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Metal recovery from incineration bottom ash: State-of-the-art and recent developments

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24 MSWI, and its annual European production is about 20 million tons. The composition of IBA depends  
25 on the composition of the incinerated waste; therefore, it may contain significant amounts of ferrous  
26 and non-ferrous (NFe) metals as well as glass that can be recovered. Technologies for NFe metals  
27 recovery have emerged in IBA treatment since the 1990s and became common practice in many  
28 developed countries. Although the principles and used apparatus are nearly the same in all  
29 treatment trains, the differences in technological approaches to recovery of valuable components  
30 from IBA – with a special focus on NFe metals recovery – are summarized in this paper.

31

32 Keyword: bottom ash, metal recovery, waste-to-energy, non-ferrous metals, iron scrap

33

## 34 1. Introduction

35 Municipal solid waste incineration (MSWI) is one of the leading technologies for municipal solid  
36 waste (MSW) treatment in Europe. According to Eurostat data, in 2015, 27% of MSW, i.e., more than  
37 80 million tons per year, was treated in MSWI plants. Therefore, Europe’s annual production of  
38 incineration bottom ash (IBA) is about 20 million tons, as it makes up about 25% of the weight of  
39 input MSW (Lamers, 2015). In the EU List of Waste (LoW), IBA is listed as a “mirror entry”; i.e. a  
40 waste from the same source that might under the LoW be allocated to a hazardous entry (19 01 12)  
41 or to a non-hazardous entry (19 01 11) depending on the specific case and on the composition of the  
42 waste.

43 Beside the utilization of waste’s energy content, MSWI allows the recovery of various  
44 valuable components; hence, MSWI is an integral part of the circular economy concept (Van  
45 Caneghem et al., 2019, Brunner and Rechberger, 2015). IBA is a secondary source particularly of  
46 ferrous (Fe) and non-ferrous (NFe) metals and glass. Moreover, the residual mineral fraction left after  
47 separation of the above-mentioned materials can be used for various applications in the construction  
48 industry, e.g., as an aggregate substitute for bound or unbound applications, in cement

49 manufacturing, or, as indicated by recent research, in more sophisticated applications such as  
50 manufacturing of ceramics. The legal requirements for the utilization of the mineral part of IBA vary  
51 from country to country. This and current practice of waste incineration bottom ash utilisation in  
52 Europe was recently reviewed (Blasenbauer et al., 2020). The technologies for metals recovery from  
53 IBA have developed significantly during the last decade and have become an important integration to  
54 MSWI facilities all over Europe. Glass recovery is also gaining momentum, with some applications  
55 starting to appear on the market.

56         The mineral fraction left after the recovery of metals can be utilized in a number of ways  
57 which are in different stages of maturity and acceptance by authorities/public and have different  
58 potentials for the management of the bulk mass of IBA, different costs and different environmental  
59 impacts. A detailed discussion of this topic is outside of the scope of this review, but for the sake of  
60 clarity it could be mentioned that, historically, utilization as a landfill cover or material for the  
61 construction of roads on the landfill site was the main management option. Over the last 20 years, an  
62 increasingly larger portion of the mineral fraction was being utilized in many European countries as  
63 unbound construction aggregates; typically as a subbase layer in road constructions thereby  
64 replacing natural materials (Blasenbauer et al., 2020). At a somewhat smaller scale, utilization of the  
65 mineral fraction as a replacement for natural materials (sand, gravel, cement) in construction  
66 materials like mortar, different types of concrete, premanufactured construction products (e.g.  
67 building blocks), light-weight aggregates, and asphalt was reported elsewhere (Lynn et al., 2018). In  
68 some countries, the mineral fraction – or part of it – may be used as a replacement for raw material  
69 in cement production or as feedstock for glass, glass-ceramics, and ceramic production. Overall, the  
70 management options for the mineral fraction originating from metal-separated IBA are affected by  
71 applied pre-treatment (e.g. washing, crushing) which is affected by the intended application. In some  
72 countries, the fine fraction of IBA may need to be removed, because the presence of this fraction  
73 (often enriched with trace elements) may hamper the utilization of the mineral fraction in the  
74 construction sector. Naturally, by removing the fine fraction a new waste stream (contaminated with

75 e.g. trace metals) is generated and needs to be managed properly. On the other hand, in other  
76 countries, where IBA is utilized as unbound aggregate in e.g. road constructions, removing the fine  
77 fraction may not be necessary and may even be undesirable, since this may negatively affect the  
78 particle size distribution of the IBA-gravel, limit its suitability for construction applications and  
79 ultimately lead to landfilling of large bulks of IBA (Hyks and Hjelmar, 2018).

80 The aim of this paper is to present a comprehensive review of various technological  
81 approaches to recovery valuable components from IBA, with a particular interest in NFe metals  
82 recovery.

83

## 84 2. IBA properties and chemical composition

85

### 86 2.1. Physical properties and elemental composition

87

88 IBA is gray or dark gray-colored heterogeneous material with the elemental composition given by the  
89 composition of the incinerated waste. The main constituents of IBA are typical ash-forming elements  
90 (e.g. Si, Al, Ca, and Fe) and a variety of other elements, some of them of environmental concern (see  
91 Table 1) that is mostly related to their leaching. As there are many studies on the leaching of  
92 elements of potential environmental concern from the mineral fraction of IBA (see e.g. Silva et al.,  
93 2019 and references therein), this matter will not be discussed further in this paper.

94

95 Table 1. IBA elemental composition (Astrup et al., 2016)

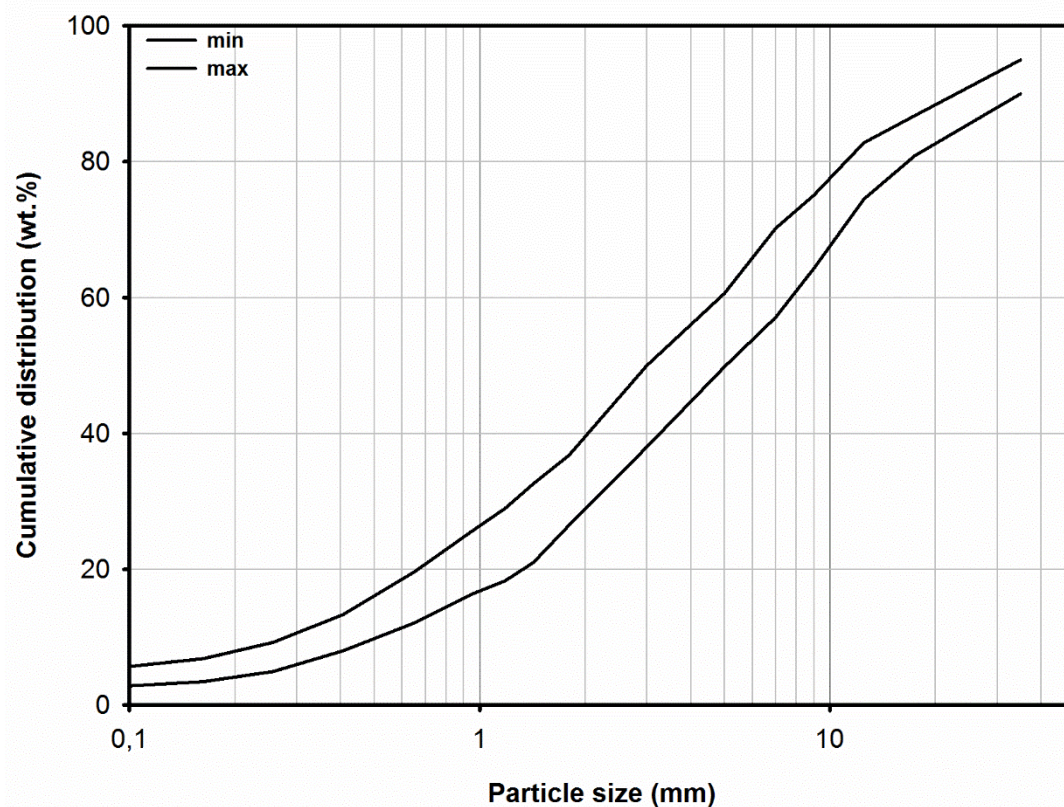
<b>Ash-forming elements (mg/kg)</b>		<b>Minor and trace elements (mg/kg)</b>	
<b>Al</b>	14,000-79,000	<b>As</b>	0.12-190

<b>Ca</b>	8,600-170,000	Ba	69-5,700
<b>Fe</b>	3,100-150,000	Cd	0.3-70
<b>K</b>	660-16,000	Cu	190-25,000
<b>Mg</b>	240-26,000	Cr	20-3,400
<b>Mn</b>	7.7-3,200	Mo	2.5-280
<b>Na</b>	2,200-42,000	Ni	7.0-4,300
<b>P</b>	440-10,500	Pb	74-14,000
<b>Si</b>	4,300-308,000	Se	0.05-10
		Sn	2.0-470
		Tl	0.008-0.23
		V	16-120
		Zn	10-20,000

96

97 The bulk density of uncompacted IBA is typically 1,200-1,800 kg/m<sup>3</sup>. The pH value of fresh IBA is 10.5-  
98 12.0. The moisture content is related to the type of discharge: wet or dry. Wet discharged IBA has a  
99 moisture content of about 18-25%, with the majority of the moisture content allocated to the fine  
100 fraction; dry discharged IBA has a moisture content below 1%. The loss of ignition of IBA is usually 1-  
101 3% (Lynn et al., 2017). All values refer to weight-% unless specified otherwise.

102 IBA contains particles from a few micrometers up to several centimeters in size. Usually, 30-  
103 40% of its particles are smaller than 2 mm and about 20% are larger than 2 cm (Šyc et al., 2018a,  
104 Huber et al., 2020). A typical range of particle size distribution is shown in Figure 1.



105

106 Figure 1. Typical particle size distribution of IBA (Šyc et al., 2018a)

107

## 108 2.2. Mineralogy

109 The mineralogical composition of IBA has been extensively investigated over the years, both from a  
 110 qualitative and, more recently, a quantitative point of view. Mineralogical analyses aim to identify: (i)  
 111 the main crystalline phases occurring in the bulk material or in specific particle size and/or material  
 112 fractions (e.g. Fe fraction, glass fraction, etc.) (Bayuseno and Schmahl, 2010; Chimenos et al., 2003;  
 113 Eusden et al., 1999); (ii) phases bearing heavy metals (Wei et al., 2011), and (iii) the effects of natural  
 114 weathering or other treatments on IBA mineralogy (Chimenos et al., 2003; Piantone et al., 2004).

115 Most studies define IBA mineralogy as complex, due to its multi-component, partially  
 116 amorphous characteristics (Wei et al., 2011). IBA contains solid phases with high melting points that  
 117 were already present in the original waste. These so-called refractories include metals, ceramics,



118 glass fragments, unburned materials, and minerals such as quartz, K-feldspar, plagioclase and biotite.  
119 In addition, IBA contains melt products (glass and mineral phases) formed due to high-temperature  
120 combustion (Bayuseno and Schmahl, 2010; Eusden et al., 1999; Inkaew et al., 2016). These latter  
121 products, which are considered the main phases that bind heavy metals, include crystallization or  
122 decomposition products such as melilite group minerals (gehlenite and akermanite, in particular),  
123 spinels (such as magnetite and other spinels from the aluminum spinel subgroup), plagioclase  
124 feldspar, (pseudo)wollastonite, metal inclusions, and lime (Eusden et al., 1999; Wei et al., 2011).

125 As for the mineralogy of dry discharged IBA, Bourtsalas (2015) analyzed the as-received IBA  
126 fine fraction ( $d < 1\text{mm}$ ) produced by the Swiss MSWI plant in Monthey. The major crystalline phases  
127 reported were quartz, calcite, gehlenite, and hematite. These results are in good agreement with the  
128 findings of Inkaew et al. (2016) and Yang et al. (2016), who reported quartz, gehlenite, calcite, and  
129 lime as the main phases of unquenched IBA sampled from Japanese MSWI plants. Chlorides were  
130 reported to be bound mostly to the amorphous glassy fraction of dry-extracted IBA (Yang et al.,  
131 2016).

132 In summary, although waste composition and thermal treatment conditions affect IBA  
133 mineralogy, the cooling (or discharge) methods applied (Yang et al., 2016) and weathering reactions  
134 (discussed later) also exert a key role in terms of IBA mineralogy and environmental properties. Table  
135 2 reports the main crystalline phases identified in studies carried out on unquenched, freshly  
136 quenched, and weathered IBA samples, in which the content of the amorphous glassy fraction ranges  
137 from 40 to around 70%.

138 Water cooling (quenching) leads to several reactions that modify the chemical, physical, and  
139 mineralogical properties of IBA. As investigated in depth by Inkaew et al. (2016), quenching causes  
140 the dissolution of soluble salts, the oxidation of Fe and NFe metals, and hydration reactions that lead  
141 to the precipitation of new phases (i.e., portlandite, ettringite, gypsum, and Cl-containing crystalline  
142 phases such as hydrocalumite and/or Friedel's salt). Quench products and melt particles tend to

143 agglomerate, causing an increase in IBA particle size due to water-bridging, carbonation reactions  
144 occurring in the pore water, and hardening of newly formed C-S-H phases.

145 Furthermore, the phase assemblage that is present after rapid combustion, cooling, and  
146 quenching is metastable (far from equilibrium conditions) and therefore highly susceptible to  
147 chemical and mineralogical transformations (Bayuseno and Schmahl, 2010). This process, generally  
148 termed weathering, involves a complex series of reactions including hydrolysis/hydration,  
149 dissociation/precipitation of salts and hydroxides, carbonation (in which lime or portlandite reacts  
150 with gaseous CO<sub>2</sub> via a liquid phase, yielding calcite), the formation of clay-like minerals from the  
151 glassy phase such as illite or muscovite, oxidation/reduction, and the sorption and formation of solid  
152 solutions (Bayuseno and Schmahl, 2010; Costa et al., 2007; Eusden et al., 1999; Kirby and Rimstidt,  
153 1993; Meima and Comans, 1997; Zevenbergen et al., 1998). In particular, phases such as gypsum,  
154 ettringite, calcite, and hydroxides such as ferrihydrite and gibbsite have been indicated as the main  
155 weathering products (Chimenos et al., 2003; Meima and Comans, 1997; Piantone et al., 2004;  
156 Zevenbergen et al., 1998), as has hydrocalumite (Bayuseno and Schmahl, 2010). These phases play a  
157 key role in the environmental behavior of IBA, since they have been identified as the ones controlling  
158 solubility for the release of metals and metalloids (Meima and Comans, 1997). It should be noted  
159 that in samples subject to prolonged weathering, some of these phases such as ettringite,  
160 hydrocalumite and Friedel's salt may undergo carbonation reactions (Baclocchi et al., 2010; Inkaew  
161 et al., 2016), leading to further changes in pH and the leaching of elements of potential  
162 environmental concern, including sulfates.

163 Metals and metalloids of potential concern, such as Pb, Zn, Cu, Mn, and Cr, were detected mainly in  
164 non-silicate minerals (Wei et al., 2011); specifically, Cr, Zn, and Mn were found in spinels, but Cu and  
165 Pb were reported to be associated with Fe, Sn, and Zn, present as metallic inclusions bound in the  
166 silicate glass matrix (Wei et al., 2011). Cu sulfates and Ba sulfates were also detected in fresh and  
167 weathered IBA (Bayuseno and Schmahl, 2010).

168 The magnetic fraction of IBA was found to contain magnetite, wüstite, and hematite (Bayuseno and  
 169 Schmahl, 2010; Kirby and Rimstidt, 1993). The latter study reported specifically that metallic iron was  
 170 not found. As for the mineralogical composition of specific particle size fractions of IBA, Chimenos et  
 171 al. (2003) found that in the finest fractions ( $d < 4 \mu\text{m}$ ), gehlenite and albite were the major crystalline  
 172 phases containing aluminum, while metallic aluminum was the main Al source in the coarser ones.

173

174 Table 2. Main crystalline phases detected in IBA after dry extraction (or before quenching), after  
 175 quenching, and after weathering

Mineral phase	Chemical formula	Unquenched	Quenched	Weathered
		IBA	IBA	IBA
<b>Quartz</b>	SiO <sub>2</sub>	h, i	b, e, f, g, i	a, c, d, e, f
<b>Cristobalite</b>	SiO <sub>2</sub>		g	a, g
<b>Gehlenite</b>	Ca <sub>2</sub> Al <sub>2</sub> SiO <sub>7</sub>	h, i	b, e, f, g, i	a, e, f, g
<b>Akermanite</b>	Ca <sub>2</sub> MgSi <sub>2</sub> O <sub>7</sub>		b, e	a, e
<b>Alkali Feldspars</b>	(K,Na)(Al,Si)3O <sub>8</sub>		b, c (albite),g	g
<b>Plagioclase feldspars</b>	NaAlSi <sub>3</sub> O <sub>8</sub> -CaAl <sub>2</sub> Si <sub>2</sub> O <sub>8</sub>	e, i	B, e, i	e
<b>Calcium Pyroxene</b>	Ca(Mg,Fe)Si <sub>2</sub> O <sub>6</sub>		b, g	g
<b>Wollastonite</b>	CaSiO <sub>3</sub>		b, f, g	f, g
<b>Lime</b>	CaO	e, i	b	
<b>Portlandite</b>	Ca(OH) <sub>2</sub>		c, g	
<b>Magnetite</b>	Fe <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	e	e, f, g	a, e, f, g
<b>Hematite</b>	Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	h, i	i, f, g	d, f, g
<b>Wüstite</b>	FeO		f, g	f, g

<b>Calcite</b>	$\text{CaCO}_3$	h, i	e, i, f, g	a, c, d, e, f, g
<b>Goethite</b>	$\text{FeO(OH)}$			d
<b>Corundum</b>	$\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$		e	e
<b>Gibbsite</b>	$\text{Al(OH)}_3$			d
<b>Anhydrite</b>	$\text{CaSO}_4$		c, e, g	d, g
<b>Gypsum</b>	$\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$			a, g
<b>Hydrocalumite</b>	$\text{Ca}_2\text{Al(OH)}_6\text{Cl}_{1-x}\text{(OH)}_x \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$		f, i	e
<b>Friedel's salt</b>	$\text{Ca}_2\text{Al(OH)}_6\text{Cl} \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$		i	
<b>Ettringite</b>	$\text{Ca}_6\text{Al}_2(\text{SO}_4)_3(\text{OH})_{12} \cdot 26\text{H}_2\text{O}$			a, c, d, e

176 References: a) (Zevenbergen et al., 1998); b) (Eusden et al., 1999); c) (Chimenos et al., 2003); d)  
177 (Piantone et al., 2004); e) (Bayuseno and Schmahl, 2010); f) (Wei et al., 2011); g) (Santos et al., 2013);  
178 h) (Bourtsalass, 2015); i) (Inkaew et al., 2016)

179

### 180 2.3. Material composition

181 IBA material composition is usually within the following ranges: 5–15% Fe metals, 1–5% NFe metals,  
182 10–30% glass and ceramics, 1–5% unburned organics, and 50–70% minerals. However, IBA is a very  
183 heterogeneous material and its composition is determined by the composition of the incinerated  
184 waste and the operating conditions (Hyks and Astrup, 2019). The efficiency of various recovery  
185 techniques is affected mostly by the particle size of the recoverable material. Therefore, the overall  
186 content, the particle size distribution, and the liberation of the recoverable materials are key factors  
187 for determining the potential of recovery of valuable materials from IBA.

188 Fe metals content is usually 5-15%. Muchová (2010) reported that Fe scrap content varied from 8 to  
189 13% of the IBA from the Amsterdam MSWI plant. Wieduwilt et al. (2015) found the average Fe scrap  
190 content in IBA from Switzerland to be 9%. Šyc et al. (2018a) reported 6-11% in the IBA from a Czech

191 MSWI plant, whereas in IBA from plants that incinerated mostly MSW, the Fe scrap content was 9-  
192 11%. Fe scrap generally presents a coarse particle size; more than 80% of the Fe scrap total content is  
193 in particles larger than 1 cm.

194 The NFe metals content is usually reported to be 1.0-5.0%. As the most abundant of NFe metals, Al  
195 was found to amount to 1–2% of IBA, according to Allegrini et al. (2014), Berkhout et al. (2011) and  
196 Biganzoli and Grosso (2013). Allegrini et al. (2014) analyzed material flows in a BA treatment plant  
197 and determined the average content of NFe metals in Danish wet discharged IBA to be 2.2%. NFe  
198 metal content in 2–8, 8–16, and 16–50 mm BA fractions was nearly the same, i.e., approximately  
199 3.1–3.5%. They also reported that approximately 70% of the NFe metals was aluminum. IBA from  
200 two Spanish MSWI plants analyzed by Chimenos et al. (1999) contained 2–4% NFe metals, of which  
201 90% was aluminum. Muchová (2010) found the average content of NFe metals in IBA from an  
202 Amsterdam MSWI plant to be 2.3%; more than 80% of the metals were in free form, i.e., recoverable  
203 without IBA crushing. About one-half of the NFe metals were in particles greater than 20 mm.  
204 Aluminum was dominant in particles from 6–20 mm (60%); in particles smaller than 2 mm, Cu was  
205 the most prevalent (90%). Šyc et al. (2018a) found the average NFe metals content in IBA from three  
206 Czech MSWI plants to be 1.3-2.8%, about 4/5 of which made up by aluminum and the rest by heavy  
207 non-ferrous (HNFe) metals like Cu, brass, etc.. NFe metals were spread equally among all size  
208 fractions. (Šyc et al., 2018a) The section above confirms the large variability of NFe metal total  
209 content in IBA.

210 Glass recovery has not been widely applied so far to IBA, so very few data about glass content can be  
211 found (see Chapter 5). Generally, it can be claimed that the total glass content in IBA varies from 10  
212 to 30%, depending mainly on the effectiveness and intensity of the separate collection system and on  
213 local consumer habits. Chimenos et al. (1999) studied IBA material composition from 2 MSWI plants  
214 and found glass as the main component of weathered IBA in particles larger than 4 mm, with the  
215 glass content greater than 50% in particles larger than 1 mm. Glass content decreased in time with  
216 an increase of the effectiveness of the separate collection system. Therefore, 15 years later, del

217 Valle-Zermeño et al. (2017) found lower glass content and claimed the total content of glass in IBA to  
218 be ca. 26%. Makari (2014) found an average total glass content in IBA of approximately 20% at the  
219 MSWI plant in Bratislava. Šyc et al. (2018a) found total glass content in IBA of 9-23%, and claimed  
220 that with increased co-incineration of commercial waste the content of glass decreased as well. Glass  
221 particle size distribution is a crucial factor for its recovery. Glass shards were a main component of  
222 particles 4-8 mm with a share of over 50% in this fraction; in the fraction 8-16 mm the share of glass  
223 was nearly 40% (del Valle-Zermeño et al., 2017). In particles larger than 16 mm, they reported the  
224 share of glass of ca. 10%, and in particles 2-4 mm nearly 30%. A slightly different distribution was  
225 reported by Šyc et al., (2018a), who found the maximum glass content in the 8-15 mm fraction. This  
226 result implies a shift of glass particles distribution toward larger particles with maximum contents in  
227 the 8-15 mm fraction, in contrast to the findings of del Valle-Zermeño et al. (2017), who reported the  
228 maximum amount in 4-8 mm particles.

## 229 3. Metal recovery

### 230 3.1. Basics of metal recovery

231 Since the 1990s, technologies for NFe metals recovery have emerged in IBA treatment. They are  
232 currently common practice in many developed countries. Generally, there are three types of  
233 treatment trains:

- 234 • dry processing of wet bottom ash,
- 235 • wet processing of wet bottom ash,
- 236 • dry processing of dry bottom ash.

237

238 The choice between dry or wet IBA treatment depends first of all on the IBA discharge system. Two  
239 different types of discharge systems exist: wet-based and dry-based. A wet extraction system allows  
240 the quenching of the hot IBA by contact with water, and the IBA is subsequently transported with a  
241 ram discharger or a chain transport system to a bunker (Lamers, 2015). Dry discharge systems are

242 relatively rare in up-to-date MSWI plants; they have several advantages with respect to metal  
243 recovery efficiency, but they are technically more complicated than wet extraction systems (Kahle et  
244 al., 2015).

245 The majority of metal recovery treatment technologies are dry treatment for wet IBA. Wet treatment  
246 for wet IBA has emerged mainly in the Netherlands in the last few years as a result of an initiative  
247 focused on achieving the same environmental quality of treated IBA and other construction materials  
248 including primary materials (AEB, 2015). Dry methods for dry IBA have been particularly proposed in  
249 Switzerland; they can lead to increased metal recovery, but the residual IBA cannot be used without  
250 further treatment (i.e., wetting and subsequent ageing) and must be landfilled. Up to now, only one  
251 plant based on dry treatment of dry IBA has been built in Switzerland, due to the absence of dry IBA  
252 discharge from MSWI plants. NFe metals recovery is usually achieved by using eddy current  
253 separators (ECS) with several other apparatus and pretreatment steps; IBA treatment trains can  
254 contain sieving, magnetic separation, eddy current separation, crushing, wind sifters, a sensor-based  
255 sorting system, hand-picking, etc. Density separation could be part of a treatment plant as well,  
256 particularly for recovering fine heavy non-ferrous metals (Šyc et al., 2018b; Bunge, 2018).

257 Metal recovery can take place at the site of the MSWI plant. A simple conventional method is usually  
258 employed on-site, except at large centralized MSWI plants with a capacity of at least 400 kt of waste  
259 per year; for the latter, it can be economically feasible to build a more advanced plant with greater  
260 efficiency. From an economic point of view, the greater investment required for advanced IBA  
261 treatment plants – primarily due to the introduction of a grinding stage, the presence of multiplied  
262 ECS for each size stream and sensor-based sorting systems for stainless steel – is justified by the  
263 increase in NFe metals recovery (Kohaupt, 2011). For small incineration plants that cannot afford  
264 such an investment, a good option might be to establish a centralized IBA treatment plant serving  
265 several incineration plants or to use mobile treatment plants that can be moved around in  
266 accordance with a certain schedule. However, such a mobile plant cannot achieve the same  
267 efficiency of fitted and optimized on-site plants (Kallesøe, 2017).

268 **3.2. Bottom ash treatment approaches**

269 There are two main approaches to metal recovery treatment trains (Table 3) (Šyc et al., 2018b)

- 270 • maximizing the efficiency of metal recovery with no intention to use the mineral fraction in
- 271 the construction industry, or
- 272 • metal recovery with the use of the mineral fraction in the construction industry.

273 The entire treatment of the IBA is determined by these aims, starting with the discharge system and  
 274 ending with, e.g., IBA crushing or ageing. For example, for using IBA as a subbase layer for road  
 275 construction, wet discharge with subsequent ageing for IBA stabilization is necessary and crushing is  
 276 limited to large oversized particles over 40 mm. On the contrary, if there is no intention to use the  
 277 mineral fraction of IBA dry discharge has several advantages and increase metal recovery from fine  
 278 particles. Also crushing of the complete IBA liberates metals agglomerated with minerals.

279

280 Table 3. IBA treatment train principles

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>IBA mineral fraction to be used as subbase layer for construction industry</b>	<b>No intention to use IBA mineral fraction</b>
<b>Dry discharge</b>	Not applicable, as there is no preceding ageing process	Optional, as no sticky fine fraction is formed
<b>Wet discharge</b>	Necessary to initiate the ageing reactions	Possible, but causes several problems in metal recovery
<b>Ageing</b>	Necessary for IBA stabilization	Optional for decreasing IBA humidity in case of wet discharge
<b>Crushing</b>	Optional for large IBA fractions with particles larger than 40 mm	Optional for all size fractions for liberating agglomerated metals and increasing recovery efficiency

281



282 Many bottom ash treatment plants have been built across Europe in recent years. Each plant is  
283 nearly unique; however, the principles of pretreatment and separation methods are similar. Recent  
284 data show that an average of 63 kg of iron scrap and 17 kg of NFe metals are recovered per ton of  
285 raw IBA. A further increase in recovery efficiency can be achieved, e.g., by pre-drying IBA, splitting it  
286 into several size fractions, or crushing the coarse fraction to release metals contained in ash  
287 agglomerates (Walker, 2010). A correctly designed treatment plant should, in fact, include grinding,  
288 sieving, Fe and NFe separators, and possibly other technologies for the recovery of the stainless steel  
289 and for the separation of the finest and stickiest particles (by drying or with technologies such as the  
290 ADR described in Chapter 3.3.4). Sieving is necessary to obtain different material flows of a selected  
291 size, with a magnetic separator and an eddy current separator sequentially located on each stream.

292 Overall, the recovery rate of NFe metals is essentially determined by the treatment train setup;  
293 advanced ones can produce up to 30 kg per ton of raw IBA. The recovery rate increases with the  
294 number of apparatus in the treatment train, e.g. 12 ECSs are employed in a treatment train that can  
295 recover more than 20 kg of NFe metals per ton of IBA. On the other hand, the increased recovery  
296 rate may result in increased energy consumption. The average electricity consumption is 3 kWh per  
297 ton of treated IBA, but for some plants up to 15 kWh were reported (European Integrated Pollution  
298 Prevention and Control Bureau (EIPPCB), 2018).

299

### 300 3.3. Pretreatment operations

#### 301 3.3.1. Ageing

302 Ageing (or weathering) is a technique used mostly to treat the bulk of IBA before the metal recovery  
303 process or the residual mineral fractions before they are disposed of in a landfill or processed for use  
304 as a construction material. Ageing improves IBA leaching properties, decreases its water content, and  
305 stabilizes the meta-reactive IBA matrix. Ageing occurs naturally during storage before further  
306 treatment. The storage usually lasts for 4-12 weeks and is occasionally prolonged up to one year. A

307 substantial decrease in water content takes place during storage of the IBA under atmospheric  
308 conditions. For example, a decrease from over 20% by weight to below 5% by weight in 6 weeks  
309 during the summer and in 3 months or less during the winter has been reported (Walker, 2010). A  
310 low moisture content results in higher metal recovery rates, but can cause problems with dust  
311 emissions during treatment. The optimal IBA humidity for metal recovery is 10-15%. On the other  
312 hand, ageing affects the metals speciation and leachability in IBA. Numerous studies have assessed  
313 the alteration processes occurring during IBA ageing (Meima and Comans, 1997; Poletini and Pomi,  
314 2004; Speiser et al., 2000). It is assumed that the most important exothermal reactions causing the  
315 temperature increase are the hydration of alkali and alkaline earth oxides, the corrosion of metals,  
316 and the carbonation of portlandite ( $\text{Ca(OH)}_2$ ) to calcite ( $\text{CaCO}_3$ ) (Sabbas et al., 2003). A detailed  
317 description of the reactions proceeding during the ageing process is published elsewhere (Nørgaard  
318 et al., 2019).

319 On the one hand, some researchers have shown that a significant portion of aluminum will undergo  
320 oxidation reactions with an up to 30% loss of metallic aluminum after ten weeks of storage, and with  
321 a release of hydrogen gas (Rem et al., 2004). Aluminum oxidation was reported to take for ca. 3  
322 months, presumably because after this period the surface of all Al particles is covered by  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ . On  
323 the other hand, a recent Swedish study investigated real-time corrosion rates of aluminum  
324 electrodes placed in a number of piles of IBA during outdoor ageing and found very low initial  
325 corrosion rates ( $< 0.1$  mm/yr) and negligible corrosion rates ( $< 0.001$  mm/yr) even after 3 months of  
326 outdoor ageing (Hedenstedt et al., 2016). Iron corrosion by chloride and sulfate ions and  
327 transformation to iron hydroxide will take place under a strongly alkaline environment such as that  
328 of IBA, as well. Cu and brass particles will not undergo corrosion; hence, their content does not  
329 decrease while IBA weathers.

330

331 *3.3.2. Sieving*

332 Accurate fractioning of IBA is a crucial step for improving the recovery of metals. Sieving makes it  
333 possible to obtain narrow-fractioned material flows that are homogeneous in terms of particle size,  
334 thereby optimizing the efficiency of the downstream magnetic separation system, ECS, or other  
335 apparatus. The distribution of the elements into different grain size fractions varies, but is not so  
336 diverse that certain elements could be recovered or significantly concentrated simply by sieving (Yao  
337 et al., 2013, Huber, 2019).

338 In conventional plants, the IBA is usually sieved in two or three streams, but the number of fractions  
339 can increase in advanced plants and can reach even 6-9 fractions, in order to optimize metal recovery  
340 by using ECS calibrated to the specific material sizes.

341 The type of sieve to be selected in the sorting system depends on the sizing (Kahle et al., 2015):

- 342 • for oversized items, it is common to install a simple finger sieve or bar sizer;
- 343 • drum (trommel) sieves are often used for intermediate size fractioning;
- 344 • flip flow screens are commonly used for the fine fractioning of wet IBA. A flexible,  
345 perforated rubber screen oscillates, while the material travels across the screen. The  
346 shaking ensures that the material is mixed and allows the fine fraction to pass  
347 through the perforations. Like the flip flow screen is the vibrating screen, which  
348 vibrates instead of oscillating.

349 Sieving and transporting wet IBA can generally be performed in open systems, although this is not a  
350 completely dust-free operation. Dry sorting systems aim to ensure a water content of 10-12% by  
351 weight. In the case of higher water content, difficulties arise when sieving because the IBA can  
352 clump. If the water content is lower than 10%, the working environment will become very dusty,  
353 requiring fully enclosed operations during the handling of the material (Kahle et al., 2015).

354 Sieving is usually performed on vibrating screens without the addition of water (Bunge, 2018). For  
355 wet processing, wet sieving (e.g. wet drums) can also be used, particularly for particles below 4 mm,

356 as this allows to recover “rinsed” metal particles and reduces stickiness (see also chapter 3.5.2.2)  
357 (Born, 2018a).

358

### 359 *3.3.3. Crushing*

360 Crushing is a fundamental step to improve metal recovery, because it allows the liberation of the  
361 metal particles trapped inside the mineral conglomerates. It is often employed for particles larger  
362 than 40 mm (Bunge, 2018; van de Wouw et al, 2020).

363 IBA size reduction is currently performed only in large centralized treatment plants to improve the  
364 recovery efficiency of NFe metals. In this way, the mineral materials sticking to metal lumps are  
365 removed and the large mineral conglomerates are crushed or pulverized. This provides access to the  
366 small metal particles usually trapped in the mineral conglomerates, thus increasing the recovery  
367 efficiency of ECS. Crushing IBA size fractions greater than 40 mm has no detrimental effect on  
368 mineral fraction application in the construction industry and is often employed. Crushing smaller  
369 particles changes the IBA particle size distribution and thus can preclude residual fraction utilization,  
370 particularly as an unbound road subbase layer, where natural IBA granulometry is required. For other  
371 applications, e.g. for cement or concrete production as is common in Italy, crushing down to 2-4 mm  
372 is a required pretreatment step. However, these applications are not common, so after metal  
373 recovery, crushed IBA is often landfilled. So the decision whether to include crushing in the  
374 treatment train should be made with the IBA’s final use in mind.

375

### 376 *3.3.4. Ballistic separation*

377 Ballistic separation is one of the unique methods to increase NFe metal recovery. A ballistic separator  
378 is used in the process called Advanced Dry Recovery (ADR). This process was developed in a  
379 cooperation between Inashco company and TU Delft (Berkhout and Rem, 2010); details are specified  
380 in patent WO 2009/123452 A1. According to the patent, the ballistic separator mechanically

381 separates the fine particles smaller than about 2 mm, which are associated with the highest moisture  
382 content and cause the material to stick, from the coarse and heavy particles, especially particles 2-15  
383 mm in size. IBA processed by ADR can be classified by particle size and is accessible for conventional  
384 dry separation processes without previous drying or wetting. The particle size distribution shows that  
385 the medium and coarse fractions were efficiently freed of fine particles, which lowered the moisture  
386 content in these fractions and led to increased NFe metals recovery (De Vries et al., 2009). In  
387 practice, ADR is used mainly for particles smaller than 12 mm, because fine particles stuck to coarse  
388 ones worsens recovery efficiency, particularly for this size fraction (Sormunen et al., 2017; Sormunen  
389 and Kolisoja, 2017).

390 The Swiss company DHZ, under the trademark supersort®fine pss, uses ballistic separator to treat the  
391 IBA's fine fraction (< 5 mm). A ballistic separator can throw fine particles with different sizes and  
392 densities to different distances. Coarse and dense particles are separated from fine (< 0.5 mm) and  
393 light ones. The heavy fraction is then led to ECS, which achieves greater recovery efficiency (Zust,  
394 2018). No humidity adjustment is needed before processing.

395 Ballistic separators are not a common part of treatment trains, but they are sometimes used as  
396 described above.

397

## 398 3.4. Treatment operations

399

### 400 3.4.1. Magnetic separation

401 The principles and limitations of separation in magnetic field are described in the literature (Martens  
402 and Goldmann, 2016). As a standard practice for recovering Fe scrap, only basic magnetic separation  
403 is carried out at the sites of most MSWI plants. In the simplest version of the treatment, this is  
404 usually done just after the IBA discharge, by means of an overbelt or drum magnets. This method of  
405 separation is used only for large pieces of scrap. Multi-step magnetic separation is usually employed  
406 for each stream in an advanced treatment plant. Overbelt magnets are used for iron scrap; in a

407 second stage, drum magnets are often used to remove the magnetic fraction (iron oxides and  
408 agglomerates with their content), because the magnetic fraction lowers NFe separation efficiency on  
409 ECSs. This magnetic fraction is often later returned from the treatment train to the IBA's mineral  
410 residue.

411

#### 412 *3.4.2. Eddy current separation*

413 The principles and limitations of eddy current separators (ECS) are well described in the literature  
414 (Smith et al., 2019). The ECS requires a proper calibration, based on the size of the material to be  
415 separated. Furthermore, it is a good practice to adopt a different rotation speed of the rotors when  
416 the ECS is used on coarse rather than on fine particles: a rotation of 2,000-3,000 rpm (typical of  
417 standard ECS) is appropriate only for particles larger than 5 mm. To achieve high recovery efficiency  
418 of the NFe metals in the IBA fine fraction (< 5 mm), an advanced ECS with a rotation speed greater  
419 than 4,000 rpm is required and/or the number of poles must be increased. High-frequency ECSs and  
420 ECSs with an eccentric rotor specifically designed for fine particles have been marketed in recent  
421 years and are currently in use in some full-scale IBA treatment plants.

422 Other technologies have been proposed in the scientific literature, but many of them have never  
423 been developed full scale. This is the case with wet eddy current separators (WECSs), Magnus ECSs,  
424 and backward operating ECSs (Fraunholz et al., 2002; Settimo et al., 2004; Zhang et al., 1999). A  
425 backward operating ECS is a standard separator whose magnetic drum rotates "backwards". Zhang et  
426 al. (1999) showed that, if it is difficult to separate small metal particles from the non-metal stream  
427 when the magnetic drum rotates in "forward" mode, the yield improves drastically when it rotates in  
428 the opposite direction.

429 The Magnus ECS is based on the "Magnus effect": a spinning particle moving through a fluid  
430 experiences a force perpendicular both to its direction of motion and to its axis of rotation  
431 (Fraunholz et al., 2002). This effect can be used to recover small NFe metal particles from the bulk  
432 stream (both wet and dry). The Magnus separation process consists of directing a feed stream past a

433 fast-spinning magnet to selectively rotate the NFe metal particles, deflecting them from the stream  
434 by the Magnus effect. Since this force derives from the fluid around the particles, it is not necessary  
435 to feed the material in a monolayer (Settimo et al., 2004). In a wet ECS, the water makes it possible  
436 to glue all the particles to the belt surface. For small particles, this adhesive force has the same order  
437 of magnitude as gravity. Without the action of the rotor, therefore, virtually all particles would stick  
438 to the belt and end up in the non-metal fraction. However, the rotating magnetic field makes the  
439 metal particles (whether Fe or NFe) spin, with the effect that the water bonds between these  
440 particles and the belt are broken. If the magnetic attraction on the Fe particles is strong enough,  
441 these will remain on the surface of the belt, but the NFe metal particles will be liberated at some  
442 point and follow the same path as on a traditional ECS. In contrast, the adhesive force is strong  
443 enough to keep most of the non-metal particles glued to the belt surface. Since the force necessary  
444 to break the adhesive forces is small, poorly conducting metals and HNF<sub>e</sub> are also recovered (Settimo  
445 et al., 2004).

446

#### 447 *3.4.3. Sensor-based sorting*

448 The latest developments in IBA processing include the use of sensors for separating metal and glass  
449 particles (Bunge, 2018). The most common is magnetic induction separation by electromagnetic  
450 sensors that can identify all kinds of metals, including stainless steel, in particles larger than 4 mm.  
451 Both the recovery rate and grade can exceed 90%. The sensor is placed under the conveyor belt,  
452 where the transported IBA must be spread out in a thin layer. A computer system evaluates the  
453 position of the detected metals and operates a set of compressed air nozzles. The selected piece of  
454 metal is then ejected from the stream of falling particles at the end of the conveyor belt.

455 Other types of sensors can be used as well, e.g. X-ray fluorescence for the detection of different  
456 metals, optical sensors for transparent materials, or cameras for distinguishing materials by color or  
457 shape. Due to the complexity of these systems, to the high demands on computing power, and to the  
458 significant costs for compressed air, sensor-based separation is currently suitable for separating

459 materials with greater economic value, such as electronics waste. Currently, they are not a common  
460 part of treatment trains, but they are sometimes used; for example, an induction sorting system (ISS)  
461 is in operation at the Afatek IBA sorting plant in Copenhagen, Denmark, where stainless steel  
462 particles as small as 8 mm are separated (see Chapter 3.5.1.2).

463

#### 464 *3.4.4. Separation by density*

465 Density separation is one of the emerging technologies for IBA treatment that focus on the fine  
466 fraction in which considerable amounts of elemental metals are present, i.e., between 10-20% in the  
467 fraction of particles smaller than 2 mm (Bunge, 2018, 2016). Here classical methods such as eddy  
468 current separation can exhibit low recovery yields. Chemically bound metals, such as copper, zinc  
469 and lead oxides or carbonates, cannot be separated using these methods at all. Density separation is  
470 based on the different density of several valuable metals or alloys, such as copper, gold, brass  
471 (density over  $4,000 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$  compared to an IBA matrix density usually below  $2,700 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ ). Aluminum  
472 cannot be separated using this method because its density ( $2,700 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ ) resembles that of the IBA  
473 matrix.

474 Holm et al. (2018) performed density separation using a centrifugal concentrator. They achieved an  
475 enrichment factor of up to 10, but the yield of valuables ranged only between 10 and 20%. Flotation  
476 and density separation are both technologies with wide applications in the treatment of metal ores.  
477 Although the copper concentration in IBA is approximately that of today's exploited ores, it seems  
478 that these processes cannot be easily adapted for application in the waste sector. Obviously, the  
479 presence of reactive substances such as CaO, metal chlorides, sulfates, and substances enabling  
480 hydraulic reactions (see above) are detrimental to the success of separation (Simon and Holm, 2017).

481

#### 482 *3.5. Examples of treatment trains*

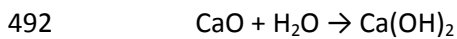
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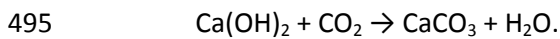
484

485 *3.5.1. Dry treatment of wet IBA*

486 Efficiently recovering metal from the IBA of a MSWI plant equipped with wet discharge is a challenge  
487 because of the IBA's sticky character of its hardening that occurs after some time. The water content  
488 of the IBA after quenching is around 18-25%, depending on the discharge system's ability to  
489 effectively squeeze out the water. As previously discussed in chapter 2.2, the quench process  
490 changes the IBA's mineralogical composition, mainly through the exothermal reaction of CaO with  
491 water (Inkaew et al., 2016)



493 and the subsequent hardening of lime via its reaction with atmospheric carbon dioxide (carbonation)  
494 during IBA storage (Holleman et al., 2007)



496 Further hydrated products are Friedel's salt and hydrocalumite. These newly formed phases, found  
497 mainly in the IBA fine fraction, lead to hardening and cementation and thus to the formation of  
498 mineral incrustation on metal and melt particles (Inkaew et al., 2016). Therefore, the main objective  
499 of the dry treatment of wet IBA for the recovery of metals is to minimize the detrimental effects of  
500 the formation of quench products. Some innovative methods, like ballistic separators, are mentioned  
501 above; similarly, the IBA can be aged to decrease its moisture.

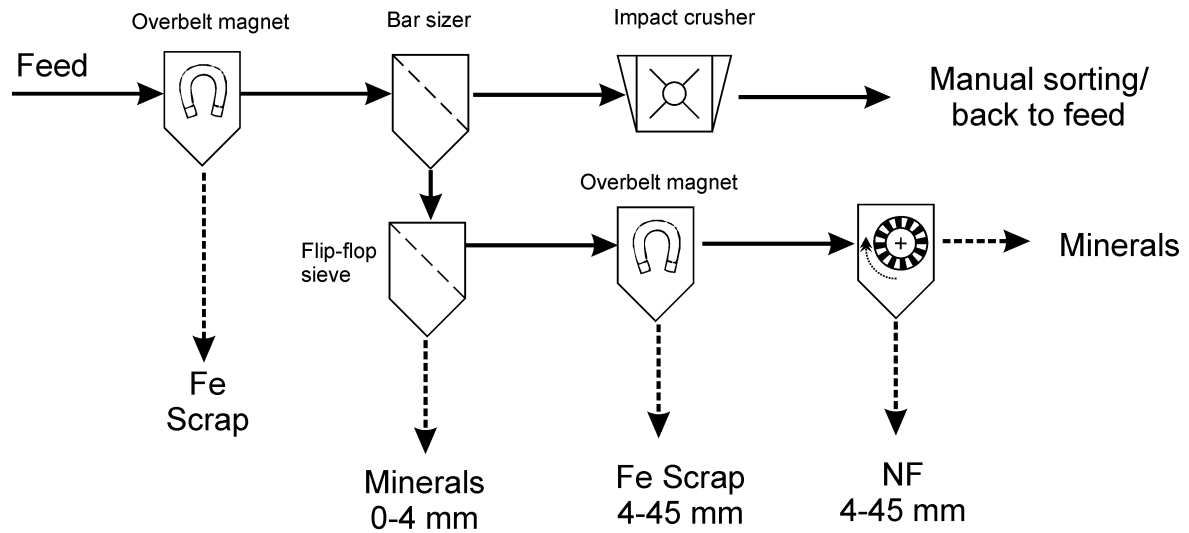
502

503 *3.5.1.1. Conventional treatment train*

504 A first pilot installation was reported by Schmelzer (1995). In this process, IBA was pretreated by  
505 drying and screening into two fractions: 0-4 mm and 4-45 mm. Each fraction underwent magnetic  
506 and eddy current separation to recover Fe and NFe metals. The residue of the larger fraction was  
507 crushed and fed back to the process. Figure 2 depicts the scheme of the treatment plants. The  
508 average output from magnetic separation was 36% by weight; the iron content in this fraction was

509 only 20-30%, due to agglomeration with mineral material. The fraction separated as NFe metals  
510 constituted 1.9% by weight of the total IBA (Schmelzer, 1995).

511



512

513 Figure 2. Scheme of conventional dry treatment of wet IBA (Schmelzer, 1995)

514

515 The simplest treatment trains that were built in the 2000s include sieving into a maximum of two  
516 fractions that are then treated separately by magnetic and eddy current separators. For the recovery  
517 efficiency of these so-called conventional technologies, values of around 80% for Fe metals and 9-  
518 48% for NFe metals (86% for the coarse fraction >20 mm), calculated in terms as ratio of recovered  
519 metals per metals fed into the furnace, can be found in the literature (Grosso et al., 2011; Raven et  
520 al., 2013). A problem with these data is the fact that the exact input of metals to the process of  
521 municipal solid waste incineration is not known. Further, the concentrate grade, i.e the mass of  
522 metal in the concentrate per mass of concentrate, is below 100%. A detailed discussion on terms  
523 related to the recovery efficiency can be found elsewhere (Bunge, 2018). These treatment trains are  
524 often employed directly in medium- to low-capacity MSWI plants.

525

526

### 527 3.5.1.2. Advanced treatment trains

528 Many efforts to increase the recovery efficiency of conventional treatment trains for both Fe and NFe  
529 metals have been driven by the increasing prices of metals, environmental concerns, and, in recent  
530 years, the EU strategy for critical elements and the circular economy. Moreover, the mineral product  
531 obtained after an efficient separation of metals can be used as construction material with fewer  
532 undesirable consequences, such as the swelling caused by the content of metallic elements. In some  
533 countries, these changes are mandatory by legislation. For example, in Switzerland, NFe metals must  
534 be recovered with state-of-the-art techniques from the fraction of particles larger than 2 mm, so that  
535 the remaining content of NFe metals in the residues destined to landfilling is below 1.5% by weight.  
536 The Netherlands' Green Deal recently imposed similar approach. These legal acts and economic  
537 incentives led to the development and construction of several advanced treatment trains with a high  
538 metals recovery efficiency.

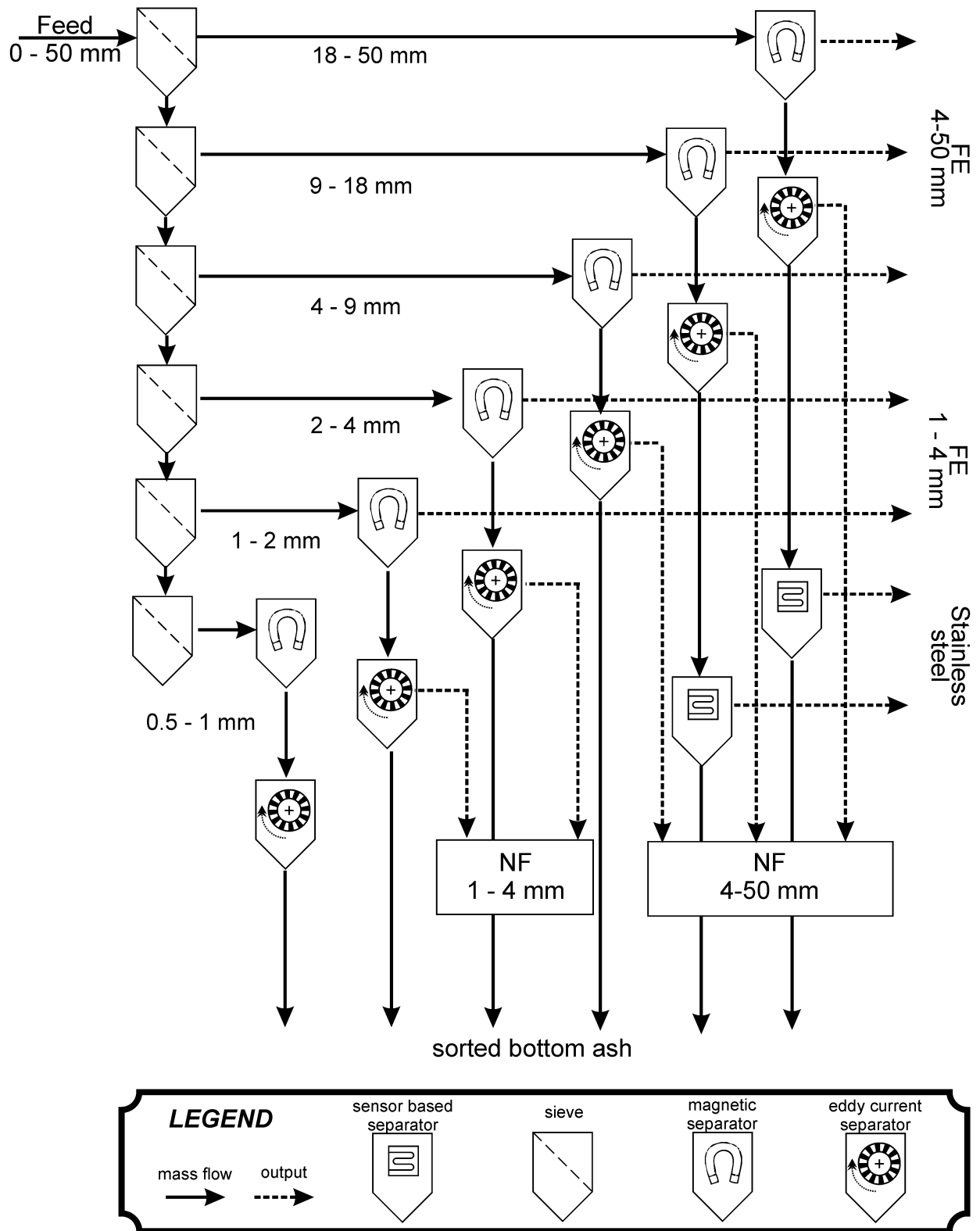
539 The Afatek NFe sorting plant is an example of an advanced treatment plant for processing quenched  
540 IBA. This plant was built in the greater Copenhagen area in 2015 and commissioned in 2016,  
541 following several years of research and pilot-scale testing (Allegrini et al., 2014). Between 2016 and  
542 2018, the IBA processing method at this facility was further optimized (Nørgaard et al., 2019); the  
543 facility currently processes 200,000–250,000 tons of IBA per year (~40% of Danish IBA production)  
544 originating from six nearby MSW incinerators. The initial processing step includes 2-3 months of  
545 outdoor ageing in piles, necessary to decrease the IBA's moisture content and to improve the  
546 material's leaching behavior (Nørgaard et al., 2019). The ageing is followed by the removal of  
547 magnetic metals just before the material enters the NFe sorting facility. Here, the incoming bulk of  
548 the IBA (0-50 mm) is first screened into seven particle size fractions. Six of those seven particle size  
549 fractions (0.5-1 mm, 1-2 mm, 2-4 mm, 4-9 mm, 9-18 mm, and 18-50 mm) are then treated in  
550 dedicated lines, while the <0.5 mm fraction is currently not treated and is passed to the outgoing  
551 material stream. All lines are equipped with eddy current separators to remove Al- and NFe-heavy  
552 fraction (a mixture of Cu, brass, zinc, lead, and precious metals) while the 9-18 mm and 18-50 mm

553 lines are also equipped with inductive sorting systems (ISS) that target stainless steel. The outputs  
554 from the NFe sorting plant include stainless steel (9-50 mm), aluminum (0.5-50 mm), and the NFe-  
555 heavy fraction (0.5-50 mm).

556 To obtain a high NFe metal recovery rate, the system is operated such that the NFe output streams  
557 contain some minerals. The mixture is sent for further upgrading to a specialized external facility.  
558 According to previous measurements (Kallesøe and Dyhr-Jensen, 2018), the overall recovery rate of  
559 NFe metals for 4-50 mm IBA is close to 90%, and for 1-4 mm IBA is around 60-75%. The recovery rate  
560 for 0.5-1 mm particles was not measured. Note that these rates are calculated based on the actual  
561 amount of metal/product sold on the metal market, and not on the amount of metal sorted out of  
562 the IBA, which contains mineral ballast. Finally, it is important to mention that Afatek does not  
563 extensively crush the IBA to liberate metals. Although crushing could result in even better recovery  
564 rates in some particle size fractions, it would also result in an unfavorable particle size distribution  
565 curve of the bulk IBA after metal recovery. This would have a negative impact on the possibilities to  
566 use the remaining IBA. All Danish IBA is now used as secondary construction material in underground  
567 applications (e.g., subbase in road construction, filler in embankments, noise reduction barriers, etc.).

568

569



570

571

572 Figure 3. Example of an advanced dry treatment train for wet IBA (Kallesøe and Dyhr-Jensen, 2018)

573

574 Another interesting plant is the one reported by Holm and Simon (2017). This treatment plant is  
575 located in Germany and produced high-quality recovered metals by using a crusher to pretreat of the  
576 aged IBA and high-speed impact crushers to separate the mineral fraction from NFe metals. Magnets  
577 and eddy current separators are used after sieving IBA into three grain size fractions. Whereas the  
578 IBA fraction of particles < 2 mm is often excluded from further treatment, in this plant special focus is  
579 placed on the fine fraction. The treatment line was completed in 2015 and includes magnetic  
580 separation by means of extra-strong magnets, as well as a drying step before the adapted high-speed  
581 rotation accelerator. Subsequently, the material is sieved into three different grain sizes, which are  
582 then treated individually with different metal recovery devices (Holm et al., 2016; Holm and Simon,  
583 2017).

584

### 585 *3.5.2. Wet treatment of wet IBA*

586 An alternative to the previous approaches is the use of wet technologies that involve the extensive  
587 use of water during some of the process steps or during the whole IBA treatment. Two main  
588 approaches to wet treatment that have synergetic effects can be exploited. The first is to use wet  
589 separation techniques mainly for metal recovery. This wet treatment process was first developed in  
590 the Amsterdam MSWI plant as a pilot plant installed in 2005. The first idea was to combine metal  
591 separation technology with a process originally used for soil washing to remove residual organics and  
592 fine particles. The objective was to produce sand and granulate fractions for building materials and at  
593 the same time to recover as much metals as possible (Rem et al., 2004). During the development of  
594 the plant, several wet treatment technologies were developed and tested, such as the wet gravity  
595 separator, the wet eddy current separator, and the wet magnetic separator (Muchová et al., 2009).  
596 After the conventional recovery of Fe and NFe metal particles larger than 20 mm, the residue was  
597 screened into several size fractions in a water stream. Each fraction was then treated individually.  
598 The recovery efficiency was 83% for Fe metals and 73% for NFe metals (Muchová and Rem, 2006).  
599 The main disadvantage of this system was its great consumption of water and the consequent costs

600 for water treatment, which is supposedly one of the reasons the plant in Amsterdam was never  
601 developed to full scale, but was replaced by ADR (see chapter 3.5.1.2). However, some examples that  
602 use full wet treatment can be found (see chapter 3.5.2.1).

603 The second approach aims mainly to enhance environmental parameters of IBA fine fractions but it  
604 leads also to an increase in the efficiency of the recovery of heavy non-ferrous metals from the IBA  
605 fine fraction as wet density separators are used for this fraction. This approach is spreading in the  
606 Netherlands, also, except Netherland one plant in Germany and another in Italy are in operation.  
607 Almost 60% of the total sulfate can be concentrated in the ultra-fine fraction approx. (< 0.25 mm)  
608 which is separated as a filter cake (Simon and Holm, 2019). To avoid the formation of mineral  
609 coatings on metals, the treatment method does not include ageing. Again, the main drawback is  
610 water consumption and all related issues, such as water treatment and cleaning. An example of the  
611 wet method for IBA improving is described in chapter 3.5.2.2.

612

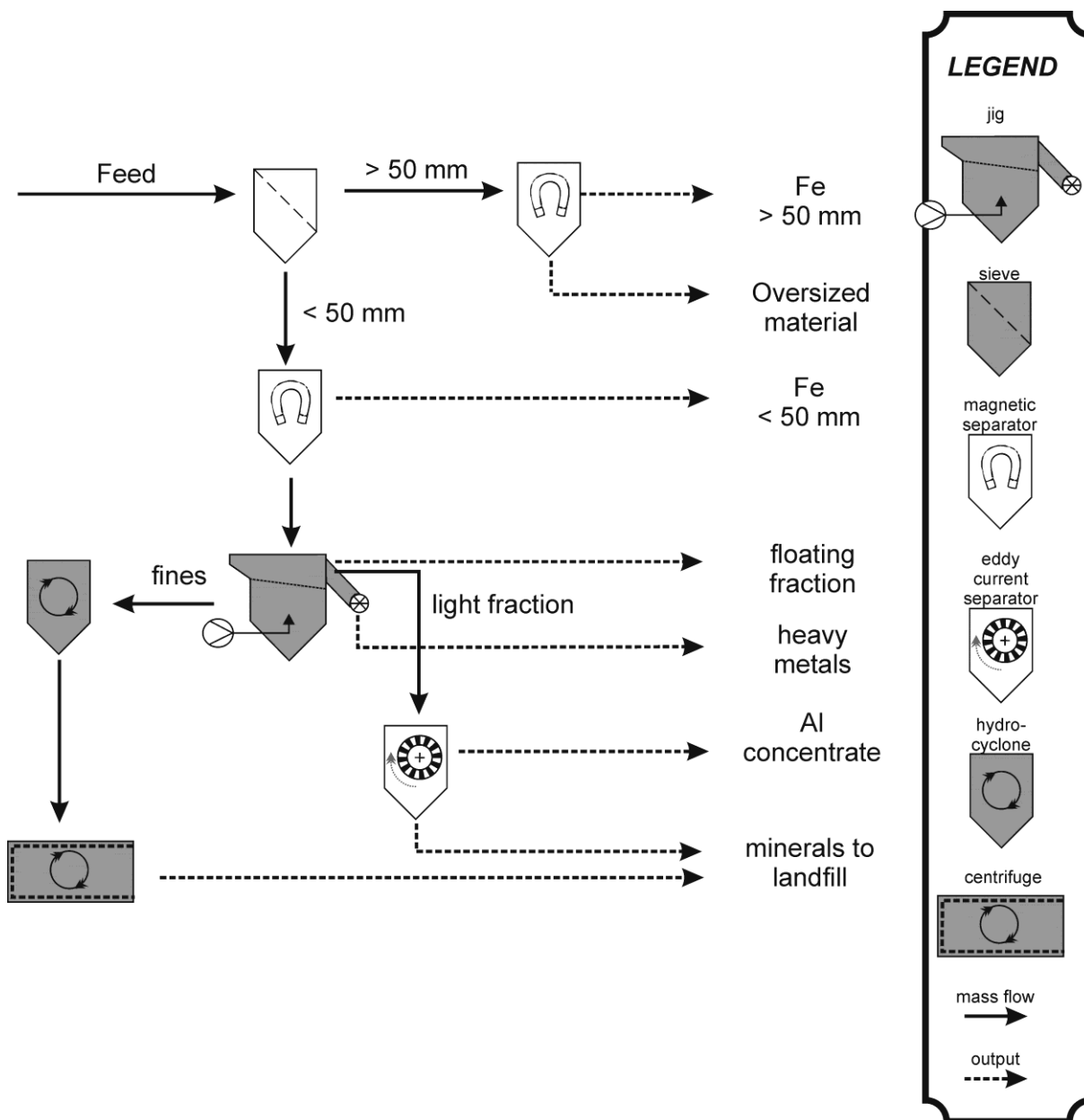
### 613 [3.5.2.1 An example of wet separation for metals recovery](#)

614 An example of a wet treatment train mainly for metal recovery is reported by G. Stockinger; the  
615 Brantner&Co. plant, located on a landfill, has been in operation since 2013 (Boehnke et al., 2015;  
616 Stockinger, 2018). Its capacity is nearly 40,000 tons of IBA a year and it treats fresh IBA from one  
617 MSWI plant. The treatment starts with a two-step magnetic separation of iron scrap particles larger  
618 than 50 mm from those smaller than 50 mm, using an overbelt magnet (see Figure 4). The core  
619 equipment is a wet jig that removes fine particles from larger ones and separates IBA by density.  
620 Four output streams, separated by density, come from the wet jig. The floating fraction consists of  
621 plastics and other unburned materials. The heavy non-ferrous metals fraction with a density greater  
622 than  $4,000 \text{ kg/m}^3$  remains on the jig bottom and contains stainless steel, copper, brass, and precious  
623 metals; as metals are washed, they can be led directly to smelting plant. The light fraction has a  
624 medium density and contains a mineral matrix of IBA, including aluminum. Fine particles smaller than  
625 2 mm are removed from this fraction in a wet jig; aluminum can then be effectively separated with

626 reasonable efficiency in one step by an eddy current separator after dewatering. Al content in the  
627 IBA particles larger than 1 mm after treatment is declared to be 0.1-0.5%. The last output is water  
628 containing a fraction of particles smaller than 2 mm that must be further treated; solid particles are  
629 removed by hydrocyclone and further processed for metal recovery. All the water is then  
630 recirculated in the process. Particles smaller than 2 mm are led to the fine slag treatment plant of the  
631 Sepro urban mining company (Boehnke et al., 2015), where metal particles as small as 100  $\mu\text{m}$  can be  
632 separated. The treatment train here consists of a low-intensity wet drum magnetic separator and  
633 Falcon centrifugal gravity concentrators followed by a wet shaking table for final upgrading; this  
634 system is based on density separation and therefore efficient for heavy non-ferrous metals, including  
635 precious metals.

636





637  
 638 Figure 4 Scheme of the Brantner company wet separation treatment train (wet processing in gray  
 639 scale) (Stockinger, 2018)

640  
 641 [3.5.2.2 An example of enhancing the recovery potential of the mineral fraction of IBA by wet  
 642 separation](#)

643 A wet method for improving the leaching behavior of the mineral fraction of IBA has been developed  
 644 by the Boskalis Company in response to the Netherlands' Green Deal, which sets stricter  
 645 requirements on IBA leaching to allow its free reuse. The aim of this technology is to separate metals

646 and then wash out soluble salts and metals from the IBA mineral fraction. Most leachable heavy  
647 metals or environmentally hazardous elements are in the fine fraction, so only this fraction  
648 undergoes washing treatment. The principle is a modification of the technology used for soil cleaning  
649 and remediation. It was installed in 2016 in Alkmaar during the retrofitting of the IBA treatment  
650 plant; its annual capacity is nearly 240,000 tons of IBA. The core of the change consisted in  
651 substituting dry sieving for a wet drum sieve.

652 Figure 5 shows the scheme of the treatment train. Particles larger than 40 mm are separated from  
653 the raw IBA by a bar sizer and led into the crusher. Iron scrap and stainless steel are removed by  
654 magnetic separation from the particles larger than 40 mm. Particles smaller than 40 mm are led into  
655 the wet drum sieve to remove particles smaller than 4 mm; the remainder is then further sorted into  
656 4-8, 8-20, and 20-40 mm fractions by a vibrating screen and a drum sieve. Water consumption is  
657 below 0.5 m<sup>3</sup>/t IBA. Particles larger than 20 mm are led to the crusher and back into the input. Two  
658 ECSs in series separate NFe metals from the 4-8 and 8-20 mm fractions. Particles smaller than 4 mm  
659 are further separated into a sludge fraction of particles smaller than 63 µm and a sand fraction with  
660 particles sized 63 µm to 4 mm. Only heavy non-ferrous metals, including precious metals, are  
661 separated by density separation from the sand fraction, while light non-ferrous remain. The washed-  
662 out sand fraction is then mixed with the granulate fraction with particles sized 4-20 mm; this mixture  
663 complies with Dutch legislation for aggregates and is used in construction industry. The removal of  
664 fine particles increased the efficiency of NFe metals separation by ca. one third – from 2.6 to 3.5% of  
665 the input IBA – compared with the output of dry sieving, because coarse metallic particles are more  
666 accessible for separation. Moreover, another 0.3% of the HNFe is obtained from the sand fraction.

667 The total metal recovery, including non-ferrous metals, iron scrap and stainless steel, is 11.85% of  
668 the input IBA. The company claimed an Au content of 50 mg/kg and an Ag content of 900 mg/kg in  
669 the HNFe particles smaller than 4 mm, and about two-third of the revenues from this fraction come  
670 from its precious metals content. NFe metal concentrates from ECSs consist of about half IBA mineral  
671 matrix and half NFe metals with the amount of HNFe increasing as the fractions grow smaller (from

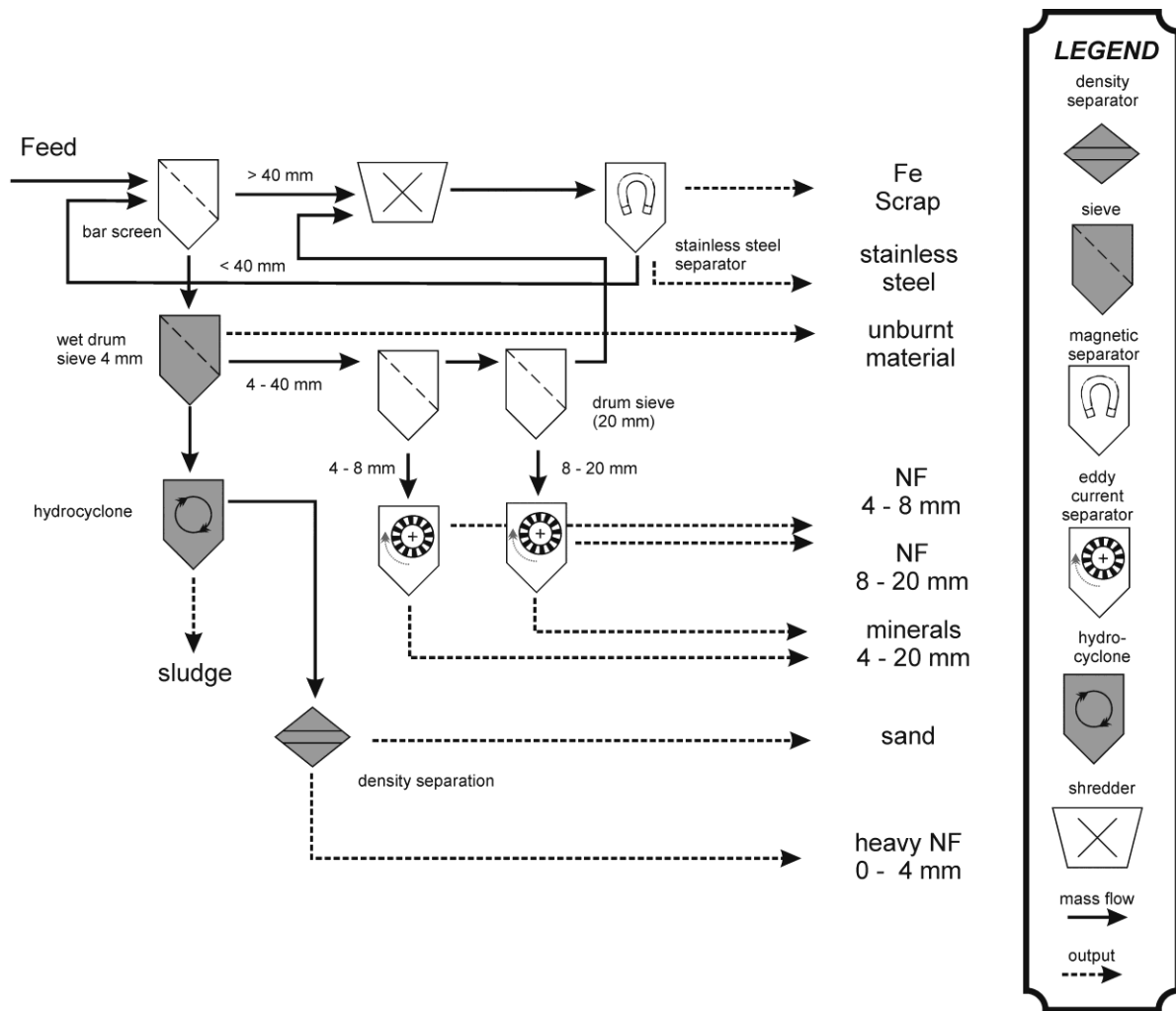
672 1/5 for 8-20 mm to 1/3 for 4-8 mm). The production of the applicable fraction (the mixture of  
 673 granulate and sand) is ca. 181,000 tons. The main drawback of this approach seems to be the  
 674 production of sludge (ca. 50,000 tons) with a high concentration of heavy metals that have hazardous  
 675 properties and must be further treated. The mass balance at the Alkmaar plant is shown in Table 4  
 676 (Born, 2018b, 2018a).

677

678 Table 4. Annual mass balance at the Alkmaar plant (Born, 2018b, 2018a).

<b>Input IBA (t)</b>	<b>235,866</b>
<b>Output streams</b>	
<b>Sludge (t)</b>	49,745
<b>Sand (t)</b>	99,745
<b>Granulate (t)</b>	81,610
<b>Iron scrap (t)</b>	15,965
<b>Stainless steel (t)</b>	2,590
<b>Unburned material (t)</b>	4,168
<b>NFe (t)</b>	8,321
<b>HNF<sub>e</sub> ≤ 4 mm (t)</b>	800

679



680

681 Figure 5. Scheme of the Alkmaar plant (wet processing in gray scale) (Born, 2018b, 2018a).

682

683 A similar approach is used at the New Heros plant in the Netherlands, which treats 650,000 t of IBA  
 684 per year. After ageing and the separation of the Fe scraps, the IBA is sieved into 9 size classes. The  
 685 fractions of particles smaller than 10 mm are sent to the ADR process to separate the light and sticky  
 686 fine mineral particles. Then each size class is sent to an ECS to recover the NFe metals (the ECSs used  
 687 for the fine fractions have a rotation speed of 4,000 rpm). Downstream from this section, the IBA is  
 688 ground and sieved again into 6 other size classes. An ECS for each size class is dedicated to recovering  
 689 NFe metals scraps, and then the stainless steel is separated manually. The mineral fraction with  
 690 particles > 4 mm is washed with water (liquid to solid ratio (L/S) equal to about 4 l/kg) to remove  
 691 chlorides, sulfates, and metals so that the fraction can be used in free application as required by the

692 Netherlands' new Green Deal legislation. NFe metal particles < 12 mm are further treated to improve  
693 their quality by using densimetric tables to separate the light NFe metals (aluminum) from the heavy  
694 ones, that contain also precious metals.

695

### 696 *3.5.3. Dry treatment of dry extracted IBA*

697 Residues from municipal solid waste incineration, such as fly ash, flue gas cleaning products, and IBA,  
698 have been the subject of research projects for decades. Early research programs in Canada and the  
699 USA were the National Incinerator Testing and Evaluation Program (NITEP) (Sawell and Constable,  
700 1993) and the Waste Analysis, Sampling, Testing, and Evaluation (WASTE) program (A. J. Chandler &  
701 Ass. Ltd. et al., 1995). During a sampling campaign at the Burnaby Incinerator Facility (Burnaby,  
702 British Columbia, Canada), unquenched IBA falling off the grate before the water tank was collected  
703 with a special sample thief. So, it was possible to study the characteristics of unquenched IBA. The  
704 results of these investigations of the ash from Burnaby were published years later (Eusden et al.,  
705 1999).

706 No recommendations were made regarding the potential of metals recovery from quenched and  
707 unquenched IBA. However, inspired by this work, researchers from the ABB Corporate Research  
708 Centre sampled dry IBA with a similar approach at a Swiss waste incineration plant (KVA Turgi,  
709 Aargau Canton). The method's obvious advantages for resource recovery from unquenched IBA, i.e.,  
710 no mineral attachments on glass, ceramics, or slag particles and almost uncorroded metals were  
711 recognized and led to the development of what is called the ABB InRec process (Simon and  
712 Andersson, 1995). After lab tests on small and large samples, a full-scale dry IBA extraction system  
713 was installed at the GEVAG waste incineration plant (Trimmis, Graubünden Canton, Switzerland) and  
714 operated in the years 1995 and 1996 for several months using a roller screen consisting of rotating  
715 polygonal discs as an integral part of the discharge system for the removal of oversized grains  
716 (Selinger and Schmidt, 1997). The basic principle of the InRec process was to remove the fraction of  
717 particles smaller than 2 mm, e.g. by a flip-flop screen prior to the recovery of Fe and NFe metals

718 (Bürgin et al., 1995). Fe and NFe metals were recovered from the IBA fraction of particles > 2mm  
719 using a magnet drum and a pilot-scale eddy current separator to generate a reliable sample size of  
720 the metal fraction for testing quality and purity. The yields of Fe and NFe metals were 17% and 1.4%  
721 by weight, respectively. The purity of the NFe metals fraction was 95% (Simon, 2017). Despite  
722 positive results from the operation of the dry ash extraction and treatment system in Trimmis, plant  
723 operators displayed no further interest, most probably because recovering secondary resources from  
724 waste was still a secondary issue in the 1990s.

725 This started to change with the increasing demand for efficiency in NFe metals recovery and also  
726 with the challenge to recover other materials, such as rare earth elements (REE) and precious metals  
727 (Morf et al., 2013), so that the replacement of wet IBA discharge from the combustion chamber by  
728 dry systems experienced a renaissance. A new full-scale dry IBA extraction system was put in  
729 operation in 2009 again at the SATOM plant in Switzerland (Monthey, Wallis Canton). It consists of a  
730 ram discharger operated without water and an integrated wind sifter for dust removal (Lamers,  
731 2015). The coarse fraction is transported by means of gravity and vibration for further sorting. A  
732 second full-scale system with a different design started in 2010 at the KEZO plant (Hinwil, Zurich  
733 Canton, Switzerland). The main component is a vibrating conveyor. The inlet of tertiary air is limited  
734 to about 10% of the total combustion air by two vertical gates and replaces the same amount of  
735 secondary air. Tertiary air also promotes the afterburning of organic components in the ashes and  
736 reduces the organic carbon levels to lower than 0.3% by weight (Lamers, 2015). Currently, dry  
737 extraction of the IBA has been implemented in five plants in Switzerland and in two plants in Italy.

738

739 Dry discharge allows greater efficiency in metals recovery because it eases screening into defined  
740 particle size fractions and the possible treatment of fine particles. Furthermore, metals are not  
741 agglomerated into clusters by sticky, wet fine ash particles and are more easily accessible by  
742 technologies such as eddy current separators. Other advantages are savings in water consumption  
743 and treatment and thus reduced transport costs, reduction of the organic carbon content, and

744 improved leaching properties of the resulting IBA. The main drawbacks of this concept are dust  
745 formation, i.e., all operations must be performed in closed systems (Böni and Morf, 2018; Quicker et  
746 al., 2015), and that the IBA mineral fraction cannot be used in the construction industry without  
747 further treatment.

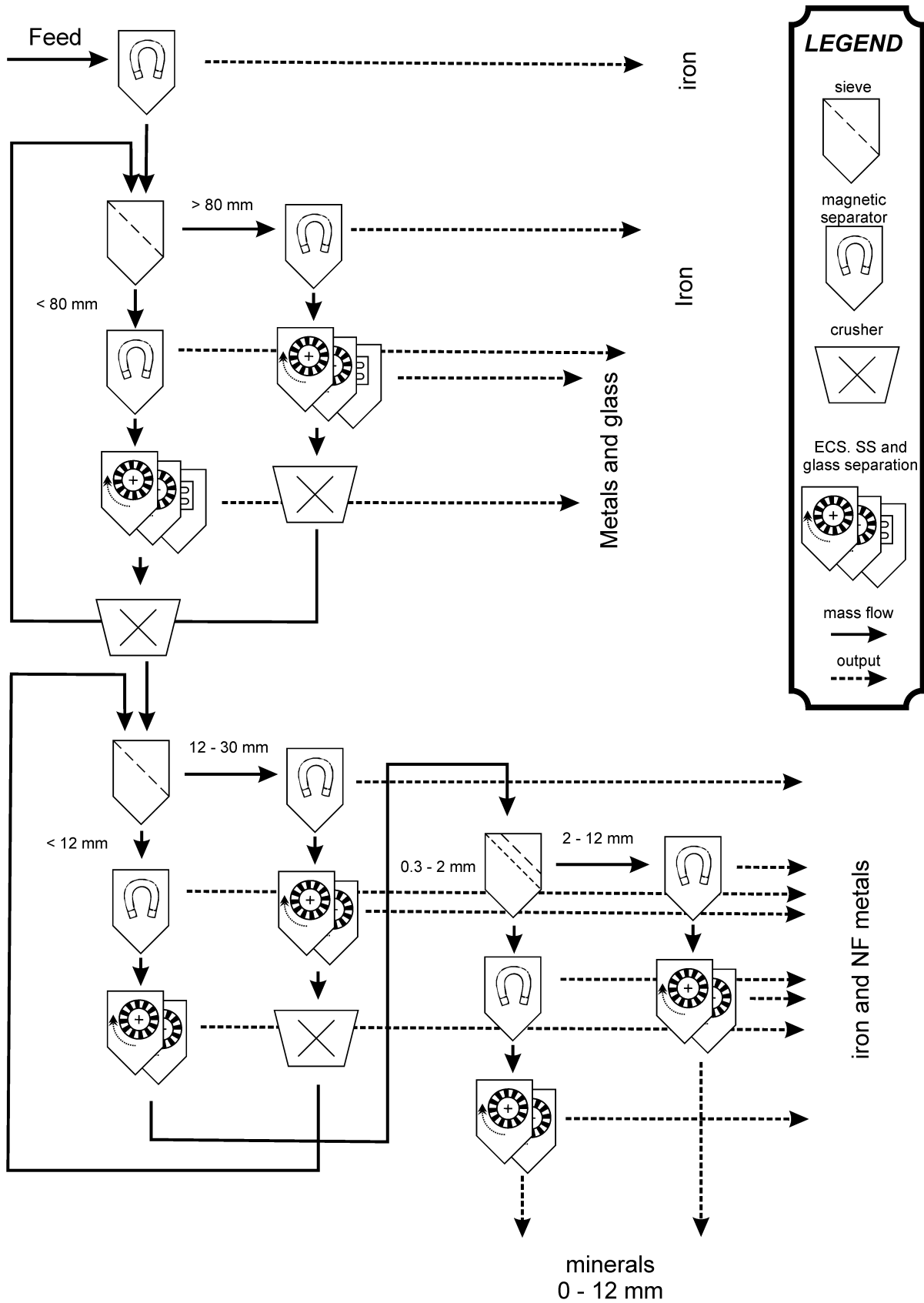
748 At the KEZO MSWI plant in Hinwil (Zurich Canton), a new centralized treatment plant was built to  
749 recover metals from all the IBA produced by MSWI plants in the canton of Zurich. The plant was  
750 designed to treat 200,000 tons of IBA per year with an investment of 40 million CHF and began  
751 operation at the beginning of the year 2017. The plant scheme is shown in Figure 6. After a magnet  
752 separates the coarse metal scraps (> 80 mm), the IBA is divided into four streams: particles sized > 80  
753 mm, 30-80 mm, 12-30 mm, and < 12 mm. The fraction of particles larger than 80 mm is sent to a  
754 handpicking station to recover metals and separate large mineral agglomerates and then is crushed  
755 and joins the fraction of particles < 80 mm. The fraction of 30-80 mm particles is sent to a magnetic  
756 separator, two stainless steel separators, and an ECS and then is crushed and joins the fraction of  
757 particles < 30 mm. The fraction of 12-30 mm particles is sent to a magnetic separator, a glass  
758 separator, two stainless steel (SS) separators, and an ECS and then is crushed and joins the fraction of  
759 particles smaller than 12 mm. The fine fraction is screened again: the fraction of particles < 0.3 mm is  
760 not treated; the fraction of particles 0.3-2 mm is sent to two magnetic separators and two high-  
761 frequency ECS; and the fraction of particles 0.3-2 mm is sent to a magnetic separator and two high-  
762 frequency ECS.

763 The NFe metal mix is then upgraded by separating the light fraction (mainly Al) from the heavy  
764 fraction (mainly Cu and precious metals) by means of densimetric tables. The recovery rate is as  
765 follows – 10.08% of the IBA was recovered as Fe metals, 4.45% as NFe metals (heavy and light), and  
766 1.07% as glass (Böni, 2013; ZAR, 2011). However, the composition of revenues is very different,  
767 because the heavy non-ferrous yield is only 0.52% and accounts for about half of the total revenues  
768 (due to its precious metals content), iron scrap about 7%, and light NFe metals account for the rest of

769 the revenues. Total revenues are reported as 95 CHF per ton of dry bottom ash. Energy consumption  
770 is about 16 kWh per ton of bottom ash (Böni and Morf, 2018).

771





772

773 Figure 6. Scheme of the dry bottom ash treatment plant in Hinwil (CH) (Böni and Morf, 2018)

774

## 775 3.6. Emerging technologies for recovering metals and metal compounds

776 Aside from the technologies described above, several attempts to mine metals from bottom ash  
777 using unconventional approaches are summarized below. None of them is currently applied at full  
778 industrial scale and their application cannot be expected in the near future due to several  
779 disadvantages or economical infeasibility. However, a summary of them seems appropriate for this  
780 review.

781

### 782 3.6.1. Landfill mining

783 The chapters above describe state-of-the-art processes for recovering valuables from IBA after the  
784 incineration of municipal solid waste. As mentioned above, in the past IBA used to be disposed of in  
785 landfills without any prior material recovery. Reclamation of metals on such landfill sites seems to be  
786 feasible if the content of elemental metals in old IBA deposits is high enough for profitable landfill  
787 mining projects. Wagner and Raymond report on a case study at an ashfill located near a waste  
788 incineration plant in the US state of Maine (Wagner and Raymond, 2015). Between 2011 and 2015,  
789 more than 35,000 tons of Fe and NFe metal were recovered and sent to metal recycling companies at  
790 a cost of approx. \$158 US per ton of metal. Revenues were a minimum of \$216 US per ton of  
791 recovered, so that the operation provided an economic gain. However, it was stated that it is far less  
792 costly to recover metals *before* landfilling.

793

### 794 3.6.2. Bioleaching, hydrometallurgy

795 Hydrometallurgy is the separation of metals from ore minerals using acids or bases.  
796 Hydrometallurgical separation is also performed by solvent extraction or by means of solid ion  
797 exchangers, ionic liquids, membranes, and other adsorbents. Biohydrometallurgy, i.e., a chemical  
798 extraction enhanced by microorganisms, is a widely and increasingly studied branch of  
799 hydrometallurgy and is successfully employed in the treatment of mine tailings and in metal recovery

800 from secondary sources (Hennebel et al., 2015). As a matter of fact, the industrial use of bioleaching  
801 already started at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the Rio Tinto copper mine in southwestern Spain is  
802 considered the first large-scale biohydrometallurgical operation. In recent decades, bio-mediated  
803 processes were progressively increased also for the treatment of by-products (e.g., for the recovery  
804 of gold from tailings in Nerco Can Mine, Canada (Stefanski and Martin, 1992).

805 Recently, biohydrometallurgical routes have been applied to the treatment of and subsequent metal  
806 recovery from waste from electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) (Mäkinen et al., 2015) and a  
807 range of alkaline wastes (Lee and Pandey, 2012), including MSWI residues in which, according to  
808 bench-scale experiments, base metals like Cu, Al, and Zn are profitably extracted (Funari et al., 2017;  
809 Lee and Pandey, 2012; Ramanathan and Ting, 2016). The treatment of IBA using bioleaching via  
810 acidophilic bacteria seems a scalable process, but the lack of experimental data on larger scales  
811 hinders the breakthrough to full-scale bioprocessing of incineration waste. After earlier experience  
812 with MSWI fly ash (Funari et al., 2017), mixed cultures of sulfur- and iron-oxidizing bacteria were  
813 tested on pre-acidified IBA collected from different Italian MSWI plants (Funari et al., 2015). The  
814 bacteria consortium employed thrived under the starting pH conditions (ca. pH 4) and produced  
815 lixivants capable of reducing the pH (Funari et al., 2019), thus enhancing metal removal. The  
816 relatively long time needed to attain low pH values, the need to pretreat an alkaline material, and  
817 the lack of pilot plants hamper actual implementation of the bio-assisted leaching of metals from  
818 IBA. On the other hand, the possibility to produce consortia of microorganisms that can be tuned to  
819 the removal of a specific metal, the low consumption of acid (or base) compared to pure  
820 hydrometallurgical routes, and a safer work environment are potential advantages that make  
821 bioleaching an intriguing option.

822

823 Bioprocessing alkaline wastes, however, has other drawbacks. The sulfur content that is converted to  
824 sulfuric acid in the IBA, mainly promoted by *At. thiooxidans*, is not enough to change the naturally  
825 alkaline IBA pH (pH 10-13) to acidic pH levels allowing metals mobilization. Besides, the imbalance

826 between elemental sulfur addition and microbial growth of sulfur-specific consortia might lead to  
827 low leaching rates, due to the passivation effect that typically occurs in metal sulfide bioleaching  
828 (Piervandi et al., 2019). Optimal amounts of ferrous iron to sustain an active microbial population of  
829 iron oxidizers (like *At. ferrooxidans*) should be determined, also to enhance synergistic bioleaching  
830 effects. In these circumstances, a stepwise inoculation strategy or nutrients addition can regulate the  
831 microbial community structure to promote secondary microbial growth to maintain a moderate  
832 trade-off between microbial community performance and iron and sulfur metabolism (Feng et al.,  
833 2015; Panda et al., 2017) in effective bioleaching systems. Finally, IBA treated in this way will have  
834 acidic pH and the formation of calcium sulfate is promoted (Funari et al., 2017). If the pH is not  
835 neutralized, therefore, such IBA can be considered hazardous material that cannot be used in the  
836 construction industry. Thus, bioleaching is currently far from the real industrial practice and much  
837 further research has to be done.

838

839

#### 840 *3.6.3. Electrodynamic fragmentation*

841 Electrodynamic fragmentation to disintegrate ore and rocks to obtain higher yields has been studied  
842 since the 1960s. Today, this technique is applied on a technical scale in ore processing (Wang et al.,  
843 2011). Applying this process to recycle construction and demolition waste and incineration ash was  
844 suggested already in the year 2000 (Bluhm et al., 2000). In a research project, IBA was fragmented  
845 into metals, smelting products, ceramics, stones and glass (Seifert et al., 2013). A drawback of the  
846 technology could be the high consumption of electrical energy (1-3 kWh/ton of mineral material)  
847 (Wang et al., 2011) and, as the process takes place under water, electrolytic losses in the course of  
848 enriching salts in the process water (Bluhm et al., 2000). This might be the reason why a prototype  
849 with a capacity of 3 tons per hour that started operation in 2016 at the SAIDEF plant in Posieux  
850 (Fribourg Canton, Switzerland) is fed with washed IBA. The SELFRAG company's investment cost to  
851 install electrodynamic fragmentation was 6 million Swiss francs (SAIDEF AG, 2016).

852

#### 853 4. Metal upgrading and the market situation

854

855 As indicated in previous sections, advanced metal recovery from IBA is a highly specialized process  
856 and, as such, there are multiple steps in the process, which can be managed by different companies  
857 and/or external contractors other than the MSWI plant that generated the IBA. However, as a great  
858 variety of technologies have been applied in IBA processing and metal recovery from IBA worldwide,  
859 the metal recovery systems differ significantly among countries and even regions. The decision  
860 whether to include external contractors in IBA processing and to what extent (to which final quality)  
861 the metal recovery is done depends on many factors, such as the MSWI's throughput (large vs. small  
862 MSWI), the type of IBA (quenched IBA vs. dry IBA; chapter 3.5 and 3.5.3), the location of the IBA  
863 treatment plant (on site, at a landfill, at a specialized IBA processing facility, or at a mobile sorting  
864 plant), IBA storage options (space limitations), metal recovery technology (dry vs. wet processing),  
865 management options for the mineral part of IBA (landfilling vs. use in road constructions), and,  
866 naturally, overall economic feasibility (Bunge, 2018).

867 In many European countries, metal recovery from IBA can be described as a step-wise system  
868 typically composed of: Fe recovery; Fe upgrading; NFe recovery; and NFe upgrading.

869 Overall economic feasibility is one of the key factors affecting the recovery of metals from IBA. The  
870 economic value of NFe metals is significantly higher than that of Fe metals. The value of metals  
871 (including both Fe and NFe) in tonne of "typical" IBA has been estimated at between 60 and 100 €, of  
872 which >85% is allocated to the NFe fraction, while this fraction is estimated to contribute only 10-  
873 15% of the weight of the total metal content (Bunge, 2018). Consequently, the recovery and  
874 upgrading of NFe has received much greater attention lately.

875 The Fe upgrading step typically consist of cleaning (e.g. by crushing) the Fe (in IBA from which  
876 extraneous material such as slag and rust has already been separated), hand-sorting the more

877 valuable items (e.g. Fe and Cu parts), and passing the cleaned material through a magnetic separator  
878 (or a series of magnetic separators) to concentrate the material stream to a quality suitable for  
879 secondary steel production (Allegrini et al., 2014). The fraction of Fe particles smaller than  
880 approximately 3-4 mm is still relatively unused, while its composition and quality may vary  
881 significantly. Low-quality products (e.g., those having a high proportion of corrosion products)  
882 require higher processing costs at the smelters and, therefore, are less profitable than higher-quality  
883 products, which, on the other hand, can cost more to produce.

884 While the first couple of steps in metal recovery from IBA can take place at an MSWI plant, at an IBA  
885 deposit/monofill (Wagner and Raymond, 2015), and/or at a primary IBA sorting plant (often a  
886 centralized facility processing IBA from several MSWI plants or a mobile sorting facility), the last step  
887 (i.e., NFe upgrading) often requires a rather specialized set-up that is fine-tuned to process “pre-  
888 products” or “concentrates” obtained at the MSWI plants and/or the primary IBA sorting plants.  
889 Indeed, these “pre-products” or “concentrates” could be (and sometimes are) sold to a third party;  
890 however, since they often contain adhering mineral material and/or impurities in the form of other  
891 metals, their purity is low, which results in a low smelting yield and, in turn, in a low market value. To  
892 be accepted directly by smelters/foundries and, consequently, to achieve better market value, the  
893 “pre-products” or “concentrates” must be upgraded. In general, the types of “pre-products” or  
894 “concentrates” generated during the primary NFe recovery that are then processed at NFe-upgrading  
895 facilities are: light non-ferrous, LNFe (predominantly aluminum); heavy non-ferrous, HNFe (Cu, brass,  
896 stainless steel, Zn, Pb, Au, Ag, and coins); or a mixture of these. Often, the “pre-products” or  
897 “concentrates” are produced with different gradation (in different particle size ranges) depending on  
898 the set-up of the NFe recovery system. The upper particle size boundary of “pre-products” or  
899 “concentrates” is found around 50-80 mm, as larger NFe items are typically removed either by the  
900 MSWI plants or at the primary IBA treatment plants. Though the lower particle size boundary of the  
901 “pre-products” or “concentrates” may differ based on both their origin and the technology used in  
902 the receiving NFe-upgrading facility (i.e., dry vs. wet systems), as a rule of thumb, “pre-products” or

903 “concentrates” generated at full-scale *mobile* sorting plants have shown larger minimum particle  
904 sizes (varying between 2 to 8 mm) than those generated at full-scale *stationary* sorting plants  
905 (varying between 1 to 2 mm). Note that the economic potential of NFe recovery from the 1-2 mm  
906 fraction is significant and several companies are developing sorting systems targeting the recovery of  
907 HNF<sub>e</sub>/precious metals from the very fine NFe fraction (Holm and Simon, 2017; Muchová et al., 2009).  
908 The actual technological set-up of NFe-upgrading facilities is often proprietary and cannot be  
909 described in full detail here. Nevertheless, a “typical” dry-based NFe upgrading (i.e., one without a  
910 wash plant) can include drying and mechanical removal of remaining inorganic matrix/dust. The now  
911 cleaned and dry “pre-products” or “concentrates” can then be treated by a series of, e.g., ECSs, ISSs,  
912 X-ray sorting systems, or even hand-sorting to some extent. The result can be clean scrap  
913 (“product”), often divided into different material streams (e.g. stainless steel, aluminum, copper, and  
914 a mixture of precious metals) of high purity, allowing for direct sales to smelters/foundries (Muchová  
915 et al., 2009).

916 In general, the different “products” (e.g. Al product, Cu product, stainless steel, precious metals mix,  
917 etc.) are sold on the commodity market; their sales price is controlled by the list price at the London  
918 Metal Exchange (LME):  $LME_{price}$ . However, since the “products” are further treated at the smelters,  
919 the sales price may also depend on a processing costs fee and on an achievable yield (Scanmetals,  
920 2016). For instance, the sales price of an Al product can be determined as indicated in Eq. 1:

921

$$922 \text{ Sales price} = (LME_{price} - \text{processing fee}) \times \text{yield} \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

923

924 Where the  $LME_{price}$  (e.g. EUR/ton) is controlled by the LME, the processing fee (e.g. EUR/ton) depends  
925 on the receiving smelter and the yield (%; less than 100) – in the case of aluminum – is a function of  
926 (i) the “product’s” particle size gradation (particle size affects the degree of surface oxidation) and (ii)  
927 the smelting process. Note that different yields can be achieved for different “products” at different

928 smelters; nevertheless, the yield typically decreases with decreasing particle size. From the above  
929 equation (Eq. 1) it is clear that the producer of the Al product used in this example is interested in  
930 selling to a smelter that can reach the highest possible yield and thus to fully use the materials'  
931 recycling potential. It is stated that the price that sink/float plants or smelters actually pay for the  
932 metal content of the NFe concentrate is only approximately 60% of the  $LME_{price}$  (Bunge, 2018).

933 In contrast to Al, which is oxidized during incineration and whose yield is thus affected by the particle  
934 size of the product (the smaller the particle size, the greater the surface oxide content), Cu is not  
935 oxidized during incineration and its price is determined by the purity of the Cu product, which is sold  
936 directly to copper refineries. As with aluminum, the sales price of the Cu product is determined by  
937 the LME list price.

938 The light fraction has a market value of about 600-1,100 euros/t, while the heavy fraction can  
939 achieve up to 4,500-7,000 EUR/t, depending on its precious metals content (personal  
940 communication, 2017). With these prices, a substantial increase in revenues can be expected with  
941 advanced technologies that are able to recover HNF metals, including precious metals, from fine  
942 particles smaller than 2-4 mm. NFe metals' share of total metal revenues from these advanced plants  
943 is over 80%, while precious metals have a share of up to 1/3 (Böni and Morf, 2018; Born, 2018b).

944

## 945 5. Glass recovery

946 Sensor-based separation of glass was demonstrated at a pilot plant built at the MSWI plant in  
947 Bratislava, Slovakia. The technology was supplied by an Austrian company, Binder+Co AG, specialized  
948 in glass recycling processes. Before the glass sorting, the IBA is pretreated in a process called "cullet  
949 sublimation" to remove adherent dust particles and paper labels, which decrease the efficiency of  
950 optical recognition. The pretreatment begins with screening on dynamically excited screens to  
951 separate oversized material and fine particles smaller than 7 mm. The resulting middle fraction can  
952 contain up to 50 percent glass. In the next step, the material is dried in a fluid-bed dryer that



953 decreases the moisture content to below 1 percent. The dry material is cleaned in a dry-washing  
954 process by attrition, followed by cooling and de-dusting. After this stage, an overhead magnet and an  
955 eddy current separator separate the metals and finally an optical sensor-based separator sorts out  
956 glass. According to information for the year 2013, the amounts of recovered metals were 1,753 tons  
957 of magnetic metals and 90 tons of NFe metals from about 124,000 tons of incinerated waste. The  
958 amounts of recovered glass have not been reported; the recovery rate of glass can reach 75%  
959 (Makari, 2014).

960

## 961 6. Conclusion

962 Incineration bottom ash is a source of valuable components, such as non-ferrous metals and iron  
963 scrap, as it contains up to 4% NFe metals and 13% iron scrap. Technologies for their recovery started  
964 to emerge in the 1990s and today are common practice in many developed countries. Metal recovery  
965 technologies for wet as well as for dry IBA are based mostly on dry-mechanical processes. However,  
966 some treatment plants work with a wet method, as well. Metal recovery can take place directly at  
967 the MSWI plant or at a centralized IBA treatment plant that receives the material from several  
968 different plants. It is necessary to state that a great majority of plants use dry methods for processing  
969 wet extracted bottom ash. Regardless of the type of technology, the overall principle is more or less  
970 the same, i.e., crushing the oversized fraction, sieving IBA into several narrow size fractions, and  
971 applying magnetic separation for ferrous metals, eddy current separation for non-ferrous metals, and  
972 sensor-based sorting for stainless steel. The study presented one example of each main approach to  
973 metal recovery and outlined their main advantages and drawbacks. However, it is not possible to  
974 thoroughly compare the efficiency of different approaches, due to the variability in the content of  
975 the metal of the input IBA and the high degree of uncertainty of existing methods for recovery  
976 potential determination.

977 The positive impact of metals recovery on the life cycle balance of MSWI has been quantified in a  
978 comparsion of different waste management options (Simon and Holm, 2016, Gehrman et al., 2017).  
979 Efficient recovery of metals and other valuable materials from IBA is a prerequisite for municipal  
980 solid waste incineration to be an integral part of a sustainable waste management. Burning waste  
981 just to avoid landfilling or only to generate heat and power would be incompatible with the concept  
982 of circular economy (Korhonen et al., 2018). With advanced separation techniques, also metals with  
983 mm-grain size can be recovered from IBA rather than in recycling processes with bulk municipal soild  
984 waste. Thus, the recovery of metals from IBA contributes substantially to close the gaps in circular  
985 economy (Steger et al., 2019).

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987

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