 1 000 ton/year (single-shift operation) pilot line and the former single-shift "FRELP by Sun" pilot line. The process includes the following three steps:

- 1. Box, cable, and frame removal
- 2. Glass removal
- 3. Separation of EVA, silicon, and metals from polymer backsheet

Table 11: LCI data for Tialpi's process, presenting results from FRELP by Sun project

| Company | TIALPI SRL, Mottalciata (Biella) - ITALY | | | | |
|--------------------|--|------------------|---|--|--|
| Name | LCI of PV I | module recycling | | | |
| Time period | Start in Ma | y 2022 | | | |
| Geography | Italy | | | | |
| Technology | Patent for | first phase FREL | P BY SUN process and for specific machine to detach glass | | |
| Representativeness | Individual r | eal processes in | continuous process | | |
| Date | 5/1/2022 | | | | |
| Collection method | Data from recycler | | | | |
| Comment | Italian elec | tricity mix | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Plant | Unit | Amount | Comment/reference | | |
| Capacity | t/yr each 1 000 Total capacity 3 000 tons/year shift | | | | |
| Type of plant | | | Automatic | | |



| Location | | | Mottalciata |
|--|-----------|-----------------|--|
| Module type processed | | Cryst. Silicon | Mono and polycristalline silicon modules |
| Time period | | 2021/22 | |
| Step 1 | According | g to FRELP BY S | SUN project |
| Total input | t/yr | 1 000 | Patented process as described project "FRELP BY SUN" |
| Components/fuels | 1 | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 136 | Electric energy coming from PV panels on the roof of the factory |
| CNG/LNG | kWh/t | 0 | |
| Diesel/oil consumption | I/t | 0 | |
| Output | | | |
| Cables | % | 1 | Copper recovery, external |
| Frame | % | 15 | Aluminium recovery, external |
| Junction boxes | % | 1 | Recovery of metals, external |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0 | |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 0 | |
| Polymers/foils | % | 14 | |
| Glass cullet | % | 65 | EoW for first quality glass |
| Mixture of glass cullet, foil and metals | % | 3 | Recycled by other company |
| Dust | % | 0 | |
| Other (wastes, emissions) | % | 1 | Waste disposal |
| Step2 | (155x155 | mm); cryogenic | cludes the following technologies: cut the single PV cell treatment of the cells in order to have a different thermic the wafer (silicon + EVA) from the backsheet (multilayer |
| Total input | t/yr | 500 | (From 3000 tons of panels) |
| | | | Single cells (wafer + backsheet) |
| Components/fuels | | | |
| Electricity consumption | kWh/t | 100 | |
| Nitrogen consumption | kg/kg | 0.5 | Kg of nitrogen for kg of cells |
| CNG/LNG | kWh/t | 0 | |
| Diesel/oil consumption | l/t | 0 | |
| Output | | | ized in the aluminium furnace as additive; multilayer pressed plastic compound mixed with other plastics |
| Cables | % | 0 | |
| Frame | % | 0 | |
| Junction boxes | % | 0 | |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0 | |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 55 | Silicon + EVA for aluminum furnace |
| Polymers/foils | % | 35 | Multilayer plastic as backsheet |
| Glass cullet | % | 0 | |
| Mixture of glass cullet, foil and metals | % | 5 | Waste from wafer detachment |



| Dust | | 0 | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| Other (wastes, emissions) | % | 5 | Powder from cutting cells |

2.8 Discussion of LCI Results

The LCI survey results mostly rely on input from companies that are scaling up new technologies that target value-preserving, high-quality, and high-yield recycling processes. Many data gaps still exist that could not be fully resolved by the data provided or information from the expert interviews.

Comparing the LCI data across the six respondents and the modelled Envie & ROSI combined process is challenging for several reasons:

- Process scale and throughput: The capacity of the processes varies from 1 000 t/yr to 50 000 t/yr. The amount of material processed annually varies from a test batch size of 7.5 t for Flaxres' pilot line to 41 921 t/yr for First Solar's commercial facilities.
- Variations in the type of modules processed at each facility result in differences in the metrics and values reported. Data for six of the seven facilities is for c-Si modules, however, c-Si module composition varies across different manufacturers, models, vintage, and so on. The seventh facility, First Solar, processes CdTe modules.
- Data for facilities under construction or in the ramp-up phase, such as for ROSI's pilot plant in Grenoble, are projections of expected values, whereas data for established facilities represent actual data. One of the LCI cases is a modelling result based on Envie's application of the commercial NPC process and preliminary data from ROSI.
- LCI data for some respondents is not based on their entire recycling process. For example, data for Tialpi only includes removal of the glass and separation of the backsheet, though they have investigated the full process sequence through to the electrolysis of silver from the chemical treatment of the solar cells.

Despite these challenges, the results provide useful insights for a variety of recycling approaches at different levels of development and the associated recovery rates and energy consumption. Table 12 (on the following page) contains a summary of LCI data. To facilitate comparison, a consistent system boundary is applied at the point in each process where a cell fraction (including metals) is separated from the glass and polymers. Subsequent steps to recover silicon and metals like silver, as well as purification steps are not included in the summary LCI table to facilitate comparison. The system boundary is slightly different for First Solar, as intermediate stage LCI data are not available prior to cadmium and tellurium recovery. The percentages for cables, frame, junction boxes, and non-ferrous metals in the lower portion of Table 12 differ between the respondents largely because of differences in the types of modules that were processed. There are significant differences in the glass recovered. Tialpi, Reiling, and Flaxres have a similar percentage of the glass output, and LuxChemtech and ROSI, with and without Envie, can achieve slightly higher glass outputs. First Solar modules are glass-glass construction, resulting in a higher percentage (87%) of glass output.



Table 12: Comparison of LCI results

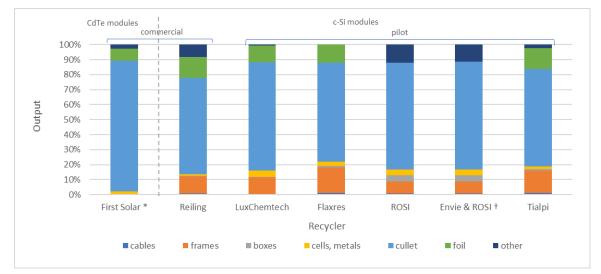
| Company | | First Solar* | Reiling | LuxChemtech | Flaxres | ROSI | Envie & ROSI | Tialpi |
|--|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Unit | Amount | Amount | Amount | Amount | Amount | Amount | Amount |
| Capacity | t/yr | 50 000 | 50 000 | 1 000 | 1 000 | 3 000 | 3 000 | 3 000 |
| Type of plant | | 4 recycling plants | | | | | 2 plants, subsequent treatment | Automatic |
| Location | | Multiple | Marienfeld, other, Germany | Tangermünde, Germany | Dresden, Germany | La Mure, France | Saint- Loubès & La Mure, France | Mottalciata (Biella), Italy |
| Module | | CdTe | c-Si | c-Si | c-Si | c-Si | c-Si | c-Si |
| Time period | | 2021 | 2022/2023 | 2022/2023 | 2022 | Nov-22 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 |
| Annual Through | put | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total input | t/yr | 41 921 | 1 000 | 1 000 | 7 | 3 000 | 2 850 | 1 000 |
| Process steps included | | 1–8, Figure 3 | 1–12, Figure 5 | 1–5, Figure 7 | 1–6, Figure 9 | 1–5, Figure 11 | NPC (see ⁹) & ROSI 3–5, Figure 12 | 1–4, Figure 13 |
| Components/fue | els | • | • | | • | • | • | • |
| Electricity | kWh/t | 265 | 60 | 130 | 50 | n.d. | 52 | 136 |
| CNG/LNG | kWh/t | Not applicable | 0.36 | No | n.d. | n.d. | n.d. | 0 |
| Diesel/oil consumption | l/t | Not applicable | 2.5 | No | n.d. | n.d. | 15 | C |
| Output | | | | | | | | |
| Cables | % | Not provided | 0.65 | 0.42 | 1 | 0.85 | 0.89 | 1 |
| Frame | % | Not provided | 11.5 | 11.1 | 17 | 7.79 | 7.79 | 15 |
| Junction boxes | % | Not provided | 0.35 | 0.39 | 1 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 1 |
| Ferrous metals | % | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Non-ferrous metals | % | 1.5 | 1.2 | 4.05 | 3 | 0.87 | 4.27 | 0 |
| Polymers/foils | % | 8 | 14 | 11.1 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Glass cullet | % | 87 | 64 | 72.5 | 66 | 71.4 | 72.1 | 65 |
| Mixture of glass cullet, foil and metals | % | | 6.6 | 0 | | 3.4 | 0 | 3 |
| Dust | % | | 1.5 | 0.44 | | 0 | 0 | C |
| | | | | 1 | 1 | | 0 | 1 |
| Other | % | 0.3 | | | | 2 | 2 | 1 |

* First Solar LCI data for CdTe module recycling includes process steps to recover cadmium and tellurium, whereas the system boundary for the other recyclers is at the point where a cell fraction (including metals) is separated from the glass and polymers.

Figure 14 presents a comparison of material recovery for the six respondents and the modelled Envie & ROSI combined processes based on the Table 12 data. Each process assumes a



significantly different input mix (module type). The y-axis is normalized to 100% for each recycler, such that the cumulative material fractions sum to the weight of one module or one ton of input. All of the respondents recover the frame (except First Solar because their modules do not have frames), cables, and junction boxes, but these contributions vary based on the type of module processed. The foils are more similar, but "other" materials (shown in dark blue in Figure 14), vary between respondents. For example, Reiling's mechanical crushing process produces a mixed fraction and large amounts of dust. ROSI's mechanical sortation also produces some dust. In Tialpi's mechanical processes, the glass is not fully removed from the polymer, producing some dust and mixed fractions. LuxChemtech removes the glass cullet and foil in a way that produces hardly any dust or foil. In ROSI's process, the foil fraction is fully pyrolyzed, which effectively increases the relative amounts of the other outputs. The pyrolyzed polymers are represented in the "other" fraction together with some dust in the graph. Lead is present in small concentrations in the solder alloy covering the Cu interconnectors. Therefore, some lead is collected in the Cu fraction and treated in Cu production. Trace amounts of lead also may be present as PbO glass frit on the solar cells. In some recycling processes lead may be precipitated from the waste chemical and water treatment streams for disposal, but this detail was not reported by the recyclers in this study.



* First Solar LCI data includes recovery of cadmium and tellurium, whereas the system boundary for the other recyclers is at the point where a cell fraction (including metals) is separated from the glass and polymers.

[†] Envie uses NPC's commercial process, but the combined Envie & ROSI process is considered a pilot.

Figure 14: Relative output composition for 7 recyclers using significantly different input mixes (module type). The system boundary is the point in the process where a cell fraction (including metals) is separated from the glass and polymers. Table 12 indicates the process steps included in the LCI comparison.



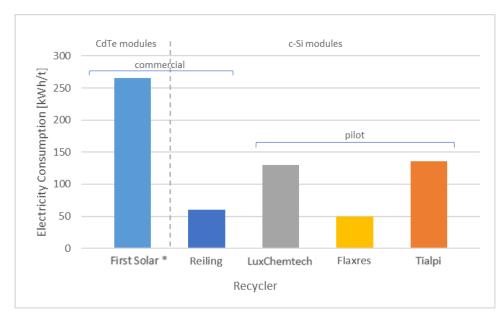
Table 13 summarizes available information about silicon and silver recovery for each of the respondents.

| Technology | Silicon | Silver | Comment |
|--------------|---------|--------|--|
| First Solar | N/A | N/A | |
| Reiling | | | Not currently able to recover |
| LuxChemtech | Yes | Yes | Nearly 100% silicon, (indium, tin), silver |
| Flaxres | | | Flaxres currently partners with third parties to recover silicon and silver and is actively developing this capability |
| ROSI | Yes | Yes | Recovered silicon has 5-6N purity |
| Envie & ROSI | Yes | Yes | Recovered silicon has 5-6N purity |
| Tialpi | Yes | Yes | Silicon and silver recovery process is under development |

Table 13: Recovery of silicon and silver

Figure 15 compares energy consumption for all respondents except ROSI and Envie & ROSI, because ROSI does not yet have data available. Processes vary in the number of steps, additional chemical treatments, and consumption of fossil fuel. Reiling and Flaxres are the most efficient in terms of energy consumption. The chemical and water-jet processes developed by LuxChemtech consume a moderate amount of electricity, but it is still more than twice the consumption of Reiling's facility. Tialpi results are in the same energy consumption range as the LuxChemtech process, if only Phases 1 and 2 of Tialpi's pilot process are included. Tialpi would likely have the highest energy consumption if all recycling steps under development in Phases 3 and 4—such as polymer decomposition; copper, silicon, and silver recycling; and silver winning by electrolysis—were included. First Solar's LCI data includes recovery of cadmium and tellurium, which explains the higher electricity consumption.





* First Solar LCI data includes recovery of cadmium and tellurium, whereas the system boundary for the other recyclers is at the point where a cell fraction (including metals) is separated from the glass and polymers.

Figure 15: Electricity consumption of the different recycling processes, except ROSI and Envie & ROSI. The system boundary is the point in the process where a cell fraction (including metals) is separated from the glass and polymers. Table 12 indicates the process steps included in the LCI comparison.

2.8.1 Quality of Recovered Materials

In addition to the recovery rate of a recycling process, the quality of the recovered materials is important to the economics of recycling. Higher purity materials can be sold into higher value markets, potentially offsetting the cost of recycling. While the recycler survey focused on LCI data, a few recyclers shared information about material quality. For example, First Solar relies on a third party to purify recovered Cd and Te for reuse in manufacturing new CdTe modules. In Reiling's past batch processing of modules, they had cross contamination issues, sometimes resulting in low purity output fractions and material downcycling. Information is not vet available for the dedicated PV facility that was commissioned in 2023. LuxChemtech stated that the water-jet process produces high-purity glass, which may stay intact. Similarly, Flaxres reported that the glass produced with the light pulse delamination process is very clean and can be recycled as flat glass. ROSI is the only recycler to quantify the quality of recovered material. The company reported that the recovered silicon has 5-6N purity. In the combined process with Envie, a fine-grained solar cell residue was observed after pyrolysis. The fine fragments potentially impact quality unless the mechanical separation and chemical recovery of silicon and silver can be modified. Tialpi currently is able to produce high-quality cullet (0.08-0.39 in. [2-10 mm]). The company is working on an acidic leaching process that would enhance silicon quality to 99% purity and electrolysis for copper and silver recovery. All recyclers have outlets for the material fractions, including downcycling in some cases.

Few PV recyclers publish material quality today. As the PV recycling industry matures, output stream quality may determine which recyclers are profitable. In the meantime, there is R&D value in collecting measurable data on quality, and this is a gap that could be addressed in future studies.



2.8.2 Technology Development Trends

For c-Si module technology, Reiling's improved, pure-mechanical recycling process represents a fully commercial, best available technology and sets a benchmark for maturity, costs, and low energy consumption. Though the glass yields were significantly improved compared to the reported yields in the 2016-2017 study, the output streams currently do not allow silicon and silver recovery because much of the silicon and silver is encapsulated in the polymers, which are incinerated for energetic use. The glass quality could be slightly improved, thus approaching the limits of what is feasible with pure mechanical separation technology.

All other processes presented in this study target value-preserving recycling through full recovery of aluminum frames, cables, junction boxes, interconnectors, silicon, and silver, combining high yields with high-quality output fractions. For example, the Envie & ROSI, ROSI, LuxChemtech, Tialpi and Flaxres processes separate a glass fraction that can offer the flat glass industry a future source of usable cullet as a secondary raw material, saving melting energy. All new processes show that it is feasible to achieve more ambitious PV module recycling targets than the prevailing laws in the EU, which currently require an 80% recycling rate. However, recovery of copper, silicon and silver in high quality and yield requires significant investments in dedicated PV module recycling technologies that combine thermal, physical, and chemical treatment of the modules.

As First Solar operates a proprietary recycling system for its own thin-film CdTe module technology, it is challenging to compare with the recycling processes for c-Si module technology. With over 90% material recovery, First Solar's recycling process is a good example of a value-preserving thin-film module recycling process. New emerging recycling technologies are expected to be applicable to thin-film modules of any kind, as well as c-Si modules, though some additional special treatment might need to be added.

With the mandatory PV recycling system in place, European companies have started to invest in modern recycling plants customized for PV modules. Other countries are expected to follow soon by setting up waste policies and appropriate legislative measures. This trend can be observed through the rapidly increasing number of worldwide treatment facilities and the large annual number of patents and publications found.

Compared with the results of the previous 2016-2017 IEA PVPS LCI study,¹ the recycling processes have been better optimised for yield, quality, and economics. Though the waste streams are still moderate, new companies entered the recycling market with pilot lines and processes dedicated to PV modules in the past six years, including innovative ideas like light pulse treatment, water-jet cleaning, pyrolysis, and chemical treatment and many combinations of these treatment methods. Mechanical treatment is still the dominant technology with significant improvement in separation technology optimizing the economics of the process.



3 PATENT AND LITERATURE SURVEY

This section of the report summarizes the patents and scientific literature on recycling PV or module components as of the end of August 2022. The project includes scientific literature as found in Scopus, Elsevier's abstract and citation database, covering publications about PV and PV material recycling from 1991 on.

3.1 Approach

The research team pursued four methods to identify relevant patents and literature on the topic of PV recycling. Specific information sources, search methods, and queries are described.

3.1.1 Global Patent Search Review via DEPATISnet

Query:

BI=(recycling) AND (BI=(photovoltaic (L) panel) OR BI=(photovoltaic (L) module) OR BI=(solar (L) panel) OR BI=(solar (L) module) date: 07/30/2022

The patent search covered worldwide patent applications from 1990 through the first half of 2022. The query returned 5 380 patents. These were filtered for duplicate numbers, refined, and further analyzed by applying patent class searches in combination with the initial results. The research team finally identified 353 patents that were used for further analyses. The patent list was consolidated with the findings of IEA PVPS Task 12 described below, for a total of 456 patent applications.

3.1.2 Global Patent Search Review by IEA PVPS Task 12, 2018³⁰

The team conducted the patent search using the online Worldwide Intellectual Property Service (WIPS). The date range used was January 6, 1976, through December 9, 2016. Countries covered: European patent (EP), Denmark (DE), France (FR), Great Britain (GB), United States (US), Canada (CN), Japan (JP), Korea (KR), and the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). The initial search in WIPS resulted in 6 465 patents. After screening, 178 effective patents directly related to PV recycling were identified. The analysis focused on targeted components, processing method, and recovered materials.

The results are attached in Appendix A, Table A2: PV Recycling Patents.

3.1.3 Literature Review of Commercial and Pilot PV Recycling Plant Suppliers of Dedicated Equipment via Scopus (Elsevier)

The team conducted the literature search using Scopus with the queries:

TITLE-ABS-KEY-AUTH(("PV" OR "photovoltaic") AND ("module" OR "panel") AND ("recycling" OR "recovery" OR "reclaim"))

and

TITLE-ABS-KEY-AUTH(("PV" OR "photovoltaic") AND ("module" OR "panel") AND ("recycling" OR "recovery" OR "reclaim")) AND (SUBJAREA(CENG OR CHEM OR COMP OR EART OR

³⁰ K. Komoto, J.-S. Lee, J. Zhang, D. Ravikumar, P. Sinha, A. Wade, and G. Heath, End-of-Life Management of Photovoltaic Panels: Trends in PV Module Recycling Technologies. IEA PVPS Task 12, International Energy Agency Power Systems Programme. Report IEA-PVPS T12-10:2018. 2018.



ENER OR ENGI OR ENVI OR MATE OR MATH OR PHYS)) OR SUBJAREA(BUSI OR DECI OR ECON OR SOCI) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"ENGI") OR LIMIT-TO SUBJAREA,"ENER" OR LIMIT-TO SUBJAREA,"ENVI" OR LIMIT-TO) () SUBJAREA,"MATE" SUBJAREA,"CENG" OR LIMIT-TO OR LIMIT-TO ())) OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"SOCI" LIMIT-TO SUBJAREA,"CHEM") OR SUBJAREA,"BUSI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"ECON")) AND (LIMIT-TO LANGUAGE,"English") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"German") OR LIMIT-TO LANGUAGE,"French") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"Italian"))

The query returned 1 077 hits, which were refined by removing all publications dealing with other topics, such as water purification, desalination, and so on. The results are attached in Appendix A, Table A3: PV Recycling Literature. The statistical evaluation was carried out with the full set of hits.

The query was supplemented with a Google literature search about PV recycling and a survey via ResearchGate. Links to YouTube videos about PV recycling processes were also added.

3.1.4 Literature Review of Commercial and Pilot PV Recycling Plant and Suppliers of Dedicated Equipment via SciFinder (CAS)

The team conducted a SciFinder search as a complementary survey with the same query as above. The team downloaded 500 results. New valid results were extracted and added to the table of Scopus literature attached in Appendix A, Table A3: PV Recycling Literature.

3.2 Patent Search Results

Most patents found target recycling processes for c-Si panels, cell metals, polymers, glass, or devices (Figure 16). A smaller number explicitly address recycling CdTe or CIGS and its components. Emerging cell technologies, such as perovskites, organic photovoltaic, or dye-sensitized cells, are not well represented yet (Table 14).

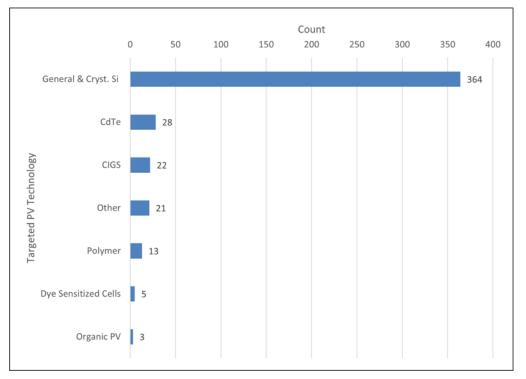


Figure 16: Number of recycling patent applications by PV technology



| Targeted PV Technology | Count | Share |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| General and c-Si | 364 | 79.8% |
| CdTe | 28 | 6.1% |
| CIGS | 22 | 4.8% |
| Other | 21 | 4.6% |
| Polymer | 13 | 2.9% |
| Dye-sensitized cells | 5 | 1.1% |
| Organic PV | 3 | 0.7% |

Table 14: Patent applications by targeted technology

Producers of silicon-based solar cells and modules or their business partners frequently also develop thin-film technologies, e.g., modules using perovskite-silicon tandem solar cells. A number of PV manufacturers, equipment suppliers, polymer or glass companies, and research institutions developing c-Si technologies are actively involved in the development of recycling solutions for modules and their components.

Most patents aim at recovering valuable or toxic materials and semiconductor materials, some focus on glass, and some focus on polymers. A large variety of patented techniques (Table 15 and Table 16) combine several technical approaches, such as the following:

- Mechanical treatments, such as cutting, shredding, grinding, blasting, and so on.
- Thermal measures, such as pyrolysis, incineration, and hydrothermal or polymer melting.
- Chemical treatment with solvents, such as water vapor, supercritical CO₂, ionic liquids, salt melts, limonene, microemulsions, and so on.
- Treatments complemented by reactive chemicals to remove layers and recover materials of interest, such as alkaline (NaOH, KOH with or without alcohol), HNO₃, H₂SO₄/H₂O₂, methane sulfonic acid, and so on.
- Other: electrodynamic fragmentation, laser, or flash lamp annealing.

Table 15: Treatment methods applied to c-Si modules

| Treatment | Share of Patents |
|-------------|------------------|
| Mechanical | 40% |
| Thermal | 15% |
| Chemical | 19% |
| Combination | 25% |

Table 16: Treatment methods applied to thin-film compound modules

| Treatment | Share of Patents | | | |
|------------|------------------|--|--|--|
| Mechanical | 7% | | | |
| Thermal | 9% | | | |



| Chemical | 7% |
|-----------------|-----|
| Electrochemical | 4% |
| Optical | 9% |
| Combination | 64% |

According to the IEA survey, 128 patents addressed c-Si modules, with 45% of them targeting module separation. Many patents focused on recovering module components like frames, junction boxes or intact glass panes rather than recovering materials like cullet, polymers, copper, silicon, and silver (Table 15).

The results for thin-film compounds predominantly aimed at high-value recovery of materials, including several treatment steps from module separation to material recovery. Table 16 lists the main treatment methods applied.

For both technologies, the first treatment steps remove frames and terminal boxes. The methods listed in Table 15 and Table 16 are applied accordingly in subsequent process steps.

The number of publications and patent applications clearly indicates that interest has increased with the annual growth of the global PV market and the introduction of PV waste policies in several regions (Figure 17). Increasing production, the introduction of waste policies (in EU in 2012), the publication of the first studies on expected PV module waste streams (e.g., by IEA-PVPS Task12 and IRENA in 2016), potential material supply shortages, and eco-friendly design rules initiated a worldwide discussion on end-of-life waste treatment and valuable-material recovery. Many universities and institutes started research on module recycling and recycling equipment designs partly in cooperation with module manufacturers. The share of patent applicants is therefore dominated by those organizations; recyclers and equipment manufacturers rarely filed for patents previously.



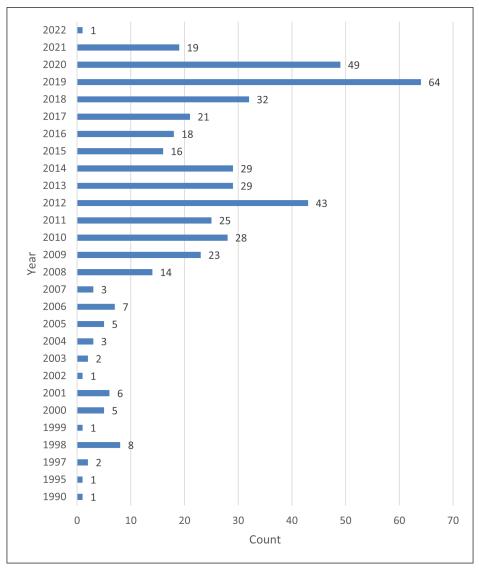


Figure 17: Annual distribution of recycling patent applications

Recyclers' interest is still moderate for the small waste streams reported today, hardly justifying a significant investment into dedicated treatment facilities.

Figure 18 shows the number of PV recycling patents per country. The graph may have some redundancy because some entities have applied for the same patents in several countries. In Europe, national patents frequently are discontinued once a European Patent Office (EPO) application has been awarded. For this reason, applications originating in individual EU member states can be added to the number of European patents when considering broader economic regions. In this case, the top-five regions are People's Republic of China, the United States, Korea, Japan, and EU.



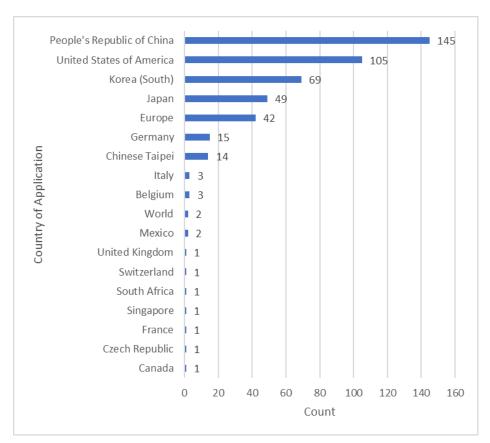


Figure 18: Geographical distribution of recycling patent applications

The patent search (Figure 19) revealed that organizations located in People's Republic of China own the most patents, followed by Japan, Korea, the United States, and Germany.

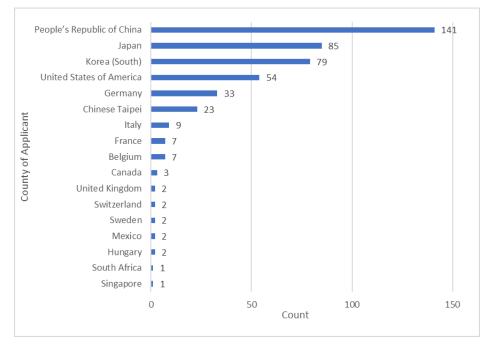


Figure 19: Geographical distribution of recycling patent owners



The results shown in Figure 19 clearly indicate that the patents are filed in major production locations and main installation markets. The owners are predominantly PV producers or suppliers and research institutions, but rarely professional waste treatment companies.

Figure 20 presents the number of patent applications by organization. Top ranking is the Korea Institute of Energy Research, which closely collaborates with companies such as Samsung and LG. Second ranking is Suzhou Goldway Technologies Co Ltd, known for developing PV-deframing equipment. Third on the list is First Solar, with its proprietary recycling technology for CdTe modules. Next is Yingli, an integrated PV manufacturer. The next three companies are in Japan: Tattori Resource Recycling manufactures the foam glass "Alpha," NPC manufactures PV production and recycling equipment, and Daikin Industries produces heat pumps, air conditioning systems, and fluorochemicals (the latter relevant for PV).

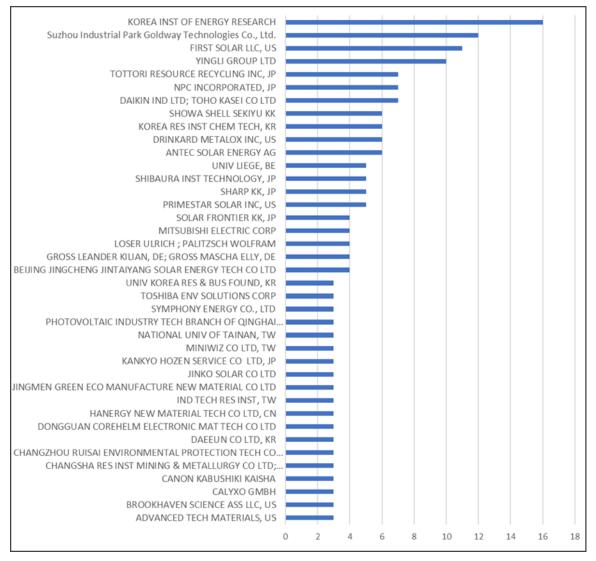


Figure 20: Number of patent applications by organizations

A reason that few patents are filed by professional waste treatment companies is that the current waste stream isn't sizable enough to justify significant investments in dedicated recycling technologies. Additionally, appropriate legal frameworks are lacking and are currently insufficient to encourage high-value recycling.



3.3 Literature Search Results

The research team conducted the literature search using Scopus to perform the following queries:

TITLE-ABS-KEY-AUTH(("PV" OR "photovoltaic") AND ("module" OR "panel") AND ("recycling" OR "recovery" OR "reclaim"))

The search resulted in more than 10 000 hits. Therefore, the query was modified as follows:

TITLE-ABS-KEY-AUTH(("PV" OR "photovoltaic") AND ("module" OR "panel") AND ("recycling" OR "recovery" OR "reclaim")) AND (SUBJAREA(CENG OR CHEM OR COMP OR EART OR ENER OR ENGI OR ENVI OR MATE OR MATH OR PHYS)) OR SUBJAREA(BUSI OR DECI OR ECON OR SOCI) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"ENGI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"ENER") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"ENVI" OR LIMIT-TO) SUBJAREA,"MATE") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"CENG") OR LIMIT-TO SUBJAREA,"CHEM") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO SUBJAREA,"BUSI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"ECON")) AND (LIMIT-TO LANGUAGE,"English") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"German") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"French") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"Italian"))

The query returned 1 077 documents on all aspects of recycling, including technology development, policy analysis, technoeconomic analysis, and life cycle assessment. After screening query results from all sources, 569 results relevant to PV recycling remained. These results are reasonably consistent with other recent literature searches. For example, a recent critical review paper that addressed circular economies for solar PV modules identified 1 349 journal publications and 408 government reports, but only 181 passed all screening stages.³¹ That study did not limit search results by geography but did exclude results written in languages other than English. Examples of differences between literature searches may include use of different databases and search terms and application of filters to screen for language and subject area. The date the search is performed is also a factor in the quantity of search results, given the growing number of publications on this topic. Figure 21 shows the analysis.

³¹ Heath, Garvin A., Dwarakanath Ravikumar, Brianna Hansen, and Elaine Kupets. "A Critical Review of the Circular Economy for Lithium-Ion Batteries and Photovoltaic Modules – Status, Challenges, and Opportunities." Journal of the Air & Waste Management Association 72, no. 6 (June 3, 2022): 478–539. https://doi.org/10.1080/10962247.2022.2068878.



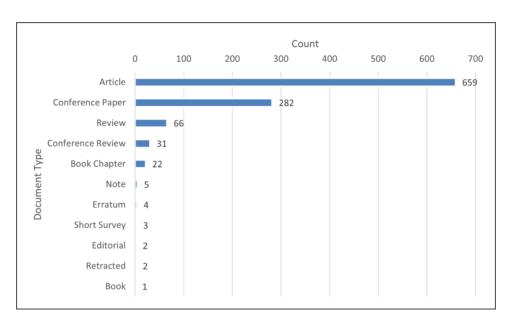


Figure 21: Scopus literature search results by document type

A ranking of information sources by number of results returned is led by IEEE conference proceedings, Solar Energy Materials and Solar Cells, and Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews. Notably, the query used in the Scopus and SciFinder literature searches did not identify the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference (EU PVSEC) in the results. Figure 22 shows other leading sources.

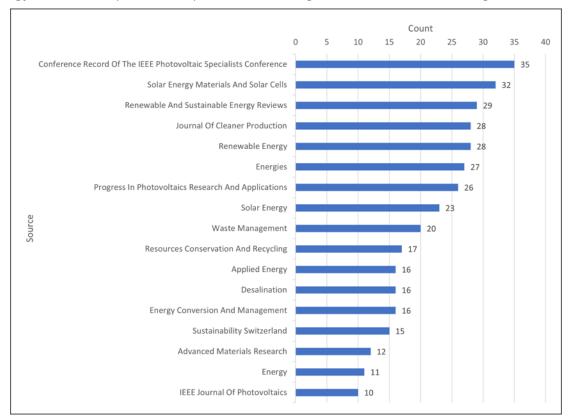


Figure 22: List of top literature sources with at least 10 publications in total (Note: The Scopus and SciFinder result lists did not identify ASEAN or EU PVSEC.)



Figure 23 shows the number of annual publications from 1981 to 2022. The number of publications has ascended steeply since 2010. This correlates with the number of newly installed PV capacities and the WEEE discussions and implementation in Europe. Many countries are considering PV waste policies, and research interest is high.

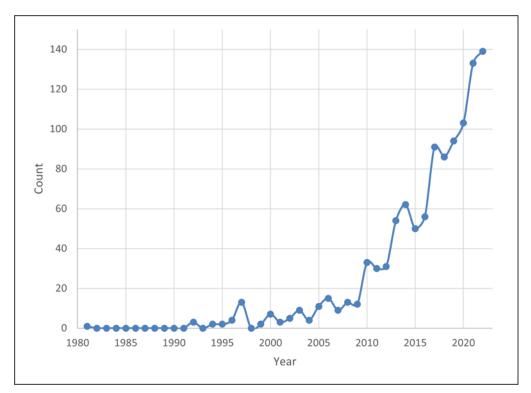


Figure 23: Number of annual publications about PV recycling



Figure 24 presents the authors with the most publications (at least five) found in the Scopus search. Most of the authors' affiliations are research institutes and universities. Of the top 25 publishing organizations, only one was a company—First Solar, United States (Figure 25). The author list of publications selected for download evidences that institutes and universities frequently cooperate with PV manufacturing companies, equipment manufacturers, and recycling companies.

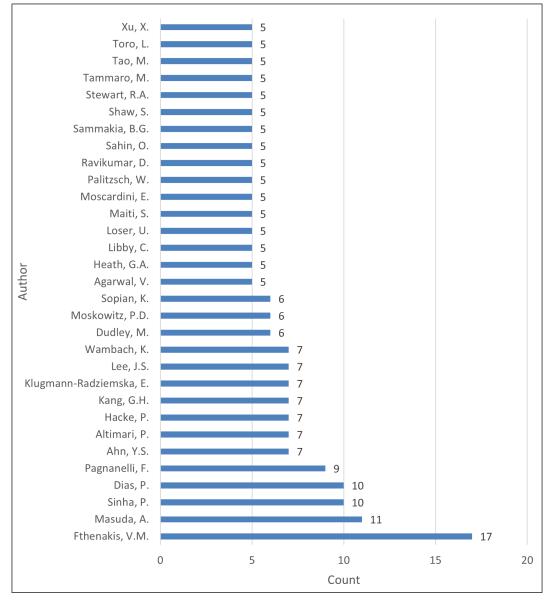


Figure 24: Authors with most publications (at least five) about PV recycling



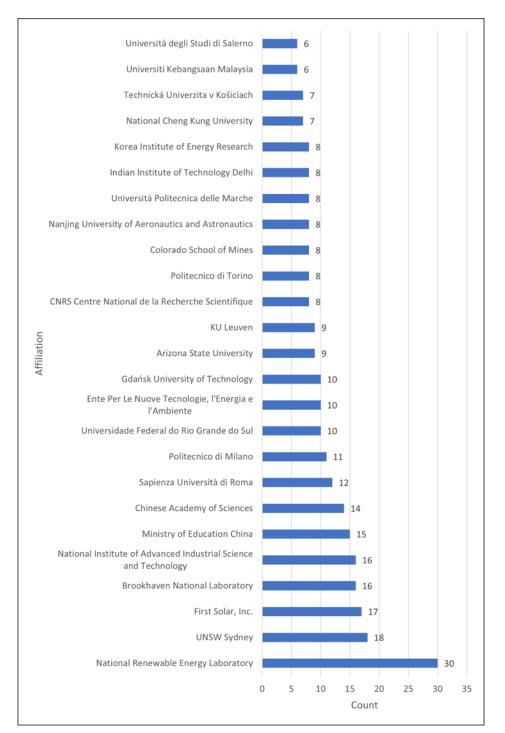


Figure 25: International organizations with most publications (more than five)

The authors with the most publications were from the United States, followed by Italy and the country with the most publications, People's Republic of China. The list of top countries and economies does not correlate with the major PV production regions or with the major markets. PV recycling has obviously been identified as a global and important topic. This can be confirmed by publications such as those in Table 17, found using Scopus (see also Appendix A, Table A3: PV Recycling Literature). The selection of publications gives an overview of the different demands and conditions in various industrialized, emerging, and developing countries and economies. The PV waste topic is discussed not only in the leading production countries



and markets (e.g., EU, United States, People's Republic of China, Japan, South Korea, Australia) but also in countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, and Mexico. Further activities are found, for example, in India, Chile, and Vietnam. This breadth of interest can also be seen in the number of publications from a country, region, or economy, as Figure 26 presents.

Table 17: List of publications targeting regional PV waste treatment systems and policies

| Author | | Title | Year | Scopus Code |
|---|----|--|------|--------------------|
| Liu C., et al. | CN | Employing benefit-sharing to motivate stakeholders' efficient investment in waste photovoltaic module recycling | 2022 | 2-s2.0-85123929279 |
| Zhang L., Chang S., Wang Q., Zhou D. | CN | Is subsidy needed for waste PV modules recycling in China? A system dynamics simulation | 2022 | 2-s2.0-85125119028 |
| Zhang L., Chang S., Wang Q., Zhou D. | CN | Projection of Waste Photovoltaic Modules in China Considering Multiple Scenarios | 2022 | 2-s2.0-85134795621 |
| Heath G.A., et al. | US | A critical review of the circular economy for lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic modules–status, challenges, and opportunities | 2022 | 2-s2.0-85131528047 |
| Li Y., et al. | CN | Conception and policy implications of photovoltaic modules end-of-life management in China | 2021 | 2-s2.0-85088008346 |
| Powicki C., Libby C., Shaw S. | US | Review of Decommissioning Plans for Large-Scale Solar Plants | 2021 | 2-s2.0-85115942059 |
| Murakami S., et al. | JP | Potential impact of consumer intention on generation of waste photovoltaic panels: A case study for Tokyo | 2021 | 2-s2.0-85115718963 |
| Ogbonnaya C., Turan A., Abeykoon C. | GB | Novel thermodynamic efficiency indices for choosing an optimal location for large-scale photovoltaic power generation | 2020 | 2-s2.0-85075854073 |
| Xi ZZ., Song ZC., Guo YG., Wu X. | CN | Progress and prospects of recovery of spent photovoltaic module | 2020 | 2-s2.0-85088092172 |
| Liu C., Zhang Q., Wang H. | CN | Cost-benefit analysis of waste photovoltaic module recycling in China | 2020 | 2-s2.0-85091328816 |
| Salim H.K et al. | AU | Systems approach to end-of-life management of residential photovoltaic panels and battery energy storage system in Australia | 2020 | 2-s2.0-85088989342 |
| Li Y., et al. | CN | Study on the optimal deployment for Photovoltaic components recycle in China | 2019 | 2-s2.0-85063911737 |
| Nair S., et al. | IN | 'Roshini'-Developing a DIY Rural Solar Light: Utilizing Products at End-of-Life (EoL) Stage | 2019 | 2-s2.0-85061792648 |
| Mahmoudi S., Huda N., Behnia M. | AU | Photovoltaic waste assessment: Forecasting and screening of emerging waste in Australia | 2019 | 2-s2.0-85064315779 |
| Kim H., Park H. | ко | PV waste management at the crossroads of circular economy and energy transition: The case of South Korea | 2018 | 2-s2.0-85054519504 |
| Domínguez A., Geyer R. | US | Photovoltaic waste assessment in Mexico | 2017 | 2-s2.0-85028420985 |
| Chenvidhya D., et al. | тн | PV industry growth and module reliability in Thailand | 2015 | 2-s2.0-84951188892 |
| Lin KL., et al. | тw | Recycling solar panel waste glass sintered as glass-ceramics | 2012 | 2-s2.0-84867746575 |



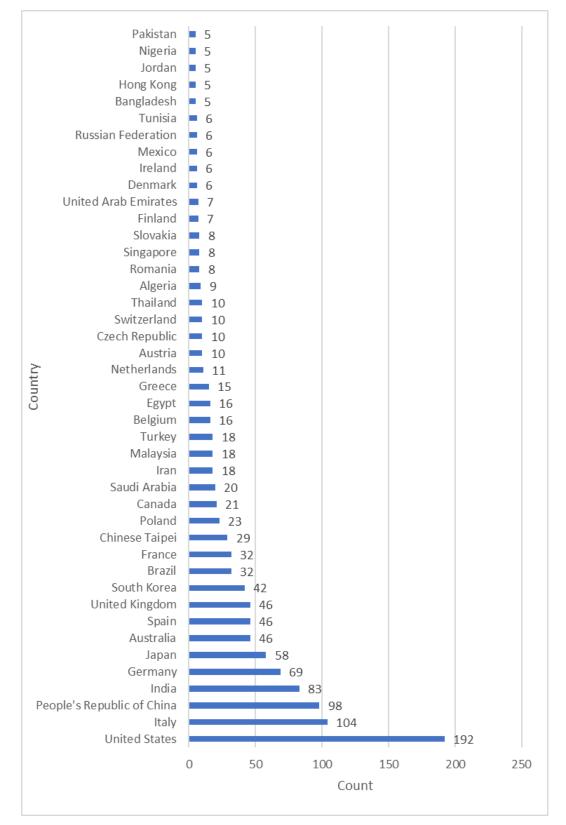


Figure 26: Countries, regions, and economies with the most publications (at least 10 publications)



Similar to what was observed in the patent space, most publications have been submitted by researchers from institutes and research organizations; waste treatment companies are rarely involved. Details about current commercial recycling processes can rarely be found, except from First Solar. Some recyclers provide general descriptions on their web pages, some with links to YouTube videos. "Appendix C: Example Recycling Videos," lists examples.



4 CONCLUSIONS

This report identifies worldwide research on PV recycling with a broad approach to separating components and recovering valuable materials or purifying the products. These activities include developing tools for handling and automatically removing frames and junction boxes and separating glass from polymers. This is accomplished predominantly through mechanical treatments and modern recycling process technologies that combine several types of crushers and mills, sieves, vibrating tables, aeraulic sortation, sensor-based sortation, eddy current separators, optical sortation, X-ray sortation, and more. Mechanical treatment remains the most common approach because existing shredding facilities can be easily adapted to recycle PV modules. However, the outputs of mechanical processing are usually not very pure and better yields of high-quality materials or critical raw materials, especially for silicon and silver, should be targeted for better economic and environmental performance. In advanced recycling processes customized for PV modules, the mechanical steps are combined with various pyrometallurgical or chemical treatments to extract and recycle semiconductors and metals. New developments include electrodynamic fragmentation, laser or light-pulse annealing, and green chemistry approaches. Improving the quality of recovered materials offers upcycling opportunities that can offset the cost of recycling and advance PV circularity.

Most processes are still under development or in a pilot stage, except for several mechanical process technologies for c-Si modules and First Solar's recycling plants in the United States, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Germany for CdTe modules.

Commercial processes today rely predominantly on mechanical treatment, which has a wide quality range in execution. It spans from frame and cable removal with landfill disposal of the module laminate to sophisticated mechanical treatment of the entire module. Full mechanical treatment is carried out with process technologies for metal, e-waste, or laminated-glass separation. Existing lines' free capacities are used to treat PV panels collected in batches. Since it is not optimized for PV modules, there is frequently some downgrading of recovered material quality.

An increase in the waste stream can be observed in regions such as People's Republic of China, Europe, the United States, India, and others. First commercial plants for PV module recycling are planned or under construction. These plants cover all technical combinations, including thermal, mechanical, and chemical treatments to separate the materials in high quality and yields to support the growing supply of end-of-life modules. Many new technologies in pilot stage offer excellent recycling quality (with both: high yields and purity of the fraction) and economic value opportunities. Recyclers and equipment manufacturers in Japan, People's Republic of China, Europe, and the United States have started to provide solutions for waste PV modules, including companies such as Reiling, ROSI, NPC, La Mia Energia, ImpulsTec, LuxChemtech, and many others.

Trends in global publications, patents, and research activities suggest a steep increase in PV recycling interest. While most work is focused on recycling current PV technologies, innovative recycling approaches are also under development for next-generation PV. Limited information about capacity, technologies, and output results are available for most commercial recycling facilities, as well as those under development. In this study, five European recyclers and First Solar, a US company with four global locations, shared LCI data for processes ranging from 1 000 t/yr (LuxChemtech) to 50 000 t/yr (Reiling). These six companies are scaling up innovative technologies to improve the economic value of recycling through improvements in yield and quality.



APPENDIX A: PV RECYCLING RESULTS

Full results of the recycler survey and patent and literature search are presented. Please see Table A-1 for a list of global PV recyclers, Table A-2 for a list of PV recycling patents, and Table A-3 for results of the PV recycling literature review.

| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|---|-----------------------------|----------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Etavolt Pte. Ltd. | Singapore | 637141 | Singapore | 1 Cleantech Loop #06-04 Cleantech One | Home (etavolt.com) |
| Henan Minguan Trade UK Ltd alias Panoramic Resources | United Kingdom | SE7 7QU | London | 260 Woolwich Road | www.solar2recycle.com |
| 3R Recycling | United States of America | | | | http://3r-recycling-cincinnati.com/ |
| Aerisoul Metal & Energy Corp. s.r.o., AMEC | Slovakia | 936 01 | Šahy | Lesná 1863 | https://aerisoul.com/solar-panel-recycling/ |
| Aurinka PV | Spain | | | | |
| Buhck/Take-e-way | Germany | | Hamburg | | |
| Canadian Solar Inc. | China | | | | |
| Cascade Eco Minerals LLC | United States of America | MO 64804 | Joplin | 2401 E 32nd St. Ste. 10 PMB 344 | Solar Panel Recycling Cascade Eco Minerals |
| Chungbuk Technopark | Korea (South) | | Chungbuk | | |
| Cleanlites Recycling | United States of America | | Mason, Michigan | PO Box 212 | https://cleanlites.com/ |
| Closed Loop Refining And Recovery, Inc. | United States of America | | Phoenix | | http://www.clrrusa.com |
| cmc Recycling | United States of America | Tx 75039 | Irving | 6565 N. MacArthur Blvd., suite 800 | Home Commercial Metals Company (cmcrecycling.com) |
| COMET | Belgium | | Chatelet & Obourg (Mons) | Rivage de Boubier 25 | https://www.cometgroup.be |
| Cyber Recycling & Disposal Pty Ltd | Australia | | Perth | 32 Bannick Ct, Canning Vale WA 6155, | Commercial Solar Panel Recycling in Perth Solar Panel Disposal in Adelaide Solar Panel Recycling in Darwin (cyberrecycling.com.au) |



| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Darfon | Tunisia | | | | |
| Dongyuan New Energy Technology | Viet Nam | | | | |
| DR Deutsche Recycling Service GmbH | Germany | 50968 | Köln | Bonner Straße 484 – 486 | www.deutsche-recycling.de |
| Dynamic Lifecycle Innovation, Wisconsin Headquarters: | United States of America | WI 54650 | Onalaska | N5549 County Rd Z | Dynamic Lifecycle Innovations Materials Lifecycle Solutions (thinkdynamic.com) |
| Echo Environmental, LLC | United States of America | TX 75006 | Carollton (Dallas) | 2101 W Belt Line Rd | echoenvironmental.com |
| ECO PV | Italy | | | | |
| Ecoadvance | Japan | | lga, Mie | | |
| Econecol, Inc. | Japan | | Fujinomiya, Shizuoka | | |
| EcoTech Recycling | United States of America | | Port of Kalama, WA | | Ecotech Recycles |
| Eggersman GmbH | Germany | 33790 | Halle (Westf.) | Ravenna-Park 2 | www.eggersmann-recyclingtechnology.com |
| Eiki Shoji | Japan | | | | |
| Elecsome Pty.Ltd, Ojas Group | Australia | Victoria 3195 | Braeside | Unit 2,24 Canterbury Rd, | Elecsome Solar Upcycling - Elecsome |
| Electronic Recycling & IT Asset Disposition Services | United States of America | | | | https://eridirect.com/ |
| ENGIE My Power SAS Service Clients | France | 92400 | Courbevoie | place Samuel de Champlain | https://mypower.engie.fr/energie-solaire/conseils/recyclage-panneau- photovoltaique.html |
| Envaris | Germany | 13627 | Berlin | Friedrich-Olbricht-Damm 62 | Recycling & Entsorgung – envaris.de |
| Envie 2E Aquitaine | France | | | | |
| ENVIE 2E Midi-Pyrénées | France | | Portet sur Garonne | | |
| EUROPEAN RECYCLING PLATFORM ESPAÑA, ERP ESPAÑA S.L.U. | Spain | 28003 | Madrid | C/ Raimundo Fernández Villaverde nº 61, Planta 8ª, Centro Izquierda | |
| Experia Solution Srl | Italy | 35013 | Cittadella (Padova) Italy | Via Postumia di Levante, 8 | Experia Solution - Second-Hand PV Machines & Consulting |
| FabTech Enterprises, Inc. | United States of America | AZ 85297 | Gilbert | 596 E Germann Rd Suite 104 | Recycle - Fabtech Enterprises |



| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| First Solar, Inc. | United States of America | ОН | Perysburg | | |
| First Solar, Inc. | Germany | | | | |
| First Solar, Inc. | Malaysia | | | | |
| Flaxres | Germany | | Dresden | | www.flaxres.com |
| Galloo in Halluin | France | | Halluin | | |
| Geltz Umwelttechnologie GmbH | Germany | 75417 | Mühlacker | Kerschensteinerstr. 6 | www.geltz.de |
| Good Sun | United States of America | | | | https://www.goodsun.life/ |
| Green Century Electronics Recycling | United States of America | | | | https://greencenturyonline.net/ |
| Green Clean Solar | United States of America | GA 30068 | Marietta | 1205 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite 136- 164 | https://www.greenclean-solar.com/ |
| Green Lights Recycling Inc. | | MN 55449- 4423 | Blaine | 10040 Davenport St NE | https://www.glrnow.com/ |
| Greenflow? | United States of America | | | | |
| H I RABAYASH I METAL Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Okayama, Okayama | | |
| H&H Pro Limited | United Kingdom | HA1 1BD | Harrow, Middlesex | 79 College Road | https://www.hnhpro.co.uk |
| Hakuto Total Recycle System Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Tottori, Tottori | | |
| Hamada Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Minato, Tokyo & Takatsuki Osaka | | |
| Hanwha Group? Hanwha Solar One Schanghei | China | | | | |
| Harita Metal Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Takaoka, Toyama | | |
| Henan Honest Heavy Machinery Co., Ltd | China | | | | |
| Hensel Recycling GmbH | Germany | 63743 | Aschaffenburg | Mühlweg 1 | www.hensel-recycling.com |



| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|--|-----------------------------|----------|---------------------|---|---|
| IBA | Hong Kong, SAR China | | | | |
| ILM Highland | United Kingdom | IV17 0XS | Alness | Unit 1G, Teaninich Industrial Estate | www.ilmhighland.co.uk |
| Immark AG | Switzerland | CH-8105 | Regensdorf, ZH | Bahnstrasse 142 | www.immark.ch |
| ImpulsTec GmbH | Germany | 01445 | Radebeul | Wilhelm-Eichler-Straße 34 | |
| Infoactiv Group PTY LTD | Australia | VIC 3126 | Canterbury | G03 313 Canterbury Road | https://ecoactiv.com.au |
| INTERCO TRADING, INC. | United States of America | II 62060 | Madison | 10 FOX INDUSTRIAL DRIVE | Interco Recycles Solar Panels - Interco (intercotradingco.com) |
| JA Solar Co., Ltd. | China | | | | |
| Jamko Sp. z o.o. | Poland | 36-060 | Głogów Małopolski | ul. Rudolfa Menerki 13b | Photovoltaic Wholesaler JAMKO |
| JFE Bars & Shapes Corporation | Japan | | Kurashiki, Okayama | | |
| Jiangsu Juxin Energy Silicon Technology Co., Ltd. | China | 225000 | Yangzhou, Jiangsu | No. 0178, Industrial Park, South Yangtze River | Jiangsu Juxin Energy Silicon Industry Technology Co., Ltd.: monokristalline 125 Zellen, polykristalline 156 Zellen, Solarsiliziumwafer (11467.com) |
| Jingke Energy Co., Ltd. | China | | | | |
| Kaneshiro Sangyou | Japan | | Matsuyama, Ehime | | |
| Kangai | Japan | | Kurashiki, Okayama | | |
| Kankyo Hozen Service Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Oshu, Iwate | | |
| Kankyo Tsushin Yuso | Japan | | Ushiku, Ibaraki | | |
| Kinki Denden Yuso, Ltd. | Japan | | Neyagawa, Osaka | | |
| KRD Global Group | Poland | | | | |
| Kunshan Chencan Scrap Material Recycle | China | | | | |
| Kunshan Crystal Still Sun New Energy Technology | China | | | | |
| KWB Planreal AG | Switzerland | CH-9443 | Widnau | Ringstrasse 4 | www.kwbplanreal.ch |
| Kyusyuhokusei Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Kobayashi, Miyazaki | | |
| La Mia Energia s.c.ar.l. | Italy | 03043 | Cassino (FR) | Via Cerro Antico s.n.c. | Our Treatment Plants (lamiaenergia.eu) |
| | | | | | |



| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|---|-----------------------------|----------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Lotus Energy Recycling | Australia | | Melbourne | | |
| LuxChemTech | Germany | 09599 | Freiberg | Alfred-Lange-Str. 18 | |
| LONGi Green Energy Technology Co., Ltd. | China | | Xi'an Shaanxi | No.8369 Shangyuan Road, Economic And Technological Development Zone | |
| LZY Solar | China | | | | |
| Matec, Inc. | Japan | | Ishikari, Hokkaido | | |
| Mitsuba-Shigen Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Towada, Aomori | | |
| Mitsubishi Electric | United States of America | | | | https://www.mitsubishielectricsolar.com/ |
| Mitsukaido Sangyo | Japan | | Joso, Ibaraki | | |
| Moriya | Japan | | Higasine, Yamagata | | |
| MOTIVE ENERGY, INC. (Power Solutions) | United States of America | CA 92801 | ANAHEIM | 125 E. COMMERCIAL STREET | |
| MTKN Consulting Group | Japan | 104-0061 | Tokyo | Re-energy Labo. Ginza, Okuno Building 701, 1-9-8 Ginza, Chuo- ku | https://mtkn.group |
| Mujin New Energy Technology | China | | | | |
| Nike* S.r.I. | Italy | | | | |
| Nisso Metallochemical Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Fukushima (Taito, Tokyo) | | |
| NovaTec Recycling | United States of America | | | | |
| NPC | Japan | | | | |
| NPC Incorporated | Japan | | Matsuyama, Ehime | | |
| Okaishi Construction Co., Ltd | Japan | 701-0213 | Okayama-ken | 293-1, Okayama-shi | www.kousai-k.co.jp |
| PV Industries Pty. Ltd. | Australia | | Sidney, NSW | | https://www.pvindustries.com.au |
| PV Recycling | China | | | | |
| R3-tech | China | | Wan Chai Hong Kong | 300 Lockhart Road | http://r3-tech.com/ |



| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Reclaim PV Recycling Pty Ltd | Australia | | Lonsdale (South Australia) | | www.reclaimpv.com |
| Reclaim PV Recycling Pty Ltd | Australia | | Brisbane, Lonsdale (plant9 | | www.reclaimpv.com |
| Reclite SA Pty Ltd | Saudi Arabia | 1401 | Germiston | Unit 1, 1400 16 Indianapolis Blvd, Gosforth Park | www.reclite.co.za |
| Recma SC | Belgium | 4100 | Seraing (Wallonia) | Rue du Téris 4 | https://www.recma.be/recyclage/panneaux-photovolta%C3%AFques/ |
| Recubyl | France | | | | |
| Recycle Solar Technologies Ltd. | United Kingdom | DN15 7PA | Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire | 82 Oswald Road | |
| RECYCLE SOLAR UK | United Kingdom | DN161BD | Scunthorpe | Woodhouse Road | https://www.recyclesolar.co.uk/ |
| RECYCLE SOLAR UK | Iran, Islamic Republic of | | | | |
| Recycle Tech Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Kitakyushu, Fukuoka | | |
| Recycle Tech Japan | Japan | | Nagoya, Aichi | | |
| Recycle Technologies, Inc. | United States of America | WI 53186 | Waukesha | 1480 N Springdale Rd, | |
| Recycle1234 | United States of America | CA 94587 | Union City | 33548 Central Avenue | https://recycle1234.com |
| RecyclePVSolar | United States of America | Nevada | Reno/Sparks | | |
| Reiling GmbH & Co. KG | Germany | 33428 | Marienfeld/Harsewinkel | Bussemasstr. 49 | www.reiling.de |
| Reiling GmbH & Co. KG | Germany | | Torgau | | |
| Reiling GmbH & Co. KG | Germany | | Münster | | |
| Relightitalia/TREEE | Italy | | | | https://www.relightitalia.it/en/company; https://www.treee.it/ |
| REMA PV Systém | Czech Republic | 14000 | Praha 4, Krč | Antala Staška 510/38 | www.rema.cloud |
| Re-Tem Corporation | Japan | | Ibaraki (Chiyoda, Tokyo) | | |
| Rinovasol | Germany | | | | |
| ROSI SAS | France | | Grenoble | | www.rosi.com |
| | | | | | |



| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|--|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------------|--|--|
| ROTH International GmbH | Germany | 92637 | Weiden | Hohenstaufenstraße 58 | |
| S.C. | Poland | | | | |
| Sasil | Italy | | | | |
| SB Energy | France | | | | |
| SDIC Yellow River Hydropower Development Co., Ltd. | China | | | | |
| Seinan Corporation | Japan | | Hirosaki, Aomori | | |
| Shanghai FeiHang International Trade Co., Ltd. | China | | Kunshan, Jiangsu | No. 556 Qingyang Road, Development Zone | https://www.pvrecycle.cn |
| Sharp Corp | Japan | | | | |
| Shirakawa Syouten | Japan | | Koriyama, Fukushima | | |
| SiC Processing (Deutschland) GmbH | Germany | | Bautzen | | |
| Silcontel | Israel | 27230 | Haifa | Haarmonim 25 | Contact Us - Silcontel (silcontel-ltd.com) |
| Silicon Specialists | United States of America | | | | https://www.siliconspecialists.com/ |
| Sinopower Holding (Hong Kong) Co. Ltd. | China | | Shatin, New Territories | Room 17-18, 23/F, Metropolis Plaza, 2 On Yiu Street | https://www.sinopowersolar.com.hk/ |
| SOFIES | India | | Bangalore | | |
| Solar German Cells GmbH | Germany | | Leipzig | | |
| SOLAR MATERIALS GmbH | Germany | 39114 | Magdeburg | Paul-Ecke-Straße 4 | https://solar-materials.com/ |
| Solar Professionals (KGM Services Pty Ltd) | Australia | | Wagga Wagga | | |
| Solar Recovery Corporation | Australia | | Melbourne | | |
| Solar Recycling Experts LLC | United States of America | CA 93561 | Tehachapi | | solarrecyclingexperts.com/ |
| Solar Sun's Recycling | | | | | |
| SolarCycle | United States of America | | | | SOLARCYCLE Full Solar Panel Recycling Services |



| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Solarsilicon Recycling Services dba SRS | United States of America | | Ventura, CA | | www.solarsilicon.com |
| Solucciona Energia | Spain | 28702 | San Sebastian de los Reyes, Madrid | Calle Jose Hierro 6 | www.solucciona.com |
| Sunada Co., Ltd. | Japan | | Higashi-hiroshima, Hiroshima | | |
| SunPlan GmbH | Germany | 84574 | Taufkirchen | Rieder 2 | www.sunplan.de |
| Sunpower Corp | United States of America | | | | |
| SunR | Brazil | 13283-200 | Vinhedo/SP | Av. dos Pinheiros 719, João XXIII | www.sunr.com.br |
| Sunset Renewable Asset Management Inc. | Canada | | | | www.sunsetrenewables.com |
| Surplus Service | United States of America | CA 94539 | Fremont | 3090 Osgood Ct | https://surplusservice.com |
| Suzhou Jingshang Solar New Energy Technology | China | | | | |
| Suzhou Jingshang Sunshine New Energy Technology | China | | | | |
| Suzhou Minlai Photovoltaic New Energy Co., Ltd. | China | | Kunshan, Jiangsu | No. 1128, Beimen Road | www.xumin188.com |
| Suzhou RZJ New Energy Technology | China | | | | |
| Suzhou Shangyunda | China | | | | |
| Takaryo Corporation | Japan | | Minamisoma, Fukushima | | |
| TBF Computing Inc | United States of America | | | | https://www.desktopdisposal.com/solarpanel.php |
| TG Companies | United States of America | | | | https://www.tg-companies.com/ |
| The Retrofit Companies | United States of America | | | | https://retrofitcompanies.com/ |



| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Tokyo Power Technology, Ltd. | Japan | | Koto, Tokyo | | |
| Toshiba Environmental Solutions Corporation | Japan | | Yokohama Kanagawa | | |
| Total Green Recycling | Australia | <u>WA 6986</u> | Welshpool DC | PO Box 711 | https://www.totalgreenrecycling.com.au/ |
| Trillio | Italy | | | | |
| Trina Solar | China | | | | |
| Um-Welt-Japan Co., Ltd | Japan | | Yorii, Saitama | | |
| United Electronic Recycling | United States of America | TX 75019 | Coppell, Texas | 505 Airline Dr | https://unitedelectronicrecycling.com |
| United Scrap Metal | United States of America | IL 60804 | Cicero | 1545 South Cicero Avenue | |
| VEOLIA | France | | Rousset (Bouches-du-Rhône | | |
| We Recycle Solar, Inc. | United States of America | AZ 85016 | STE 300 Phoenix | 4742 N 24th St | Solar Panel Recycling & Disposal Company - We Recycle Solar |
| WonKwang S&T | Korea (South) | | Incheon | | |
| Yancheng Kefa Renewable Material Recycling | China | | | | |
| Yellow River Upstream Hydropower Development Co, Ltd. | China | | | | |
| Yingli Energy Co. | China | | | | |
| Yiwu Shopolo Import and Export Co., Ltd. | China | | Yiwu City, Zheiyang Province | 2106#, Futian Mansion A | |
| Yiwu Shopolo Import and Export Co., Ltd. | Afghanistan | | Kabul | | |
| Yiwu Shopolo Import and Export Co., Ltd. | Pakistan | | | | |
| Yiwu Shopolo Import and Export Co., Ltd. | Russian Federation | | | | |
| Yoonjin Tech | Korea (South) | | Gyeongbuk | | |
| Tialpi S.r.l. | Italy | 13874 | Mattalciata Bi | km. 3.200 Strada St. N | |
| Yousolar Srl | Italy | 36022 | Cassola, VI | Via A. Ferrarin, 14 | www.yousolar.it |



| Recycler Name | Country | Zip | City | Street | URL |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----|--------------|--------|-----|
| Yuepeng New Energy | China | | | | |
| ZEEP Technology, LLC | United States of America | MA | South Hadley | | |

| PV Type CSI | Country of Applicant Korea (South) | Country | Publication NO | Date | | | | | |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|---|
| CSI | | | | | IPC-classes | Inventor | Applicant | Title | Document |
| | | Korea (South) | KR000102258669B1 | 10.06.2019 | IF C-Classes | | Appindum | [EN] ECO RECYCLING SYSTEM OF UNUSABLE SOLAR MODULE | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR000102250482B1 | 29.03.2019 | B02C 23/08 | | | [EN] RECYCLING METHOD FOR UNUSABLE SOLAR MODULE | https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& docid=KR000102250482B1&xxxfull=1 |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR000102315051B1 | 18.02.2019 | B02C 17/18, C01B 21/068 | | | [EN] RECYCLING PROCESS OF WASTE PHOTOVOLTAIC MODULE | https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& docid=KR000102315051B1&xxxfull=1 |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR000102207445B1 | 01.02.2019 | C22B 4/00 | | | [EN] RECYCLING METHOD FOR SPENT SOLAR MODULE USING PYROMETALLURGY | https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& docid=KR000102207445B1&xxxfull=1 |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR000102112145B1 | 21.09.2018 | | | | [EN] A Removing Device of Unusable Solar Module and A Recycling System of Unusable Solar Module Having the Same | https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& docid=KR000102112145B1&xxxfull=1 |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR000101986837B1 | | B02C 18/22, B02C 18/24, B02C 21/00 | | | [EN] A Recycling System of Unusable Solar Module | https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& docid=KR000101986837B1&xxxfull=1 |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR000101714496B1 | 09.12.2014 | B09B 3/00 | | | [EN] METHOD FOR RECYCLING SILICON FROM WASTE SOLAR MODULE | https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& docid=KR000101714496B1&xxxfull=1 |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR000101490088B1 | 28.11.2014 | | | | [EN] SOLAR CELL RECYCLING JIG FROM WASTE SOLAR MODULES AND SOLAR CELL RECYCLING METHOD FROM WASTE SOLAR MODULES USING THE SAME | https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& docid=KR000101490088B1&xxxfull=1 |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR000101409319B1 | 20.08.2012 | | | | [EN] Device for recycling cell from solar module | https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& docid=KR000101409319B1&xxxfull=1 |
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| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR102020128944A | 07.05.2019 | H01L 31/18, H01L 31/042, B09B 5/00 | CHOE JE HAK, KR | CHOE JE HAK, KR | | https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& docid=KR102020128944A&xxxfull=1 |
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| America America America America America America CHRISTOPHER, US; REED MAX WILLIAM, US US; RATHWEG CHRISTOPHER, US; REED MAX deposition conveyor assembly docid=///// US0000681755582.xxxx1II=1 CDT United States of America United States of America </td <td>CSI</td> <td>Italy</td> <td>Italy</td> <td>WO002013057035A1</td> <td>11.10.2012</td> <td>B02C 4/08</td> <td>PASIN ANDREA, IT</td> <td>COMPTON S R L, IT; PASIN ANDREA, IT</td> <td>PHÓTOVOLTAIC PANELS [FR] PROCÉDÉ ET MACHINE PERMETTANT DE FACILITER LE RECYCLAGE DE PANNEAUX</td> <td></td> | CSI | Italy | Italy | WO002013057035A1 | 11.10.2012 | B02C 4/08 | PASIN ANDREA, IT | COMPTON S R L, IT; PASIN ANDREA, IT | PHÓTOVOLTAIC PANELS [FR] PROCÉDÉ ET MACHINE PERMETTANT DE FACILITER LE RECYCLAGE DE PANNEAUX | |
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| America America America America America America America America CHRISTOPHER, US CHRISTOPHER, US FRÖM SYSTEM COMPONENTS USED IN THE MANUFACTURE öF docid=US020120045374A1&xxxdull=1 CDTE United States of America United States of | CDTE | | | US000008404177B2 | 31.10.2011 | C23C 16/06, B01D 7/00 | RATHWEG CHRISTOPHER, US | | | |
| America Antroposta Coll 20500008048194B282xxxdull=1 America America </td <td>CDTE</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>US020120045374A1</td> <td>31.10.2011</td> <td></td> <td>RATHWEG CHRISTOPHER, US</td> <td></td> <td>FROM SYSTEM COMPONENTS USED IN THE MANUFACTURE OF</td> <td></td> | CDTE | | | US020120045374A1 | 31.10.2011 | | RATHWEG CHRISTOPHER, US | | FROM SYSTEM COMPONENTS USED IN THE MANUFACTURE OF | |
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| PV Type PO | Applicant United States of | Country | Publication NO WO002007056019A2 | Date 31.10.2006 | IPC-classes C23D 17/00, C23G 1/00 | Inventor VERHAVERBEKE STEVEN, US | Applicant APPLIED MATERIALS INC, US | Title [EN] STRIPPING AND CLEANING OF ORGANIC-CONTAINING | Document https://depatisnet.dpma.de/DepatisNet/depatisnet?action=pdf& |
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| CSI | China | China | CN 201893366U | 12/1/2010 | | | TIANWEI NEW ENERGY HOLDINGS CO TIANWEI NEW ENERGY CHENGDU PV MODULE CO LTD BAODING TIANWEI GROUP CO LTD | Tool for dismantling frame of crystalline silicon solar battery component | |
| CSI | China | | CN 102931290A | 11/27/2012 | | | Bailida Solar Energy Co., Ltd. | Polycrystalline silicon solar cell reworking method without damaging suede | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 103165731A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | | CN 103165732A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | | CN 103165733A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | | CN 103165734A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | | CN 103165735A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | | CN 103165736A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | | CN 103165737A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | | CN 103165738A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | | CN 103165739A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 103165740A | 12/13/2011 | | | Suzhou Industrial Park Goldway Technologies Co., Ltd. | Solar cell frame dismantling method | |

| PV Type | Country of | | | | | | | | |
|---------|------------|---------|------------------|------------|-------------|----------|---|--|----------|
| | Applicant | Country | Publication NO | Date | IPC-classes | Inventor | Applicant | Title | Document |
| | China | | CN 103165741A | 12/13/2011 | | | | Solar cell frame dismantling system | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 103337563A | 7/15/2013 | | | SHANDONG LINUO SOLAR POWER HOL | Method for reworking defective printing piece of crystalline silicon solar cell | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 103779441A | 11/13/2013 | | | HENAN INST SCIENCE & TECH | Cleaning recovery treatment process of solar cell sheet | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 103920698A | 5/8/2014 | | | LIU JINGYANG | Method for recycling resources in waste crystal solar silicon cell piece in classified mode | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 104167462A | 5/16/2013 | | | WUXI SUNTECH POWER CO LTD | Poorly printed solar battery reworking method | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 202103080U | 6/15/2011 | | | LEYE PHOTOVOLTAIC CO., LTD. | Solar cell panel frame dismounting machine | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 104368958A | 9/26/2014 | | | SUZHOU SUNCOME SOLAR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY CO LTD | Photovoltaic module dismantling clamp | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 202307807U | 11/1/2011 | | | NINGBO XINYOU PHOTOVOLTAICS INDUSTRY CO LTD | Recycling system for waste silicon solar cell | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 104716225A | 12/17/2013 | | | JINKO SOLAR CO LTD | Silicon cell recycling method | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 202315994U | 11/7/2011 | | | YINGLI GROUP LTD | Solar battery assembly decomposing equipment and automatic material-transporting double-shaft bevelment crushing device thereof | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 202307849U | 11/7/2011 | | | YINGLI GROUP LTD | Solar cell recovery and decomposition equipment and rotary balance disc thereof | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 202285230U | 11/7/2011 | | | YINGLI GROUP LTD | Solar battery component disassembly equipment and rotary fixture thereof | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 202332932U | 11/28/2011 | | | JETION SOLAR CHINA CO LTD | Tool for disassembling aluminum section of photovoltaic component | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 202384377U | 12/8/2011 | | | JETION SOLAR CHINA CO LTD | Frame disassembling machine used for disassembling frame of solar battery pack | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 202616274U | 4/9/2012 | | | CEEG SHANGHAI SOLAR SCI & amp; TECH | Apparatus for disassembling photovoltaic assembly | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 202977513U | 12/13/2012 | | | QINHUANGDAO XINMEIYUAN CONTROLLED EQUIPMENT CO LTD | Solar cell panel long edge frame dismantler | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 203031219U | 12/12/2012 | | | TAITONG TAIZHOU IND CO LTD | Simple solar photovoltaic module frame dismantling device | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 203288629U | 12/14/2012 | | | QINHUANGDAO XINMEIYUAN CONTROLLED EQUIPMENT CO LTD | Solar cell panel short edge frame dismantler | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 203600179U | 11/14/2013 | | | FUYU ENERGY SCIENCE & amp; TECHNOLOGY KUNSHAN CO LTD HON HAI PREC IND CO LTD | Photovoltaic module dismounting device | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 203617327U | 12/9/2013 | | | BAODING TIANWEI YINGLI NEW ENERGY CO LTD | Device for detaching solar cell assembly side frame | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 204011460U | 8/8/2014 | | | TITAN PV CO LTD | Auxiliary tool for frame detachment of photovoltaic assembly | |
| CSI | China | | CN 204148829U | 8/8/2014 | | | TITAN PV CO LTD | Auxiliary tool for dismounting photovoltaic assembly frame | |
| | | | CN 204167343U | 11/11/2014 | | | YINGLI SOLAR CHINA CO LTD | Solar cell frame detaching tool | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 204206092U | 11/20/2014 | | | TONGWEI SOLAR HEFEI CO LTD | A used for crystalline silicon solar cell assembly of the frame removal tool | |
| CSI | China | China | CN 204235474U | 10/18/2014 | | | URUMQI TUOHUANGZHE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CO LTD | Photovoltaic component frame remove table | |
| CSI | Germany | Germany | DE19541074A1 | 11/3/1995 | | | SIEMENS SOLAR GMBH | Recycling solar cells or modules of silicon@ and silicon alloys | |
| CSI | Germany | Germany | DE19541074C | 11/3/1995 | | | SIEMENS SOLAR GMBH | Recycling of solar modules and - cells from silicon and its alloys | |
| CSI | Germany | Germany | DE102007034441A1 | 7/20/2007 | | | LOSER ULRICH ; PALITZSCH WOLFRAM | Method for removing front and rear side contacts of solar cells, involves processing solar cells with aqueous, sour metallic salt | |



| PV Type | Country of Applicant | Country | Publication NO | Date | IPC-classes | Inventor | Applicant | Title | Document |
|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|----------|---|---|----------|
| CSI | Germany | Germany | DE102012018548A1 | 9/20/2012 | | | Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg | Recycling disused solar modules and solar cells, comprises separating cell breakage having silicon from starting materials, and treating the breakage with choromethane/dichloromethane and hydrogen in the presence of catalyst | |
| CSI | Germany | Germany | DE102013112004A1 | 10/31/2013 | | | variata Dorit Lang GmbH & Co. KG | Recycling of photovoltaic module and/or solar modules | |
| CSI | Japan | Japan | JP 2007-134358A | 11/8/2005 | | | KYOWA HAKKO CHEMICAL CO LTD | METHOD FOR RECOVERING SOLAR BATTERY CELL AND/OR REINFORCED GLASS FROM SOLAR CELL MODULE | |
| CSI | Japan | Japan | JP 2007-180063A | 12/26/2005 | | | KYOCERA CORP | DISASSEMBLING METHOD OF SOLAR CELL MODULE | |
| CSI | Japan | Japan | JP 2009-214058A | 3/12/2008 | | | SHARP CORP | DISASSEMBLING METHOD OF SOLAR CELL MODULE | |
| CSI | Japan | Japan | JP 2014-094321A | 11/7/2012 | | | TORAY FINE CHEMICALS CO LTD | METHOD OF DISINTEGRATING SOLAR CELL MODULE | |
| CSI | Japan | Japan | JP 2014-104406A | 11/27/2012 | | | YOKOHAMA YUSHI KOGYO KK | SOLAR CELL MODULE RECYCLING METHOD | |
| CSI | Japan | Japan | JP 2014-108375A | 11/30/2012 | | | SHINRYO CORP | METHOD OF RECOVERING CONSTITUENT MATERIAL OF SOLAR CELL ELEMENT | |
| CSI | Japan | Japan | JP 2014-116363A | 12/6/2012 | | | SHINRYO CORP | SOLAR CELL MODULE DISMANTLING APPARATUS | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | JP 2015-071162A | 10/1/2014 | | | KOREA INST OF ENERGY RESEARCH | METHOD FOR DISASSEMBLING PHOTOVOLTAIC MODULE | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 1584174B1 | 5/16/2014 | | | KOREA INST OF ENERGY RESEARCH | METHOD OF COLLECTING SOLAR CELL | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 1539528B1 | 2/20/2014 | | | Kumoh National Institute of Technology | A method for recovering silver from the waste solar cell | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 2015-0039005A | 10/1/2013 | | | KOREA INST OF ENERGY RESEARCH | METHOD FOR RECOVERYING METAL OF SOLAR CELL | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 1486803B1 | 10/1/2013 | | | KOREA INST OF ENERGY RESEARCH | METHOD FOR DISASSEMBLING SOLAR CELL MODULE | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 2015-0039006A | 10/1/2013 | | | KOREA INST OF ENERGY RESEARCH | Apparatus and Method for Recovery of Metal of Photovoltaic Module | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 1509086B1 | 10/1/2013 | | | KOREA INST OF ENERGY RESEARCH | METHOD FOR RECOVERYING METAL OF SOLAR CELL | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 2015-0039010A | 10/1/2013 | | | KOREA INST OF ENERGY RESEARCH | METHOD FOR DISASSEMBLING SOLAR CELL MODULE | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 2014-00250032 | 8/20/2012 | | | Kangwon National University | Device for recycling cell from solar module | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 2013-0104794A | 3/15/2012 | | | SYMPHONY ENERGY CO., LTD | APPARATUS FOR DISMANTLING WASTE SOLAR MODULE THERMALLY | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 2011-0069962A | 12/18/2009 | | | Korea Research Institute of Chemical Technology | METHODE FOR RECYCLING SILICON FROM WASTE SOLAR CELL | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 2013-0095915A | 2/21/2012 | | | SYMPHONY ENERGY CO., LTD | APPARATUS FOR DISASSEMBLING SOLAR MODULE FRAME | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 2011-0106953A | 3/24/2010 | | | LEE, HYUN-JOO GU, SOO-JIN | Recovery Method of High-purified poly Silicon from a waste solar wafer | |
| CSI | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR 2013-0080950A | 1/6/2012 | | | SYMPHONY ENERGY CO., LTD | METHOD FOR DISMANTLING ECO-FRIENDLY WASTE SOLAR MODULE | |
| CdTe | Germany | United States of America | US 2002-0030035A1 | 8/24/2001 | | | ANTEC SOLAR GMBH | Process for recycling CdTe/Cds thin film solar cell modules | |
| CIGS | Canada | United States of America | US 2014-0065037A1 | 11/22/2011 | | | MOLYCORP MINERALS CANADA ULC | TREATMENT OF INDIUM GALLIUM ALLOYS AND RECOVERY OF INDIUM AND GALLIUM | |
| CIGS | Sweden | United States of America | US 2014-0341799A1 | 12/14/2012 | | | MIDSUMMER AB | RECYCLING OF COPPER INDIUM GALLIUM DISELENIDE | |
| CdTe | United States of America | United States of America | US 6391165B1 | 5/17/2000 | | | First Solar, LLC | Reclaiming metallic material from an article comprising a non-metallic friable substrate | |
| CIGS | United States of America | United States of America | US 5997718A | 6/16/1998 | | | Drinkard Metalox, Inc. | Recycling of CdTe photovoltaic waste | |
| CdTe | United States of America | United States of America | US 6129779A | 5/12/1998 | | | First Solar, LLC | Reclaiming metallic material from an article comprising a non-metallic friable substrate | |



| | Country of | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------|-------------|----------|---|--|----------|
| | Applicant | | T denoation tto | | IPC-classes | Inventor | Applicant | | Document |
| CdTe | United States of America | United States of America | US 5897685A | 5/12/1997 | | | Drinkard Metalox, Inc. | Recycling of CdTe photovoltaic waste | |
| CIGS | United States of America | United States of America | US 5779877A | 5/12/1997 | | | Drinkard Metalox, Inc. | Recycling of CIS photovoltaic waste | |
| CIGS | China | China | CN 103199148A | 1/9/2012 | | | Shenzhen GEM High-Tech Co., Ltd. | Method for recycling gallium, indium and germanium from wasted thin- film solar cells | |
| CIGS | Japan | Japan | JP 2004-186547A | 12/5/2002 | | | SHOWA SHELL SEKIYU KK | METHOD FOR RECOVERING COMPONENT OF CIS THIN-FILM SOLAR CELL MODULE | |
| CIGS | Japan | Japan | JP 2007-059793A | 8/26/2005 | | | SHOWA SHELL SEKIYU KK | METHOD OF RECOVERING STRUCTURAL COMPONENT OF CIS SYSTEM THIN FILM SOLAR CELL MODULE | |
| CIGS | Japan | Japan | JP 2014-079667A | 10/13/2012 | | | MIYAZAKI PREFECTURE NISHINIHON ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGICAL RESEACH CO LTD | METHOD OF RECOVERING VALUABLES FROM CIS THIN FILM SOLAR CELL | |
| CdTe | Germany | Japan | JP 2002-164558A | 9/4/2001 | | | ANTEC SOLAR GMBH | REPRODUCTION METHOD OF CdTe/CdS THIN FILM SOLAR CELL MODULE | |
| TF | Germany | Korea (South) | KR 2009-0129944A | 6/4/2009 | | | JENOPTIK Automatisierungstechnik GmbH | Recycling process for thin film solar cell modules | |
| CIGS | Sweden | Sweden | WO 2013-089630A1 | 12/14/2012 | | | MIDSUMMER AB | RECYCLING OF COPPER INDIUM GALLIUM DISELENIDE | |
| CdTe | Germany | Germany | DE50012431B1 | 9/11/2000 | | | ANTEC SOLAR ENERGY AG | Recycling procedure for CdTe/CD thin section solar cell modules | |
| TF | Germany | Germany | DE102008058530A1 | 11/21/2008 | | | LOSER ULRICH ; PALITZSCH WOLFRAM | Method for recycling a thin layer solar module during simultaneous recovering of recyclable material, by loading photovoltaic | |
| TF | Germany | Germany | DE102013009586A1 | 6/9/2013 | | | Loser, Ulrich, 04741, Roßwein, DE ; Palitzsch, Wolfram, 09599, Freiberg, DE | Hydrometallurgisches Verfahren zur Rückgewinnung von III-V-, II-VI- oder I-III-VI2- Verbindungshabbleitermaterialien aus High-Tech- bzw, Green-Tech-Abfällen, bzw. Elektro- und Elektronikabfällen | |
| DSC | United States of America | United States of America | US2014-0202517A | 3/21/2014 | | | Georgia Tech Research Corporation | Recyclable Organic Solar Cells On Substrates Comprising Cellulose Nanocrystals (CNC) | |
| TF | China | China | CN 101562212A | 4/1/2008 | | | Contrel Semiconductor Technology Co Ltd | Method for recycling transparent conducting glass substrate of solar cell | |
| DSC | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | KR2013-0049983A | 11/7/2011 | | | Dongjin Semichem Co., Ltd. | Method for Recycling Dye of Dye-Sensitized Solar Cel | |
| DSC | Korea (South) | Korea (South) | WO 2013069929A | 11/7/2011 | | | DONGJIN SEMICHEM CO., LTD. | METHOD FOR RECYCLING DYE OF DYE-SENSITIZED SOLAR CELL MODULE | |



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|---|--|------|---|---------------|-------|--------------------|-------|------|--|---|---|------------------|------|-------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------|---------------------------|
| Authors Yue Y., Zhuo Y., Li Q., Shen Y. | Title Experimental and numerical study of extracting silver from end-of-life c- Si photovoltaic solar cells in rotating systems | | Source Title Resources, Conservation and Recycling | Volume 186 | lssue | Art. No. 106548 | Start | End | DOI 10.1016/j.resconrec.2022.106548 | Link https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0- 85134582338&doi=10.1016%2/j.resconrec.2022.106548&partne rID=40&md5=1c207d6b3d18ac928ae4f7191d283e44 | Amiliations School of Chemical Engineering, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 2052, Australia | ISSN 09213449 | ISBN | RCREE | Document Type Article | n Stage Final | Open Access | Scopus | EID 2-s2.0-85134582338 |
| El-Khawad L., Bartkowiak D., Kümmerer K. | Improving the end-of-life management of solar panels in Germany | 2022 | Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews | 168 | | 112678 | | | 10.1016/j.rser.2022.112678 | https://www.scopus.com/inward/record_uri?eid=2-s2.0- 85133910890&doi=10.1016%2/j.mer.2022.112878&partnerID=4 0&md5=5f2e6ed2f4b438740cd0bd2c5214&e06 | Leuphana Universitäi Lueneburg, Universitäisaalee 1, Lüneburg, 21335, Germany, Institue 6 Sustanable auf Environmental Chemistry, Leuphana Universitäi Lueneburg, Universitäisaalee 1, Lüneburg, 21353, Germany, International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre (ISC3), Research & Education Hub, Germany | 13640321 | | RSERF | Review | Final | | Scopus | 2-s2.0-85133910890 |
| Qin B., Lin M., Xu Z., Ruan J. | Preparing ultra-thin glass from waste glass containing impurities of household waste by the combined technology of In-altu deposition and vacuum pyrolysis | | Resources, Conservation and Recycling | 185 | | 106451 | | | 10.1016/j.resconrec.2022.106451 | https://www.scopus.com/hward/record ur/?de/2-42.0- 85132542124&doi=10.1016%/21/resconrec.2022.106451&partne r/D=40&md5=ft23ca7bc689f551af23ie610c5712e2 | Guangdong Provincial Kay Laboratory of Environmental Politikin Control and Remediation Technology, School of Environmental Science and Engineering, Sun Yake University, 135 Xingang Xi Road, Guangzhou, 510275, China, School of Environmental Science and Engineering, Sanahgai Jao Eng University, 800 Dongchuan RoadShanghai 200240, China | 09213449 | | RCREE | Article | Final | | Scopus | 2-82.0-85132542124 |
| | A green method to separate different layers in photovoltaic modules by using DMPU as a separation agent | 2022 | Solar Energy Materials and Solar Cells | 245 | | 111870 | | | 10.1016j.solmat.2022.111870 | https://www.scopus.com/invard/record.ur/?e4/e4/24.2.0- 851325509936.onta.2022.1119708.partner/D =40&md5=e85de5384b45s938aa646119cd544c5f | Ganjang hnovation Academy, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Ganzhou, 31007. China, Key Lakontov of Green Process and Engineering, National Engineering Research Center of Green Recycling for Strategic Metal Recourses, Institude of Process Engineering, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, 100190, China; Nanchang University, Nanchang, 330031, China; Zhejiang Jinko Solar Co., Ltd., Zhejiang314400, China | 09270248 | | SEMCE | Article | Final | | Scopus | 2-82.0-85133250993 |
| Kiran D.S., Srinivasa | Process optimization studies of essential parameters in the organic solvent method for the recycling of waste crystalline silicon photovoltaic modules | 2022 | Solar Energy Materials and Solar Cells | 245 | | 111850 | | | 10.1016/j.solmat.2022.111850 | https://www.scopus.com/inward/record_uri?eid=2-s2.0- 851326908068doi=10.1016%2[].soimat.2022.1118508partnerID #40&md5=ed770ddd1ed68760791dc332fff3d81a | Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (C-MET), IDA Phase- III, Cherlapaly, Hyderabad, India | 09270248 | | SEMCE | Article | Final | | Scopus | 2-s2.0-85132890806 |
| Zhang L., Chang S., Wang Q., Zhou D. | Projection of Waste Photovoltaic Modules in China Considering Multiple Scenarios | 2022 | Sustainable Production and Consumption | 33 | | | 412 | 424 | 10.1016/j.spc.2022.07.012 | https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.ut/?eld=2-92.0- 85134795621&doi=10.1016%2fj.spc.2022.07.012&partnerID=40 &md5=a3be149bbaa4e41f3992cd129abd94d9 | College of Economics and Management, Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Nanjing, 211106, China; Research Centre for Soft Energy Science, Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Nanjing, 211106, China | 23525509 | | | Article | Final | | Scopus | 2-s2.0-85134795621 |
| Belançon M.P., Sandrini M., Tonholi F., Herculano L.S., Dias G.S. | Towards long term sustainability of c-Si solar panels: The environmental benefits of glass sheet recovery | 2022 | Renewable Energy Focus | 42 | | | 206 | 210 | 10.1016/j.ref.2022.06.009 | https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.ut/?eld=2-92.0- 85134340371&doi=10.1016%21.ref.2022.06.009&partnerID=40 &md5=c78696bc2c7992126b30fc79f1280cbb | Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná (UTFPR), Câmpus Palo Branco, Brazil: Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná (UTFPR), Câmpus Medianeirs, Brazil: Universidade Estadual de Maringá (UEM), Departamento de Física, Brazil | 17550084 | | | Article | Final | All Open Access, Green | Scopus | 2-s2.0-85134340371 |
| Molano J.C., Xing K., Majewski P., Huang B. | A holistic reverse logistics planning framework for end-of-life PV panel collection system design | 2022 | Journal of Environmental Management | 317 | | 115331 | | | 10.1016/j.jenvman.2022.115331 | https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0- 85130688777&doi=10.1016%20j.jervman.2022.115331&partner/ D=40&md5=6c0bc259699762/5ae9913cc0845ead1 | UniSA STEM, University of South Australia, Marwson Lakes, SA 5005, Australia, Future Industry Institute, University of South Australia, Marwson Lakes, SA 5005, Australia; School of Energy and Power Engineering. Changsha University of Science and Technology, Hunan, Changsha, 410114, China | | | JEVMA | Article | Final | | Scopus | 2-s2.0-85130888777 |
| | Recycling of solar photovoltaic panels: Techno-economic assessment in waste management perspective | 2022 | Journal of Cleaner Production | 363 | | 132384 | | | 10.1016§ jclepro.2022.132384 | https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.ut?Peid=2-s2.0- 851314445268doi=10.1016%29 j.clepro.2022.132384&partneriD =40&md5=acae1c123a568d837e58e79b851cd4d4 | Department of Chemical Engineering, KU Leuven, Celestijonikan 200F, Heverke, Leuven 3001, Belgium: Department of Materials Engineering, KU Leuven, Kasteelpark Arenberg 44, Heverke, Leuven 3001, Belgium: Department of Chemishy, Saguieraz University of Rome, Plazzale Aldo Moro 5, Rome, 00185, Raly | 09596526 | | JCROE | Article | Final | | Scopus | 2-s2.0-85131444526 |
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| Wang S., Shen Y. | pyrolysis of end-of-life solar panel particles in fluidized bed reactors | | Resources, Conservation and Recycling | 183 | | 106378 | | | | https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0- 85129531265&doi=10.1016%2/j.resconrec.2022.106378&partne rID=40&md5=a6fa295901511143b5df3fdcac434f19 | | 09213449 | | RCREE | Article | Final | | | 2-s2.0-85129531265 |
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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EPRI LCI STUDY ON PV RECYCLING

PV Recycling Expert Interviews Karsten Wambach wambach@wambach-consulting.com

| Respondent Name(s): | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Respondent Title(s): | |
| Company Name: | |
| Contact Information (phone/email): | |
| Date/Time of Interview: | |
| Interviewer: | |
| Can name be used in report? | |

Project goals: Wambach-Consulting carries out a PV recycling study for EPRI, USA, to identify best available technologies for EOL PV waste treatment and to assess upcoming technologies in laboratory and pilot stages by an international literature and patent survey. The interview results shall provide process understanding and fill data gaps in the collection of life cycle inventory data on the processes, and best practices for treatment and downstream utilization of the outputs, including associated costs.

He is surveying a number of PV waste treatment companies to examine their practices and costs surrounding disposal of solar PV modules. The investigation will encompass both the technical and economic aspects of PV waste treatment from the waste management company point of view.

Survey findings are intended to provide a benchmark against which recycling costs can be compared. Findings will be incorporated into an EPRI document. This effort also is intended to offer stakeholders a means for assessing module waste disposal options and inform their strategic thinking around PV project end-of-life planning.

Confidentiality: EPRI intends to include aggregate survey responses in a public white paper. Shared cost and pricing information will be anonymized such that responses from individual waste management companies cannot be identified. If subjects require additional confidentiality protection, this can potentially be arranged. If companies are willing to be identified sources, pending their review of statements they have made, we may include company-specific examples or data in the report.



Interview Intro

I'll be recording this interview, is that alright?

I'll plan to circulate any summary document text that we'd like to attribute to you or your company for fact-checking purposes.

Once completed, I'll plan to share the summary document with you for your review and use.

I. Context

Name, organization, and role of expert

- Company Where is your company headquartered?
- How many locations do you have for processing PV modules?
- What is your annual throughput and capacity?

1.1 PV Background

- How long have you been accepting PV modules? Approximately how many modules have been recycled to date?
- What type(s) of solar modules are you able to recycle?
- Does the company offer refurbishing/reselling services for solar modules in addition to recycling services?
- Do you recycle solar racking structures, wiring, inverters, batteries, or any other materials from solar plants, or only modules? Does the company offer any other services? Do you remove the modules from the racking and handle packaging and transportation too?
- What are typical (or max/min) annual volumes for recycling, and resale if applicable (# modules/yr or ton/yr)?
- What fraction of modules received are sold for reuse versus recycled?
- Who do you typically receive modules from? Who are your target customers (e.g., % residential, commercial, utility-scale plants, manufacturers)?

II. Processes

2.1 Please describe the processes you follow from module collection to final disposal.

2.2 What do you do to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements for packing and shipping?

2.3 Please describe the recycling process and end use of each solar module component. Is any material sent to a landfill during the recycling process or is everything recycled/reused?

2.4 How is the output processed? Please specify by output type.

- Can you separate out trace amounts of metals?
- Is your recycling process primarily focused on glass, metal, e-waste, or other? Is there any customization for solar modules?
- What process steps does the recycling include (e.g., mechanical, thermal, chemical, optical, etc.)?



- What recovery fraction are you able to achieve? Do you recover silicon, silver, and copper at sufficient purity for reuse? Alternative: Do you recover Cd, Te, Mo, Sn, In, Ga, Se, etc.?
- Is there any special handling or treatment for modules with high lead/toxic material content (fail eluate testing)? Will you be able to process perovskite on silicon modules? Do you have concerns about toxic elements other than lead?
- Are any materials sent elsewhere for further processing (e.g., smelter, recovery of metal, or other product streams)?

2.5 For companies that offer resale, how do you assess the condition of the PV modules you receive to determine if they can be repurposed/reused or if they should be recycled?

If modules are still functional, is there a process to certify them for reuse?

What types of repairs or other refurbishment do you perform prior to reselling modules?

Is there a strong market for second-life modules? Where do you resell them?

2.6 Does the company perform any sampling and analysis to properly characterize the waste (non-hazardous or hazardous) prior to recycling?

- If so, what is your approach for sampling modules (cutting method, areas of module, including frame and/or jbox)?
 - Have you confirmed that the method is precise and repeatable?
 - o Have you checked for variation between labs that receive identical samples?
 - Do you keep a database of eluate test results?
 - Have you done any work to characterize how lead content is changing over time, or how it varies between different module constructions?
- If not, do you require customers to characterize the modules prior to acceptance? If so, do you provide guidance to customers in how to sample and analyze modules?
- Do you use supplier BOM data, including information about toxic materials? Do you use SCIP data?

III. Regulations/Requirements

3.1 Which accreditations/certifications, e.g., Sustainability Electronics Recycling International (SERI) Responsible Recycling (R2) or e-Stewards, do you hold? Do you provide a Certificate of Destruction/Recycling (COD/COR)?

3.2 Does the company hold any special permits or variances for storage, treatment or disposal of hazardous waste?

3.3 Please describe any local, state, federal environmental reporting/handling/documentation requirements regarding solar panels received by your company.

3.4 Are there any special shipping requirements required to transport PV safely (e.g., packing of PV panels, shipping container type, removal of junction box or frame prior to shipping, etc.)?

IV. Economics of PV Waste Disposal



4.1 What information do you require from plant owners to determine pricing (e.g., MSDS or module spec sheet, eluate test results, module condition, etc.)?

4.2 Do prices include shipping and handling?

4.3 Does volume, condition, composition, or other factors affect pricing?

4.4 To what extent does recovery of valuable material (silicon, silver, copper) offset the cost of recycling?

4.5 What are obstacles for better PV collection and recycling?

4.6 What is your experience with international shipments of PV modules for reuse or PV waste and recycling outputs?

How can this be optimized?

IV. Conclusion

5.1 Have you identified any R&D needs? Would new high-value recycling processes be beneficial?

5.2 Is there anything I haven't asked you about on which you'd like to comment?

How were modules transported from the usage site to your facility?

Was any preprocessing conducted prior to transport (e.g., remove frames, junction boxes, etc.)?

Please describe on-site processing/disposal upon arrival at your facility.

Are you willing to share the price to the customer or your costs (can be kept anonymous) for this example?

5.3 If we have further questions, may we contact you again?

That's all, we're through! Thanks for your participation; we really appreciate it.



APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE PV RECYCLING VIDEOS

PV CYCLE: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81-MEpcA-Rc

Reiling: <u>https://www.reiling.de/recycling-produkte#progress--anchor--157</u>, or <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ylE3h9gX2U0</u>

ROSI: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TaH0tabYRQ</u>

LuxChemtech, Loser: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=392uBSgPoNo

La Mia Energia s.c.ar.l.: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7UDkRX-6Qw

Eggersmann: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=filrKYLQeU0

NPC: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uR9ASY9afkY

Flaxres: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5iMLBMkXUE

Buhck Group on reuse: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqMqOGRJTm0</u>

Henan Renewable Energy Technology Co. Ltd.: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpkk6ihlB6s

Henan Honest Heavy Machinery Co., Ltd: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1t2yIEpPwA</u>

Review movies:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sm0MINsQKio, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fU8C5t2JI48

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsZCjy84o1g

Santa Monica, CA, partnered with the California Product Stewardship Council, CalRecycle, the California Conservation Corps, and Cal Micro to pilot the first-in-state solar panel recycling program: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uodHTg_vi1s</u>



