



PLASTIC RECYCLING, INC.
ENGINEERED RECYCLED COMPOUNDS

PRI WHITEPAPER · PROCUREMENT GUIDE

ISCC PLUS MASS BALANCE, EXPLAINED.

A plain-language procurement guide to ISCC PLUS and mass balance — what the certification proves, how chain-of-custody works, and the questions to ask before you buy certified recycled content.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO PROCUREMENT

THE CREDENTIAL BEHIND A RECYCLED-CONTENT CLAIM

When a supplier says their material contains recycled content, a procurement team has to ask the uncomfortable question: **how do we actually know?** ISCC PLUS is one of the most widely recognized answers to that question — but the terminology around it ("mass balance," "chain of custody") is genuinely confusing, and that confusion creates sourcing risk.

This guide explains ISCC PLUS in plain terms, so a buyer can evaluate certified recycled content with confidence, defend the claim internally, and ask suppliers the right questions before committing to a program.

START HERE

WHAT ISCC PLUS ACTUALLY IS

ISCC PLUS (International Sustainability and Carbon Certification) is a voluntary, internationally recognized certification scheme for the traceability of sustainable and recycled materials through a supply chain. For recycled plastics, it provides independent, third-party verification that recycled content entering a process can be credibly tracked and claimed at the other end.

The key point for procurement: ISCC PLUS is not a quality spec or a performance grade. It is a **chain-of-custody certification** — it verifies the *accounting* of recycled content, not the mechanical properties of the material. You still qualify the material on its specs. ISCC PLUS is what lets you (and your customers, and your auditors) trust the recycled-content claim attached to it.

CHAIN OF CUSTODY	MASS BALANCE
The documented trail that follows recycled material through each step of the supply chain — so the recycled content claimed in the final product can be traced back to a verified source.	A chain-of-custody method that mixes recycled and conventional feedstock in production, then allocates the recycled content to outputs through verified bookkeeping — rather than physically segregating every batch.

THE CONCEPT THAT TRIPS PEOPLE UP

HOW MASS BALANCE WORKS

Mass balance is the part buyers find most confusing — so here is the plain-language version, with an analogy that makes it click.

In an ideal world, a recycler would physically keep every batch of recycled material completely separate from conventional material, all the way through production, so you could point to a specific pellet and say "that one is recycled." In real manufacturing, that level of segregation is often impractical and wasteful — recycled and conventional feedstocks frequently run through the same equipment.

Mass balance solves this with verified accounting. The recycler documents exactly how much recycled feedstock enters the system, and can then allocate that verified recycled content to a corresponding amount of output product — under independent audit, with strict bookkeeping rules that prevent claiming more recycled content than actually entered.

Think of it like renewable energy on the grid. When you buy renewable electricity, the actual electrons in your outlet aren't sorted by source — but a verified accounting system ensures that the amount of renewable energy you paid for was genuinely added to the grid. Mass balance applies the same audited-accounting logic to recycled content.

— THE MASS BALANCE ANALOGY

The result is a system that is both **practical for real production** and **credible enough to be independently certified** — which is exactly what procurement needs to stand behind a recycled-content claim.

WHAT IT GIVES YOU

WHY IT HOLDS UP UNDER SCRUTINY

- **Independent verification.** Certification is issued by an accredited third-party body, not self-declared by the supplier.
- **Traceable claims.** The recycled content in your purchase ties back to documented, audited feedstock — defensible to your customers and auditors.
- **Scope 3 support.** Verified recycled content gives your sustainability team a credible basis for reporting supply-chain emission reductions.
- **Regulatory readiness.** As recycled-content mandates tighten, certified chain-of-custody positions you ahead of compliance requirements.

BUYER'S CHECKLIST

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU BUY

Use these to separate suppliers with genuine, certified traceability from those making looser claims:

1. Are you ISCC PLUS certified, and can you provide the certificate?

A certified supplier can produce a current certificate naming the certified site, materials, and validity dates. Ask to see it.

2. Which materials and processes does the certification cover?

Certification is scoped to specific polymers and operations. Confirm the material you're buying falls within the certified scope.

3. Is the recycled content tracked by mass balance, and how is it documented?

The supplier should be able to explain their chain-of-custody method and provide documentation that supports the recycled-content claim on your purchase.

4. Can you supply chain-of-custody documentation with the order?

For Scope 3 reporting and customer claims, you'll want the paperwork — not just a verbal assurance — tied to the material you receive.

WHERE PRI FITS

CERTIFIED, AND ENGINEERED TO PERFORM

PRI holds **ISCC PLUS Mass Balance certification** — so the recycled content in PRI compounds comes with verified, traceable chain-of-custody documentation procurement teams can stand behind. But certification is only half the equation. The other half is that the material has to actually run.

Because PRI engineers variability out of its compounds upstream — backed by 38 years of operations and in-house laboratory validation — you get certified recycled content **and** consistent, spec-grade performance. Certified traceability you can report on; material consistency you can build a program around.

ISCC+

MASS BALANCE CERTIFIED

38

YEARS OF OPERATIONS

~200M

LBS ANNUAL CAPACITY

4x

FDA LETTERS OF NO
OBJECTION

SOURCING CERTIFIED RECYCLED CONTENT?

Request a sample and the supporting documentation. Validate the material on your specs — and put the certified chain-of-custody to work in your reporting.

REQUEST A SAMPLE AT [PLASTIC-RECYCLING.NET](https://plastic-recycling.net) →

Plastic Recycling, Inc. · 7601 Rockville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46214 · +1 (317) 780-6100 · info@plastic-recycling.net · www.plastic-recycling.net

This whitepaper is provided by Plastic Recycling, Inc. for informational purposes and offers a general explanation of ISCC PLUS and mass-balance chain-of-custody concepts; it is not official guidance from ISCC or any certification body. ISCC PLUS Mass Balance certification is issued by an accredited third-party certification body and is subject to defined scope and validity. Capabilities and certifications reflect PRI's operations as of publication and are subject to change.