Nigeria

Socioeconomic Profile

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and West Africa, with an estimated 201 million inhabitants in 2019\(^1\) amounting to more than 50 percent of the total population in West Africa. The Nigerian economy, classified as lower middle income, is considered a major emerging market in the context of Africa and globally. The country is a federal republic comprising 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory where its capital, Abuja, is located. Lagos is the most populous coastal city in Africa, with an estimated population of over 24 million residents.\(^2\)

Nigeria has the second-highest population density in the West African region after Gabon, at 215.1 people per km\(^2\) (2018).\(^3\) About half the country lives in urban areas while 13.7 percent live in coastal areas.\(^4\)

Plastic Industry and Ecosystem

Nigeria is Africa’s largest oil producer, with the oil and gas sector accounting for about 10 percent of GDP and where petroleum exports represent around 86 percent of total exports revenue.\(^5\) Nigeria is the only resin producer in the WACA region. It produced 486 kt of resin (325 kt PE, 96 kt PP, 65 kt PET) in 2018 and 498 kt of resin (322 kt PE, 101 kt PP, 75 kt PET) in 2019. Nevertheless, the country is a net importer of plastics, which in its raw form is typically made from oil (naptha). In 2019, imports of plastics into Nigeria amounted to $1.7 billion, including net imports of all key plastics resins (PE, PP, polystyrene [PS], and PVC).\(^6\) Almost two-thirds of demand for virgin resins in Nigeria is currently met through imports, thus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population, 2019</td>
<td>200,963,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density, people per sq. km of land area, 2018</td>
<td>215.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coastal population, % of total, 2019*</td>
<td>13.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share of people living in urban areas, % of total, 2017</td>
<td>49.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total MSW generated, tons/year</td>
<td>27,614,830</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waste generation rate per capita, kg/person/day</td>
<td>0.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plastic waste generation, kg/day</td>
<td>2,811,046</td>
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being the continent’s largest importer of resins. Nigeria’s conversion industry processed 1,094 kt of resin (581 kt PE, 367 kt PP, 137 kt PET, 9 kt PS) in 2018 and 978 kt of resin (564 kt PE, 238 kt PP, 164 kt PET, 12 kt PS) in 2019.

Nigeria’s large consumption of primary plastics (resins) supports a robust plastic manufacturing sector. According to market reports, plastic production in Nigeria has grown rapidly at a rate of 13.9 percent annually, from 120 kt in 2007 to a projected 513 kt in 2020. While being a net importer of resin, Nigeria is the largest producer of olefins and polyolefin plastics in West Africa led by Indorama Eleme Petrochemicals Limited. The country has over 3,000 plastic companies today, producing various products ranging from jerry cans, shopping bags, tables to mats. The literature highlights the challenge of managing waste from water sachets, where it is estimated that over 1,500 water sachet factories are present in Lagos alone.

In terms of plastics recovery, studies find that less than 12 percent of plastic waste is recycled in Nigeria. There are reportedly 8 completed plastic waste recycling plants in Nigeria, with 18 others at various stages of completion. There is no current capacity for waste-to-energy, for example, in cement kilns or incinerators with heat recovery. The remaining plastic waste (~80 percent) goes to landfills and dumpsites. Examples of businesses that are pioneering circular plastics solutions include Lagos-based Salubata, which produces shoes from recycled plastics waste (this company was also the recent winner of African Innovation Week 2020).

**Solid Waste Management**

Nigeria faces significant challenges with solid waste management due to a lack of infrastructure, a trained workforce, and other related factors. Annually, Nigeria generates 27.6 million kt of municipal solid waste, of which about 13 percent is plastic. Daily per capita waste generation rate in Nigeria is around 0.79 kg/person/day, slightly above West Africa’s average of 0.66 kg/person/day.

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**Notes:**

13 Babayemi et al., “Initial Inventory of Plastics Imports in Nigeria.”
16 Down to Earth, “Nigeria Well Placed to Beat Plastic Pollution.”
17 Jambeck et al., “Plastic Waste Inputs from Land into the Ocean.”
Of the waste generated more than 80 percent of waste is inadequately managed, leaked into nature through illegal dumping or in unsanitary landfills. MSW collection rate including at larger cities such as Lagos, is low, at between 40 and 70 percent. Relatedly, Nigeria is also home to 3 out of the top 20 plastic polluting rivers globally, that is, the Cross, Imo, and Kwa Ibo rivers; being a country well-endowed with natural water resources, including home to Africa’s third-largest water resource, that is, the Niger River. Compounding a low municipal solid waste collection rate are poor separation and sorting at source. To date, solid waste management is one of the most pressing environmental issues facing urban and rural areas. Among other impacts, studies have found microplastics in aquatic life due to pollution, especially due to mismanagement of low-value plastics. For example, an estimated 60 million plastic water sachets are consumed in a day in Nigeria, which currently does not yet have a sustainable end-of-life solution.

**Legislation, Policies and Other Initiatives**

There is significant momentum in Nigeria to tackle plastics waste through CE principles. In 2020, the Nigerian Federal Executive Council approved a new law on plastic waste to encourage the development of a CE around plastic waste.

Nigeria’s National Environmental Regulations introduced EPR requirements for the following industries: food, beverages, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, soap and detergent, electricals and electronics, and plastics. Additionally, the EPR Programme was introduced in 2016 as a framework geared toward achieving a zero-waste society, including the reduction of the environmental impact of packaging waste.

In May 2019, a plastic bag prohibition bill was passed, providing “an Act to prohibit the use, manufacture and importation of all plastic bags used for commercial and household packaging in order to address harmful impacts to oceans, rivers, lakes, forests, environment as well as human beings and also to relieve pressure on landfills and waste management and for other related matters.” The bill further states that

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18 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
a retailer should offer a paper bag to customers at the point of sale. However, this bill is reportedly not yet implemented as the president has not assented to it.

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Note: Hotspots are delineated based on their statistical significance, then associated with the nearest locale. Multiple hotspots may be associated with a single locale (as in the case of 14 and 15 being associated with Oshogbo).