

# step towards sustainability

## Science Supporting PVC in the Environment

In years to come, your trusty PVC footwear might have had a former life as telephone cable. Who knows what new ideas will come out of the ever-increasing opportunities for recycling?

Most of us are familiar with the well-established routes for recycling metal and glass, but few of us appreciate

the major advances now being achieved in plastics recycling. Already, used PVC products are being turned into garden seats and farm fencing. This Overview Note aims to give the facts, the science and the reasoning behind why we believe PVC is entirely safe in recovery and disposal.

### Recycling PVC

The recycling of PVC is a relatively straightforward

process. PVC is tolerant of many contaminants and the presence of the chlorine molecule is an aid to PVC being identified and separated from other plastics for recycling. There are many recycling schemes now in operation around Europe. For example, pipes are recycled in Sweden and the Netherlands, window profiles and flooring in Germany and Austria, bottles in France, Italy, and

Belgium, and cable insulation in the United Kingdom.

There is a growing range of applications for the recycle produced –

here are just a few examples – PVC bottles are turned into pipe, ducting and textiles; PVC flooring into flooring again; PVC cable insulation into floor mats and automotive mudflaps and PVC windows into window profiles and ducting.

As with other plastics, the potential for collecting and recycling PVC products is enhanced when the material is easy to identify, separate and keep clean. This enables an appropriate quality of recycle to be produced.

“ The presence of the chlorine molecule means PVC can easily be identified and separated from other plastics for recycling. ”



✓ Good for Life...  
✓ Good for the Environment

