

U.S. PLASTICS PACT ROADMAP TO 2025



LED BY:



AS PART OF:

Ellen MacArthur
Foundation's Plastics
Pact Network



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 INTRODUCTION**
- 4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- 5 WHAT IS THE U.S. PLASTICS PACT ROADMAP?
- 6 COVID-19 PANDEMIC
- 6 COLLECTIVE ACTION THROUGH WORKSTREAMS

- 7 2025 VISION**
- 8 WHERE WE ARE HEADED
- 10 ACTIONS FOR ALL TARGETS

- 11 TARGET 1**

- 14 TARGET 2**

- 18 TARGET 3**

- 21 TARGET 4**

- 24 DEFINITIONS**

- 33 APPENDIX**
- 34 REFERENCES
- 35 ACTIVATORS OF THE U.S. PLASTICS PACT

INTRODUCTION



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Plastics Pact (“U.S. Pact”) is unifying stakeholders across the entire plastics value chain to rethink the way we design, use, and reuse plastics, ultimately reducing plastic waste in our environment and creating a circular economy for plastics. The U.S. Pact will deliver a significant systems change toward a circular economy for plastics by enabling companies, government entities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), researchers, and other stakeholders in the U.S. to collectively reach ambitious goals by 2025 that they could not otherwise meet on their own. The U.S. Pact is a solutions-driven collaborative led by The Recycling Partnership and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s Plastic Pact Network.

The U.S. Plastics Pact is providing overarching leadership to drive toward a more circular economy for plastic packaging unlike any other organization in the U.S. It is uniquely focused on three essential elements that will continue to define how the U.S. Plastics Pact operates and the choices it must make:



ALIGNMENT

of all Pact signatories with four aggressive targets on a short timeframe.



AGREEMENT

that all Pact signatories will report annually against the four targets.



DEVELOPMENT

of the national strategy to realize a circular economy for plastics.

Through these three elements, the U.S. Plastics Pact is wielding accountability not yet seen in other U.S. collaboratives. The strength of the progress and the struggles of the collective Pact Activators (the signatories) will be measured, evaluated and reported on annually. The U.S. Plastics Pact will embark on a path to empower action for the plastic packaging value chain and catalyze effective policy resulting in accelerated progress toward a circular economy.

Stakeholders — companies, government entities, nongovernmental organizations, and researchers — are working collectively across the plastic packaging value chain toward a circular economy for plastics to ensure they never become waste by eliminating the plastics we do not need; innovating so that plastics packaging we do need is reused, recycled, or composted; and circulating the plastic items we use to keep them in the economy and out of the environment.

The U.S. Plastics Pact (U.S. Pact) unites 95+ stakeholders behind this common vision of a circular economy for plastics, aligned on four targets to address plastic waste at its source by 2025:

- 1 Define a list of packaging that is problematic or unnecessary by 2021 and take measures to eliminate them by 2025;
- 2 100% of plastic packaging will be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025;
- 3 Undertake ambitious actions to effectively recycle or compost 50% of plastic packaging by 2025;
- 4 And an average of 30% recycled content or responsibly-sourced, biobased content by 2025.

The U.S. Pact launched in August 2020 as part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s (“the Foundation”) global Plastics Pact network. This Roadmap shows what Activators will do to achieve the four targets in line with the U.S. Pact’s circular economy vision.

WHAT IS THE U.S. PLASTICS PACT ROADMAP?

The U.S. Plastics Pact Roadmap illustrates how collectively the U.S. Pact will approach each of its four targets. It outlines what the signatories of the U.S. Pact, known as Activators, will take on, and how the U.S. Pact plans to engage external stakeholders to deliver the targets. In order to impact what otherwise would be generational shifts in the market in only a few years, the Roadmap focuses on the key outcomes for each target, with corresponding actions and timelines.

The success of the U.S. Plastics Pact rests primarily on two elements: the extent to which brands, retailers, and packaging producers maximize actions within their control, and the extent to which the value chain can work collectively to overcome systemic barriers and to implement supporting policies. Home to 330 million people, the United States is an immense country with varying infrastructure, markets, climates, and politics. Infrastructure in the U.S. is the most localized and disaggregated of any advanced country. The objectives of the U.S. Plastics Pact and the Roadmap are no small feat. Strong prioritization of the objectives and actions needed to meet them will be required, as well as collaboration with existing efforts in order to achieve the 2025 targets — this will also necessitate inevitable trade-offs. The U.S. Pact will play a part in identifying and documenting the economic, environmental, and technical consequences of those trade-offs.

The Roadmap shows what U.S. Pact Activators and stakeholders can do to deliver against the targets, with key outcomes in specific interim timeframes. It aims to inspire Activators and supporters to act, and to galvanize wider action by governments, investors, NGOs, and businesses who are not members of the U.S. Pact. Achieving the targets will bring huge environmental, social, and economic benefits. It will, however, require difficult decisions to be made, significant investment, and some compromise.

Collaboration within North America will also help to ensure success. The U.S. Pact is working closely with the Canadian Plastics Pact and building relationships with stakeholders in Mexico. Creating synergies across North America will positively impact the drive toward a circular economy for plastics. Additionally, with nine other Plastics Pacts and the Foundation's Global Commitment in operation, the U.S. Pact can draw on learnings and support from around the world.

This Roadmap is a living document and will evolve as the U.S. Pact continues to prioritize and refine its actions required to achieve the targets. The Roadmap is meant to kick-start action and adapt as advancements are made in material science and infrastructure capabilities.



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Despite launching amidst the global pandemic, the U.S. Pact created its Roadmap and engaged more than 100 companies and organizations internal and external to the U.S. Pact. Certain sectors of the plastics packaging value chain continue to operate under extreme conditions because of the pandemic, and the long-term impacts are yet to be seen. Future revisions will reflect these impacts and any associated changes. Regardless, the Activators of the U.S. Pact remain committed to a circular economy for plastics, working toward achieving the 2025 targets.



COLLECTIVE ACTION THROUGH WORKSTREAMS

The Roadmap will require collective action by all of those involved with the U.S. Pact, and it details the needed actions to build a circular economy for plastics with the external value chain. Key stakeholders for each of the specified activities in the Roadmap are categorized as follows:

U.S. Plastics Pact Steering Committee

U.S. Plastics Pact Workstreams

Governments

Brand & Retail Sectors

Manufacturers (e.g., Plastics, Packaging, Packaging Components)

Waste Management Companies, Material Recovery Facilities & Reclaimers

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Other Industry Partners, Academics, & Experts

Implementation of the Roadmap will happen through an ecosystem of diverse workstreams, driven by Pact Activators. Currently, the U.S. Plastics Pact has six workstreams underway, which provided foundational framing for the Roadmap in addition to early thinking on some of our longer-term needs. Additional workstreams will be required to accomplish the tasks outlined.

2025 VISION



WHERE WE ARE HEADED

To achieve the U.S. Pact's four targets, we need to create value and drive change for a circular economy for plastics packaging in the U.S. focusing on the following elements:

1 Define a list of packaging that is problematic or unnecessary by 2021 and take measures to eliminate them by 2025.

Problematic and unnecessary plastic packaging materials without a path to a well-funded and scalable circular trajectory are eliminated from the U.S. market.

2 100% of plastic packaging will be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025.

100% of plastic packaging on the U.S. market is either reusable, recyclable, or compostable — in practice and at scale. See more in this section: [DEFINITIONS](#)

Retailers and brands integrate efficient and effective B2C reuse programs, including as part of e-commerce operations, with an eye toward greater growth and scale.

B2B reuse programs are integrated into the majority of U.S. food and retail chains at scale, including as part of e-commerce operations.

Design for recyclability guidance is widely available, standardized, and easy for brands to digest, prioritizes material circularity, and lowers environmental impact.

Brands and retailers, in partnership with NGO and governments will find solutions to achieve 100% reusable, recyclable, or compostable packaging solutions, moving away from non-circular packaging.

Guidance is in place to advise how to achieve circularity for new plastic packaging materials introduced to the U.S. market.

Demonstrated acceptance of and ability to process compostable packaging in industrial composting facilities at scale and development of widespread collection systems.

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

3 Undertake ambitious actions to effectively recycle or compost 50% of plastic packaging by 2025.

Achievement of this target requires companies to take full responsibility for what is within their control, complemented by collaborative action and policies.

Plastic packaging on the U.S. market will have a recycling rate (on average) of 50% or a composting rate of 50%, and this is comprised by the following:

- Americans have widespread and equitable access to recycling at their residences, places of business, schools, and via drop-off programs.
- Take action to ensure:
 - PET, PP and HDPE bottles have a minimum recycling rate of 70%.
 - PET non-bottle rigid packaging has a minimum recycling rate of 50%.
 - PP plastic non-bottle containers/rigid packaging have a minimum recycling rate of 50%.
 - HDPE plastic non-bottle containers/rigid packaging have a minimum recycling rate of 30%.
 - Film and flexible packaging is collected for recycling via all recycling means, including drop-off collection and standard residential programs such as curbside collection.
 - PE film (including PE pouches) has a minimum recycling rate of 30%.
 - Other polyolefin film (i.e., PP or potential PE/PP mix) has a minimum recycling rate of 30%.
- Robust domestic end markets exist for **all** materials listed above.

Support extended producer responsibility (EPR) policy funded by all packaging types, to support community and material recovery processing facilities. The EPR framework will incentivize reuse, recyclability, and design for lower environmental impact through eco-modulation and offers flexibility for deposit return systems (DRS) to meet beverage packaging recycling rates.

Policies such as EPR and DRS will help to drive quality supply of PCR, to enable the achievement of Target 4.

Compostable packaging solutions and infrastructure are advanced through collective efforts external to and in coordination with the U.S. Pact.

4 Average of 30% recycled content or responsibly-sourced, biobased content by 2025.

Achievement of this target requires companies to take full responsibility for what is within their control, complemented by collaborative action and policies.

The Pact will undertake ambitious actions to work toward an average of 30% postconsumer recycled content by weight or responsibly-sourced, biobased content across the U.S. packaging portfolio.

The Pact will prioritize the use of postconsumer recycled content (PCR) in packaging with the fewest challenges, supporting the highest and best use of the material (e.g., rigid plastic packaging), while adhering to food safety requirements and facilitating continual improvement in using PCR in food contact applications.

The Pact will work toward achieving appropriate PCR mandates to create market demand for postconsumer recycled content.

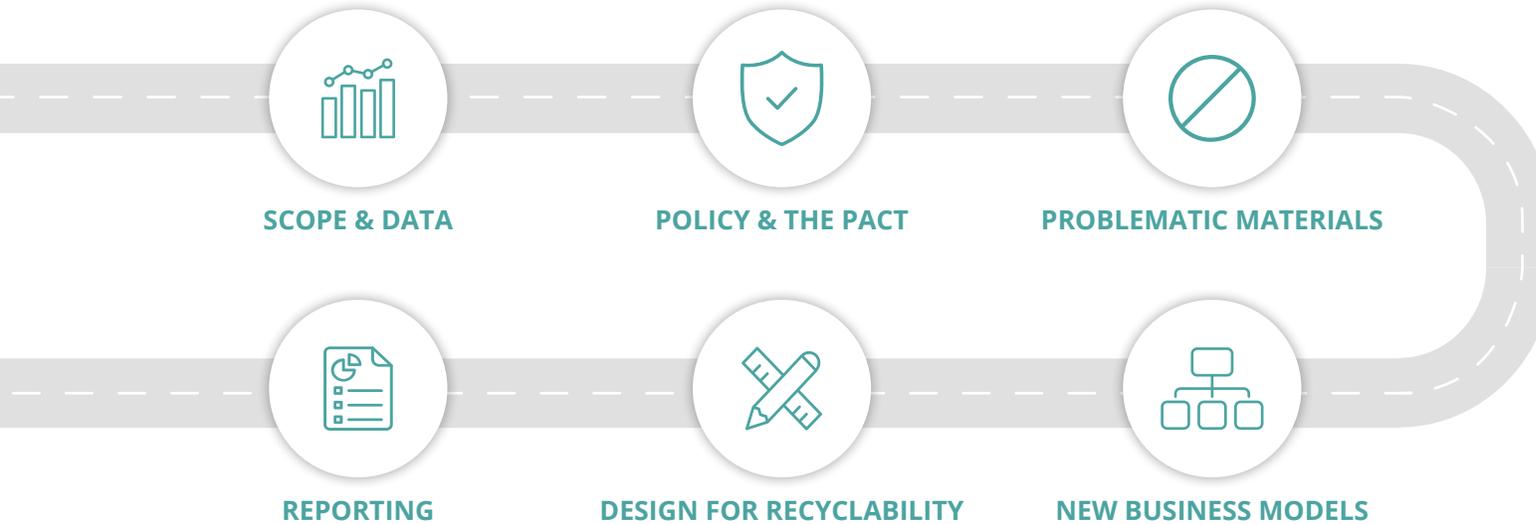
The inclusion of PCR or responsibly-sourced, biobased content will align with the goals of Target 2, achieving 100% reusability, recyclability, or compostability by 2025.

Responsibly-sourced, biobased content must meet the five criteria outlined by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) US¹ and proven credible certification²:

- Is legally sourced, conforms to Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and is produced in a safe and healthy way for workers and surrounding communities;
- Is one that is derived from renewable biomass;
- Does not adversely impact food security and affordability and maintains or improves social and economic conditions along with ecosystem services in producing communities;
- Does not result in destruction of critical ecosystems or loss of High Conservation Value (HCV) habitats, and;
- Contributes to landscape resilience and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.

ACTIONS FOR ALL TARGETS

- I. The U.S. Plastics Pact will establish workstreams or ad hoc groups as required to facilitate the strategy development and work under each target. The U.S. Pact established six initial workstreams and will create others as needed over the coming years. The initial six workstreams are listed below.



- II. U.S. Plastics Pact Activators will report annually the plastic packaging they put into the U.S. market (where relevant), in addition to actions made toward each of the four targets. As part of the annual report, the U.S. Pact will publish aggregate progress measured toward major milestones within the targets.
- III. Pact Activators will work collaboratively with stakeholders across the plastic packaging value chain. It will be critical to share the work of the U.S. Plastics Pact externally and to leverage existing work underway that is supportive of the U.S. Pact's targets. Resources must be maximized, and non-duplication is key.

TARGET TABLE STRUCTURE

Outlined in the following tables are the proposed roles and responsibilities for each of the key stakeholders.

The Lead ("L") is responsible for the delivery and enforcement of the activity.

The Co-Lead ("CL") enables one or more groups to have joint responsibility for these activities due to their unique positions and circumstances. In practice, one group may take a nominal leadership role, but Co-Leads are expected to play a significant and comparable role in terms of commitment to the effort.

The Support ("S") role provides guidance and input, resourcing if applicable, and assists with distribution, and dissemination of the outputs.

"Other Industry Partners, Academics, & Experts" may include entities external to the Pact Activators.

TARGET 1

Define a list of packaging that is problematic or unnecessary by 2021 and take measures to eliminate them by 2025.

1 Define a list of packaging that is problematic or unnecessary by 2021 and take measures to eliminate them by 2025.

KEY OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIVITIES ³	ROLES Lead (L) Co-Lead (CL) Support (S)							TARGET DELIVERY DATE						
		Pact Steering Committee	Pact Workstreams	Governments	Brand & Retail	Manufacturers	Waste Management & Reclaimers	NGO	Other industry partners, academics & experts	Mid-2021	End 2021	End 2022	End 2023	End 2024	End 2025
1. Pact Activators understand the social and environmental impacts of material choices and trade-offs when innovating for lower environmental impact.	1.1 Provide guidance for Activators on available research that assesses the environmental impacts of packaging at a systems level (included but not limited to life cycle assessment methodologies) to better inform decisions around elimination and/or other interventions.		CL	S	S	S	S		CL	●					
	1.2 Develop public engagement campaign around plastics to recognize plastics value in a circular economy and that there are unnecessary and problematic plastics that should be designed or phased out.	CL		S	CL		S	CL			●				
2. Definitions and criteria for “problematic” and “unnecessary” plastics packaging are developed.	2.1 Review and contextualize EMF Global Commitment definitions for problematic and unnecessary plastics in the U.S. and undertake international benchmarking.	S	L	S	S	S	S	S	S	●					
	2.2 Develop U.S.-specific criteria to prioritize and create a list of problematic and unnecessary plastics.	S	L	S	S	S	S	S	S	●					
3. A list of problematic and unnecessary plastic packaging is created alongside a plan for how to eliminate those items by 2025. ⁴	3.1 Develop the U.S. list of problematic and unnecessary items and begin evaluation of the trajectory to circularity for other packaging/materials.		L		S	S	S	S		●					
	3.2 Build a framework for delivery/guidance on alternatives for eliminating this list of problematic and unnecessary plastic packaging materials including case studies, alternative delivery mechanisms, innovations in materials, and format, etc.		L		S	S			S		●				
	3.3 Pact Activators have in place the necessary plans to facilitate phased elimination in their businesses/supply chains by 2025.					CL	CL					●			
	3.4 Pact Activators have completed elimination of the problematic and unnecessary items.					CL	CL								●
	3.5 Review list of problematic and unnecessary items to ensure relevance is maintained.		L		S	S	S	S				●			

1 Define a list of packaging that is problematic or unnecessary by 2021 and take measures to eliminate them by 2025.

KEY OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIVITIES ³	ROLES Lead (L) Co-Lead (CL) Support (S)								TARGET DELIVERY DATE					
		Pact Steering Committee	Pact Workstreams	Governments	Brand & Retail	Manufacturers	Waste Management & Reclaimers	NGO	Other industry partners, academics & experts	Mid-2021	End 2021	End 2022	End 2023	End 2024	End 2025
4. Stakeholders (beyond Pact Activators) who have a substantial stake in the prioritized materials have taken aligned action around problematic and unnecessary packaging.	4.1 The U.S. Pact will sponsor or host an innovation prize or entrepreneurship calls, to benchmark potential solutions.	CL						CL			●				
	4.2 Identify opportunities for policy frameworks to support the elimination of unnecessary or problematic plastic packaging.		CL	CL	S	S	S	S	S		●				
5. A target to realize an overall reduction in virgin plastic packaging is developed.	5.1 The U.S. Plastics Pact will develop a plan to realize a substantial reduction in virgin plastic packaging.	L		S	S	S	S	S	S			●			

TARGET 2

100% of plastic packaging will be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025.



2 100% of plastic packaging will be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025.

KEY OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIVITIES ⁵	ROLES Lead (L) Co-Lead (CL) Support (S)							TARGET DELIVERY DATE						
		Pact Steering Committee	Pact Workstreams	Governments	Brand & Retail	Manufacturers	Waste Management & Reclaimers	NGO	Other industry partners, academics & experts	Mid-2021	End 2021	End 2022	End 2023	End 2024	End 2025
1. Retailers, brands, manufacturers, and recyclers have clear guidance of the status of reusability, recyclability, and compostability by packaging format and resin type, and the associated implications of this status.	1.1 Undertake, publish, and maintain an assessment of relevant plastic packaging formats in the U.S. market against the required Plastics Pact definitions of reusability, recyclability, and compostability.	S	L		S	S	S			●					
	1.2 Communicate clear guidance on the implications of packaging status (i.e., recyclability or compostability) for retailers, brands, manufacturers, and recyclers and recommendations for action.	S	L		S	S	S			●					
2. All Pact Activators (and others where possible) collectively agree on and adhere to best practice guidelines on plastics packaging design.	2.1 Establish a plan for the dissemination, maintenance, and extensive education on design guidance (adopting existing guidance where possible), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design for multiple lives Design for recycling (e.g., APR) including consideration of the impacts of additives, etc., Design that produces high-quality recycled content Light-weighting guidelines Alternatives for multi-material non-recyclable packaging 	S	L		S	S	S			●					
	2.2 Disseminate design guidance to U.S. Pact Activators and external stakeholders.	L			S	S	S	S	S			●			

2 100% of plastic packaging will be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025.

KEY OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIVITIES ⁵	ROLES Lead (L) Co-Lead (CL) Support (S)							TARGET DELIVERY DATE						
		Pact Steering Committee	Pact Workstreams	Governments	Brand & Retail	Manufacturers	Waste Management & Reclaimers	NGO	Other industry partners, academics & experts	Mid-2021	End 2021	End 2022	End 2023	End 2024	End 2025
3. Pact Activators (and others where possible) are aligned on an approach to on-pack labeling and related consumer communication for end-of-life options.	3.1 Review the status of existing on-pack labeling uptake and effectiveness (including considerations of legalities and pending FTC Green Guides changes), documenting opportunities for improvement.		L		S	S	S	S	S		●				
	3.2 Take steps to suggest improvements to existing labeling schemes or identify and implement suitable alternatives to reduce contamination in both recycling and composting. Advocate for wide-scale adoption of the agreed solution.		CL		S		S		CL			●			
	3.3 Inform and assist consumer campaigns to address appropriate recycling behaviors.	S		S	CL		S	CL	S					●	
4. Pact Activators implement extended refill/reuse options.	4.1 Share insights on best practices in reuse/refill business models with Activators.	S	L	S				S	S	●					
	4.2 Develop a reuse/refill pilot strategy including measures of success to test scalability of key solutions.	S	L	S	S	S		S	S	●					
	4.3 Complete pilots (one in each of the four reuse scenarios posed by EMF) and publish results.	S	L	S	S	S						●			
	4.4 Identify a goal number of successfully implemented reuse schemes (at scale) based on the outcomes of the reuse pilots.	L	S	S	S	S		S				●			

2 100% of plastic packaging will be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025.

KEY OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIVITIES ⁵	ROLES Lead (L) Co-Lead (CL) Support (S)							TARGET DELIVERY DATE						
		Pact Steering Committee	Pact Workstreams	Governments	Brand & Retail	Manufacturers	Waste Management & Reclaimers	NGO	Other industry partners, academics & experts	Mid-2021	End 2021	End 2022	End 2023	End 2024	End 2025
5. The U.S. Pact has a clear position and guidance on compostable packaging, helping to reduce confusion in the sector and building on or adopting other industry guidelines where possible.	5.1 Promote guidance through existing consortia ⁶ to identify when compostability is the best option.	CL					S	S	CL					●	
	5.2 Build relationships with local industry bodies and technical groups for compostable packaging to give insights to Activators where appropriate.	L					S	S	S		●				
	5.3 Develop a policy approach (local, state, and national) to support the successful design, use, collection, sorting and composting of compostable packaging in practice and at scale.	S	L	S	S	S	S	S	S					●	
	5.4 U.S. Pact Activators understand the need for certification of compostable packaging and support third-party independent certification standards.	L	S		L				S		●				
6. The U.S. Pact has a clear position regarding policy approaches that are supportive of reuse.	6.1 Develop a benchmark of policies (local, state, national, and international) that support and incentivize reuse, as well as policy barriers to reuse.	S	L	S	S	S	S	S	S		●				
7. The U.S. Pact has a clear position regarding policy approaches that are supportive of recyclability.	7.1 Develop a benchmark of policies (local, state, national, and international) that support and incentivize design for recyclability, including the use of eco-modulation as part of EPR, as well as barriers to recyclability (inclusive of the incorporation of postconsumer recycled content).	S	CL	CL	S	S	S	S	S		●				

TARGET 3

Undertake ambitious actions to effectively recycle or compost 50% of plastic packaging by 2025.



3 Undertake ambitious actions to effectively recycle or compost 50% of plastic packaging by 2025.

KEY OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIVITIES	ROLES Lead (L) Co-Lead (CL) Support (S)							TARGET DELIVERY DATE						
		Pact Steering Committee	Pact Workstreams	Governments	Brand & Retail	Manufacturers	Waste Management & Reclaimers	NGO	Other industry partners, academics & experts	Mid-2021	End 2021	End 2022	End 2023	End 2024	End 2025
1. The U.S. Pact has adopted a unified approach to reporting on U.S. plastics recycling and composting rates.	1.1 Harmonize approaches to arrive at the most accurate and appropriate measurement of plastic recycling rates, potentially including present, interim, and target-state approaches.	S	L	S			S	S		●					
	1.2 Coordinate with existing consortia efforts to identify ways to assess and measure composting rates.	S	CL	S			S	CL			●				
2. The U.S. Pact has developed a clear position regarding policy approaches that are supportive of system improvements to increase the quantity and quality of recyclables.	2.1 Support extended producer responsibility (EPR) for all packaging as an opportunity to financially sustain collection and sortation programs for all recyclable packaging, enabling the incentives to design for recyclability (via eco-modulation), and the ability to recycle greater amounts of quality materials.		L	S	S	S	S	S		●					
	2.2 Support deposit return systems (DRS), working in parallel with EPR or separately as needed, to drive increased participation in recycling programs, expanded infrastructure, and higher material quality.		L	S	S	S	S	S		●					
	2.3 Develop a benchmark of additional existing policy frameworks (local, state, national and international) to identify opportunities that would support or incentivize improved access, participation, or quality, and address any policy barriers to these goals.		L	S			S	S		●					

3 Undertake ambitious actions to effectively recycle or compost 50% of plastic packaging by 2025.

KEY OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIVITIES	ROLES Lead (L) Co-Lead (CL) Support (S)							TARGET DELIVERY DATE						
		Pact Steering Committee	Pact Workstreams	Governments	Brand & Retail	Manufacturers	Waste Management & Reclaimers	NGO	Other industry partners, academics & experts	Mid-2021	End 2021	End 2022	End 2023	End 2024	End 2025
3. A strategy is in place for the achievement of this target for the priority resins and formats. See: 2025 VISION	3.1 Undertake analysis and modeling of scenarios for the achievement of 50% recycling rate, including current/required recycling access, participation, and capacity to meet the target, associated composting implications, funding requirements, and infrastructure vision.	CL	S	S	S	S	S	S	CL		●				
	3.2 Participate in and support existing consortia and research efforts to develop a strategy for composting guidance and composting infrastructure expansion.	S	CL	S			S		CL			●			
4. There is increased and more equitable access to and participation in plastics recycling and composting by consumers and businesses (in and out of home) in line with the target strategy.	4.1 Align Pact activities to prioritize actions required by different stakeholders to deliver required modeling results in key resins and formats.	L	S	S	S	S	S	S	S			●			
	4.2 Coordinate with existing efforts to prioritize increased recycling and composting access through a set of proven strategies.		S	S	S	S	S		L				●		
5. There is increased recycling and reclamation capacity (including commercial and residential) corresponding to the target system needs.	5.1 Stimulate investment in infrastructure and systems through industry engagement and policy drivers to deliver system funding the most environmentally efficient solutions.	CL		S	S	S	S		CL			●			
	5.2 Develop, stimulate, and contribute to pilots and projects that help demonstrate options to increase recycling and reclamation.	S	L	S			S	S					●		

TARGET 4

Average of 30% recycled content or responsibly-sourced, bio-based content by 2025.



4 Average of 30% recycled content or responsibly-sourced, bio-based content by 2025.

KEY OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIVITIES	ROLES Lead (L) Co-Lead (CL) Support (S)							TARGET DELIVERY DATE						
		Pact Steering Committee	Pact Workstreams	Governments	Brand & Retail	Manufacturers	Waste Management & Reclaimers	NGO	Other industry partners, academics & experts	Mid-2021	End 2021	End 2022	End 2023	End 2024	End 2025
1. Pact Activators understand the value of using postconsumer recycled and/or responsibly sourced, biobased content and how to facilitate its use in practice.	1.1 Develop clear guidance on best practices, opportunities, and challenges (including case studies) to guide the increased use of postconsumer recycled and/or biobased content.		CL				S	S	CL	●					
2. A strategy is in place for the achievement of this target by the priority resins and formats. See: 2025 VISION	2.1 Analyze and model scenarios for the achievement of an average of 30% postconsumer recycled resin (by weight), including sub-target % recycled content by resin/format, and attention to food contact requirements — all in line with Target 2.	L	S			S	S		S	●					
	2.2 All Pact Activators have publicly stated postconsumer recycled content demand commitments specific to the U.S.	L		S	S	S	S	S			●				
3. The use of postconsumer recycled content and responsibly-sourced, biobased content has increased in line with the target state, aided by Activator commitments alongside improved specifications, quality, and material grades.	3.1 Work to develop postconsumer use end markets for films and flexible packaging, potentially through existing consortia.		L	S	S	S	S	S				●			
	3.2 Develop a procurement toolkit featuring contracting and technical inputs to facilitate the use of postconsumer recycled content, with a focus on consumer packaging.	S	CL		CL	S	S	S	S		●				

4 Average of 30% recycled content or responsibly-sourced, bio-based content by 2025.

KEY OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIVITIES	ROLES Lead (L) Co-Lead (CL) Support (S)								TARGET DELIVERY DATE					
		Pact Steering Committee	Pact Workstreams	Governments	Brand & Retail	Manufacturers	Waste Management & Reclaimers	NGO	Other industry partners, academics & experts	Mid-2021	End 2021	End 2022	End 2023	End 2024	End 2025
4. The U.S. Pact has developed a clear position with respect to verification, certification, and credit trading systems for recycled content and biobased content.	4.1 Research existing and emerging standards and take a position with respect to how the Pact will further the use of postconsumer recycled content and responsibly-sourced, biobased content.	CL	S					CL			●				
	4.2 Support policies that require or incentivize certification of postconsumer recycled content.		L	S	S	S	S	S		●					
5. The U.S. Pact developed a clear position regarding policy approaches that are supportive of Target 4.	5.1 Develop a benchmark of existing policies (local, state, national, and international), including the use of mandatory recycled content and eco-modulation levers to assess potential impacts of different approaches.	S	L	S						●					
	5.2 Support postconsumer recycled content mandates and procurement policies in coordination with strong programs and policies like EPR and DRS to assist the collection and sortation of recyclable plastic packaging.	S	L	S	S	S	S	S			●				
	5.3 Identify opportunities to support or develop additional policy strategies to address financial barriers to using postconsumer recycled content, including the use of PCR in food grade applications.	S	L	S	S	S	S	S				●			

DEFINITIONS



The U.S. Pact adopted the Ellen MacArthur Foundation Global Commitment and Plastics Pact definitions based on Pact Activator direction, with the addition of a few modifications to fit the needs of the U.S. market. The U.S. Pact continues to address required definitions, and additional terms may be added to the list below.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

An economy that is restorative and regenerative by design. It is focused on economic activity that builds and rebuilds overall system health. The concept recognizes the importance of the economy needing to work effectively at all scales — for big and small businesses, for organizations and individuals, globally and locally. It is based on three principles: design out waste and pollution; keep products and materials in use; and, regenerate natural systems.⁷

COMPOSTING

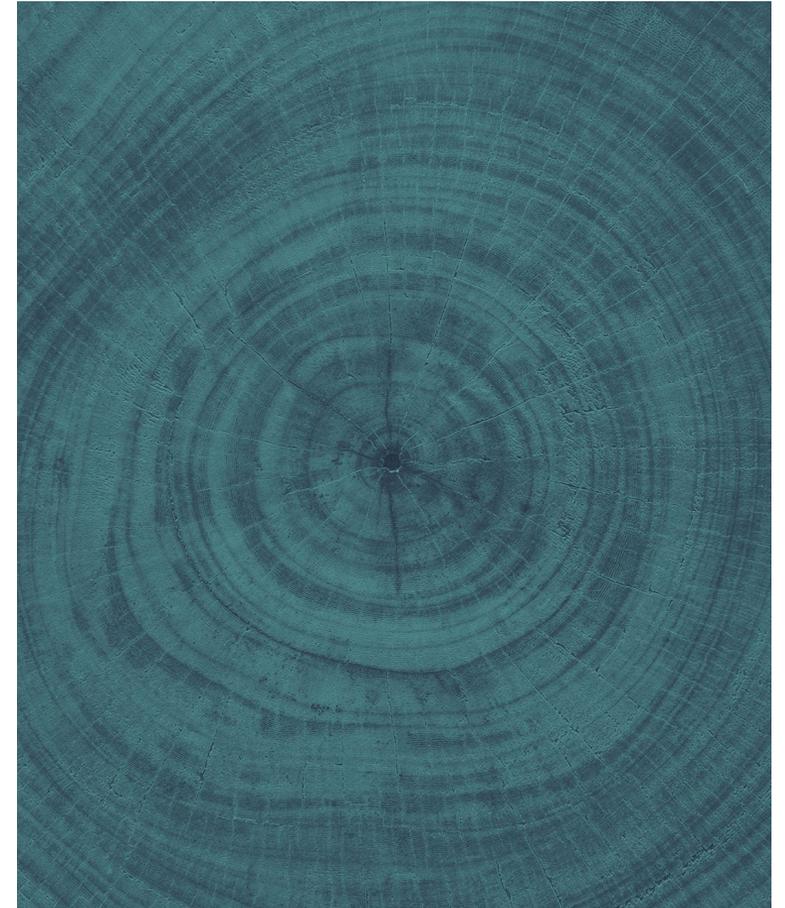
Composting is an aerobic process designed to produce compost.

Note 1 to entry: Compost is a soil conditioner obtained by biodegradation of a mixture consisting principally of vegetable residues, occasionally with other organic material and having a limited mineral content.

Source: ISO 472:2013, Plastics — Vocabulary.

Further explanatory notes:

- a. Composting can take place in an industrial facility, a collective, or at home:
 - Industrial composting: Municipal or industrial composting is a professionally managed and controlled, aerobic thermophilic waste treatment process covered by international standards and certification programs, which results in compost, a valuable soil improver.
 - Home composting: Designing packaging so that it is home-compostable means it adheres to more stringent conditions than industrially compostable packaging and increases the range of possible composting processes (both industrial and home composting). The home-composting process remains subject to the variability of householders' skills and experience, and the final product is not standardized.



COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING

A packaging or packaging component (1) is compostable if it is in compliance with ASTM standards (2) and if its successful postconsumer (3) collection, (sorting), and composting is proven to work in practice and at scale (4).

Notes:

1. ISO 18601:2013: A packaging component is a part of packaging that can be separated by hand or by using simple physical means (e.g., a cap, a lid and (non in-mold) labels).
2. Including ASTM D-6400 and ASTM 6868 (coatings), ISO 18606, ISO 14021, EN13432, and AS4736.
3. ISO 14021's usage of term clarifies postconsumer material as material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end users of the product which can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of material from the distribution chain.
4. "At scale" implies that there are significant and relevant geographical areas, as measured by population size, where the packaging is actually composted in practice.

Further explanatory notes:

- a. As per ISO 18606, a package is industrially compostable if it meets the following criteria:
 - Characterization: identification and characterization of components prior to testing;
 - Biodegradation: conversion of at least 90% of organic carbon to CO₂ within 26 weeks under controlled composting conditions (at +58°C +/-2°C);
 - Disintegration: disintegration is considered satisfactory if within 12 weeks under controlled composting conditions, no more than 10% of the original dry mass of a package remains in the oversize fraction after sieving through a 2,0 mm sieve (at +58°C +/-2°C)
 - Compost quality: the compost obtained at the end of the process does not cause any negative effects;
 - Maximum concentration of regulated metals: it does not exceed a given concentration. Of regulated heavy metals and other substances hazardous to the environment.
- b. As per ISO 18606, a package is considered compostable only if all the individual components of the package meet the compostability requirements specified. If the components can be easily, physically separated before disposal, then the physically separated components can be individually considered for composting.

- c. Compostable plastic can be composted in a municipal or industrial facility as well as, if it is designed to be home compostable, in a collective or at home as a complementary after-use option where relevant — see "Composting" definition.
- d. In line with ISO 14021 and US FTC Green claims, a marketer should clearly qualify compostability claims to the extent necessary to avoid deception, e.g., taking into account if one component is not compostable or if the item cannot be composted safely or in a timely manner in a home compost pile or device. For example, the US FTC Green guide states: "§ 260.7 Compostable Claims: "To avoid deception about the limited availability of municipal or institutional composting facilities, a marketer should clearly and prominently qualify compostable claims if such facilities are not available to a substantial majority of consumers or communities where the item is sold."
- e. This "compostable" definition applies at a global level for global commitments: it is a characteristic of packaging and is not linked to any local context or specific geographical area. It does not imply that it will be composted in every geographic area where it is put on the market. Local context and available infrastructure should be taken into account when claiming compostability in a specific geographic area.

In line with how "recyclability proven in practice and at scale" was defined, the suggested test and threshold to assess if the compostability of a packaging is proven to work "in practice and at scale" is to check if a 30% postconsumer composting rate is achieved across the U.S.

ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation develops and promotes the idea of a circular economy. They work with, and inspire, business, academia, policymakers, and institutions to mobilise systems solutions at scale, globally.⁸

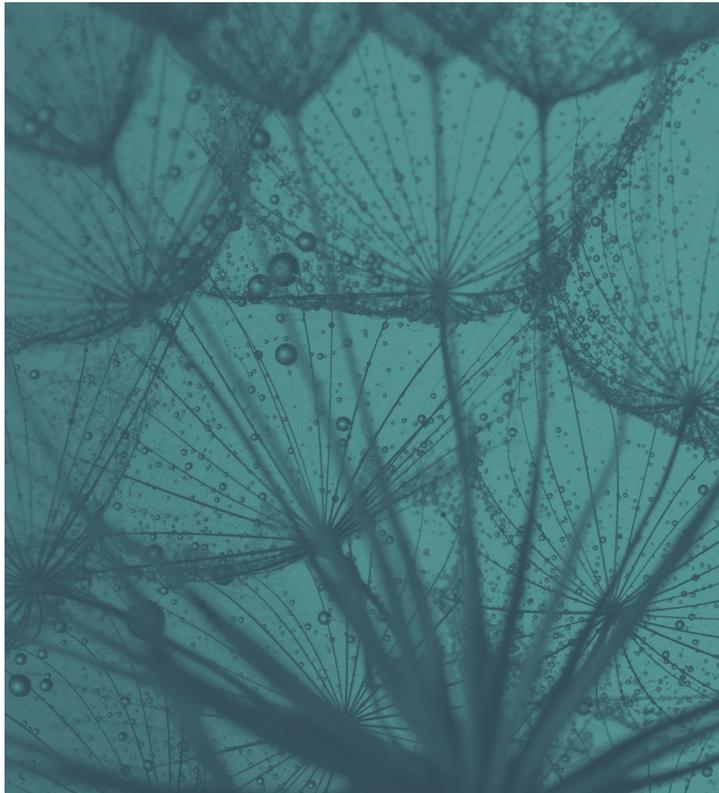
MATERIAL RECYCLING

Reprocessing, by means of a manufacturing process, of a used packaging material into a product, a component incorporated into a product, or a secondary (recycled) raw material; excluding energy recovery and the use of the product as a fuel.

Source: ISO 18604:2013 — Packaging and the environment — Material recycling, modified (note to entry not applicable).

Further explanatory notes:

- a. This includes both mechanical (maintaining polymer structure) and chemical (breaking down polymer structure into more basic building blocks, for example via chemical or enzymatic processes) recycling processes.
- b. It explicitly excludes technologies that do not reprocess materials back into materials but instead into fuels or energy. Chemical recycling can be considered in line with a circular economy if the technology is used to create feedstock that is then used to produce new materials. However, if these same processes are used for plastics-to-energy or plastics-to-fuel applications, these activities cannot be considered as recycling (according to ISO definitions), nor as part of a circular economy. For a chemical recycling process, just like for the production of virgin plastics, no hazardous chemicals should be used that pose a significant risk to human health or the environment, applying the precautionary principle.
- c. A high quality of recycling and of recycled materials is essential in a circular economy, where one aim is to keep materials at their highest utility at all times. This maximizes the value retained in the economy, the range of possible applications for which the material can be used, and the number of possible future life-cycles. It therefore minimizes material losses and the need for virgin material input.
 - Maximizing the quality and value of materials during recycling is made possible through a combination of packaging design and high-quality collection, sorting, cleaning, and recycling technologies and systems.



PACKAGING

Product to be used for the containment, protection, handling, delivery, storage, transport and presentation of goods, from raw materials to processed goods, from the producer to the user or consumer, including processor, assembler or other intermediary.

Source: ISO 21067-1:2016, Packaging — Vocabulary — Part 1: General terms.

POSTCONSUMER RECYCLED CONTENT

Proportion, by mass, of postconsumer (1) recycled material in a product or packaging. Note 1. ISO14021's usage of the term clarifies postconsumer material as material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end users of the product which can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of material from the distribution chain.

Source: ISO 14021:2016 modified, Environmental labels and declarations — Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labeling), Usage of terms, modified (focus on postconsumer recycled material)

Further explanatory notes:

- a. While in a circular economy it is encouraged that preconsumer waste is kept in the system, the priority is to avoid such pre-consumer waste as part of an efficient production process. This definition therefore excludes pre-consumer recycled content (ISO 14021, Usage of terms, Recycled content: Pre-consumer recycled content includes materials diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process).
- b. Transparency on the nature of the recycled content (i.e., postconsumer versus pre-consumer) is to be ensured whenever possible.
- c. As referred to in ISO 14021, the percentage of recycled material (by weight) shall be mentioned when a claim of recycled content is made, separately stating the percentage of recycled content used in products and packaging, without aggregating it.
- d. Amounts and quality of packaging made out of recycled content should be in line with relevant food contact and health and safety regulations where a packaging is put on the market.
- e. To verify or certify the use of recycled content, various verification systems from different assurance bodies exist.



RECYCLABLE PACKAGING

A packaging (1) or packaging component (2,3) is recyclable if its successful postconsumer (4) collection, sorting, and recycling (5) is proven to work in practice and at scale (6) and if the outcome of its processing via recycling is a specification-grade commodity for which a market exists.

Note:

1. In the context of a 2025 timeframe and the Plastics Pact and the Global Commitment, a package can be considered recyclable if its main packaging components, together representing >95% of the entire packaging weight, are recyclable according to the above definition, and if the remaining minor components are compatible with the recycling process and do not hinder the recyclability of the main components.

Otherwise, only the recyclable components of a package (or the recyclable parts of components) can be counted towards achieving this commitment, and only when other components do not hinder or contaminate their recyclability.

Examples:

- If a bottle and its cap are recyclable, the packaging can be claimed to be recyclable if it has a label (<5% of total weight) that does not hinder the recyclability of the bottle and cap.
- If that same bottle has a label that hinders or contaminates the recycling of the bottle and cap, the entire packaging is non-recyclable.
- If a package has (a) certain component(s) that are not recyclable and that make up >5% of the total packaging weight (e.g., 12%) and that do not hinder or contaminate the recycling of the remaining recyclable components of the package, then only that recyclable part (e.g., 88%) can be counted towards this commitment.

Longer-term, the aim should be for all packaging components (e.g., including labels) to be recyclable according to the above definition.

2. A packaging component is a part of packaging that can be separated by hand or by using simple physical means (ISO 18601), e.g., a cap, a lid and (non in-mold) labels. ISO 18601:2013: A packaging constituent is a part from which packaging or its components are made and which cannot be separated by hand or by using simple physical means (e.g. a layer of a multi-layered pack or an in-mold label).

3. A packaging component can only be considered recyclable if that entire component, excluding minor incidental constituents (6), is recyclable according to the definition above. If just one material of a multi-material component is recyclable, one can only claim recyclability of that material, not of the component as a whole (in line with US FTC Green Guides 15 and ISO 14021).
4. ISO 14021 defines postconsumer material as material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end users of the product which can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of material from the distribution chain. It excludes preconsumer material (e.g., production scrap).
5. Packaging for which the only proven way of recycling is recycling into applications that do not allow any further use-cycles (e.g., plastics-to-roads) cannot be considered “recyclable packaging”.
6. The test and threshold for Plastics Pacts to assess if the recyclability of a packaging design is proven “in practice and at scale” is: Does that packaging achieve a 30% postconsumer recycling rate in multiple regions, (collectively representing at least 400 million inhabitants — only relevant for the global assessment) and is a 30% postconsumer recycling rate achieved in the Pact market. If the threshold is met either globally or in the U.S., then it can be concluded for the purposes of the Plastics Pact reporting that a “system for recycling” exists for that plastic packaging category.

Further explanatory notes:

- a. By being based on the principle that recycling needs to be proven to work in practice and at scale, the definition requires the entire system to be proven to work: material choices, packaging design, the manufacturing process, the most likely way of using, disposing and collecting the packaging, and the availability, compatibility, and performance of infrastructure for collection, sorting and recycling. It also implicitly requires the system to work technically, conveniently (if it works in practice and at scale, it must be convenient enough for actors in the system to participate) and economically (if it works in practice and at scale, it must be that the economics are reasonable and that there are end markets for the resulting material).

- b. By being based on the principle that recycling needs to work in practice and at scale, the definition of recyclable packaging allows for innovation. A packaging item that is not currently recyclable could be so in future (e.g., by putting in place effective collection, sorting and recycling technologies at scale).

- c. It is important to assess the recyclability of each package separately, taking into account its design, manufacturing processes and most likely way of using, disposing and collecting it, which all have a significant impact on the possibility and probability of the package being recycled in practice. For example:

- Design: choices of materials, the shape and size of the packaging, additives and colorants, glues, inks, caps, labels.
- Manufacturing process: sometimes additives are added to facilitate the manufacturing process or residual amounts of catalysts or other products end up in the packaging during the manufacturing process.
- Most likely way of using and disposing: One should assume the most likely way of using and disposing of the packaging and not assume unlikely conditions. For example, in most countries one cannot assume that a significant share of households will disassemble packaging before disposing of it. Other questions to consider include: Would the package be disposed most often with or without the label or cap still attached? Would it most likely be disposed of empty and clean, or contaminated with product residues, glue or lid residues?
- Most likely way of collecting: Is the pack most likely to end up in a collection system for business-to-business bulk materials or in that for household materials? A package could be recycled in practice and at scale in business-to-business but not in business-to-consumer applications (e.g., PE pallet wraps usually end up in different collection systems than PE wraps around consumer products).

- d. While the definition does not specify where a package is recycled (i.e., allowing for the export and import of materials), businesses should ensure any exported packaging actually gets recycled before considering the recycling pathway to work in practice.

- e. The available technical design-for-recycling guidelines by organizations such as APR bring a more technical and in-depth analysis of design for recycling prerequisites. As such, these guidelines are complementary to the “recyclable” definition of this appendix, and businesses are encouraged to refer to and apply these design-for-recyclability guidelines.

RENEWABLE MATERIAL

Material that is composed of biomass from a living source and that can be continually replenished. When claims of renewability are made for virgin materials, those materials shall come from sources that are replenished at a rate equal to or greater than the rate of depletion.

Source: ISO 14021:2016, Environmental labels and declarations — Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labeling) - Sections 7.14.1. Usage of term and 7.14.2. Qualifications.

Further explanatory notes:

a. ISO 14021: “An unqualified claim of renewability shall only be made when the product consists of 100% renewable material, allowing for de minimis amounts of non-renewable materials being contained in that material. Otherwise, renewability claims shall be qualified as follows: a) where a claim of renewable material content is made, the percentage by mass of renewable material to the total mass shall be stated; b) the percentage of renewable material content (mass fraction) for products and packaging shall be separately stated and shall not be aggregated.”

RESPONSIBLY-SOURCED, BIOBASED MATERIAL⁹

U.S. Plastics Pact Target 4 references “responsibly sourced, biobased content”. This term addresses feedstock sources used in packaging (as opposed to end-of-life characteristics such as compostability or biodegradability) and permits the use of plastic derived from plants or other biomass as part of the achievement of Target 4.

Bio-based content has an important role to play in the circularity of plastics by ensuring that the plastics industry can move towards 100% renewable sourcing.

The following definition is adopted by the U.S. Plastics Pact, and includes the need for proven certification:

A responsibly-sourced, biobased feedstock is a substrate derived from plants or other biomass that:

1. Is legally sourced, conforms to Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and is produced in a safe and healthy way for workers and surrounding communities.
2. Is one that is derived from renewable biomass whose production is sustainably managed.
3. Does not adversely impact food security and affordability and maintains or improves social and economic conditions along with ecosystem services in producing communities.
4. Does not result in destruction of critical ecosystems or loss of High Conservation Value (HCV) habitats.
5. Contributes to landscape resilience and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.

WWF supported certifications and continuous improvement platforms relevant to responsibly-sourced, biobased materials are as follows:

- Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB)
- Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS)
- Bonsucro
- Rainforest Alliance / Sustainable Agriculture Network (WWF acknowledges this certification when a commodity-specific certification is not available)
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
- Field to Market
- Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)
- Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

REUSE

Reuse of packaging Operation by which packaging is refilled or used for the same purpose for which it was conceived, with or without the support of auxiliary products (1) present on the market, enabling the packaging to be refilled.

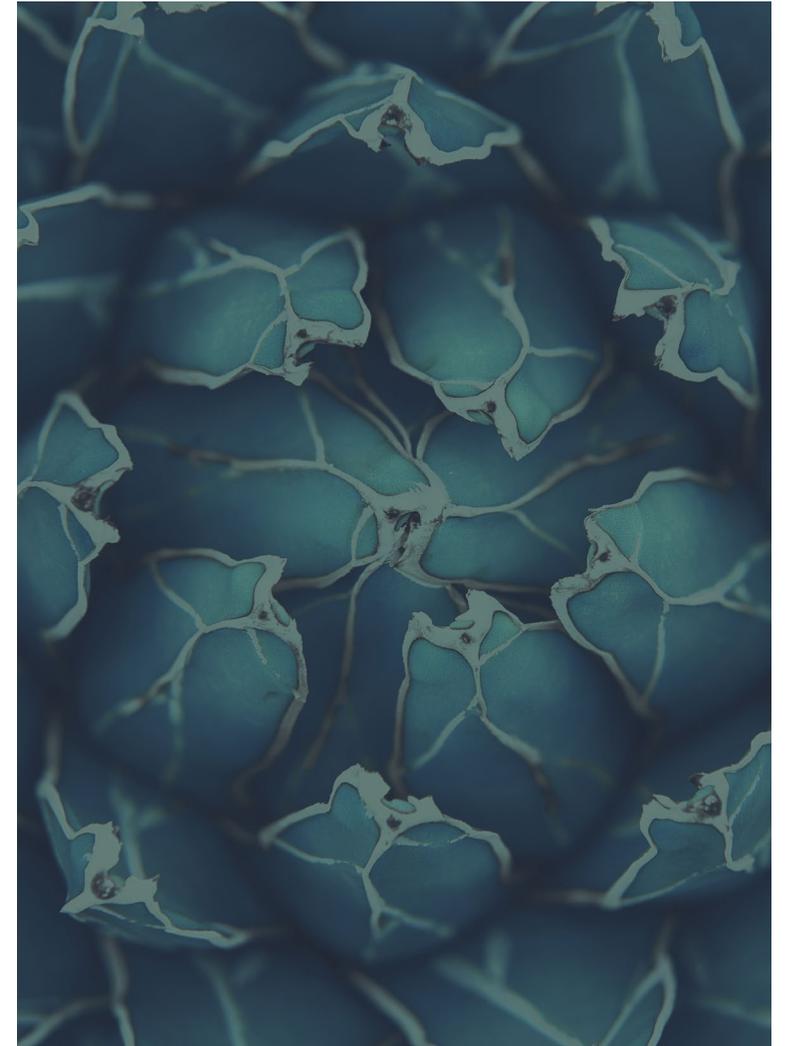
Source: ISO 18603:2013, Packaging and the environment — Reuse, modified (clarification in note 1 below). Note 1. An auxiliary product is a product used to support the refilling/loading of reusable packaging. (...) An example of an auxiliary product is a detergent pouch used to refill a reusable container at home (ISO 18603). As per ISO 18603, auxiliary products that are one-way products (i.e., designed to be used once) are not considered reusable packaging.

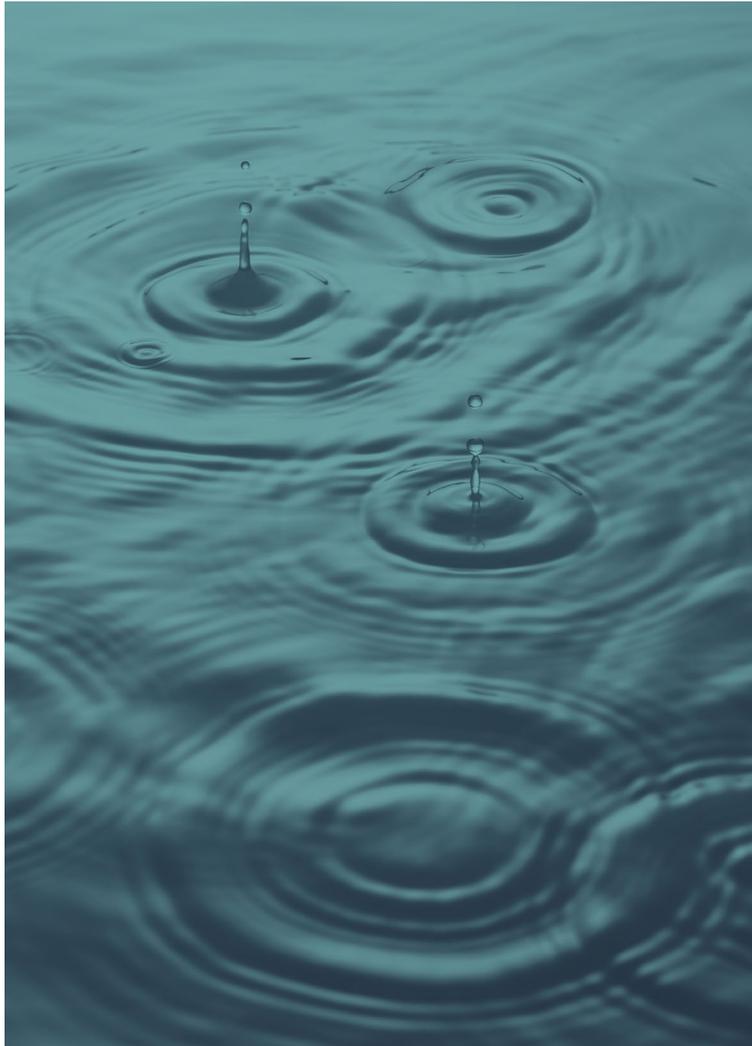
Further explanatory notes:

- a. Attention should be paid to the intended use and function of the packaging to verify whether it is being reused for the same purpose or a secondary use. In the latter case, the packaging is not considered as reusable packaging (ISO 18603, 'Packaging used for the same purpose'). For example, the use of a package as a penholder or as decoration cannot be qualified as reuse.
- b. A package is considered reusable if the design of the packaging enables the principal components to accomplish a number of trips or rotations in normally predictable conditions of use (ISO 18603). According to ISO 18601, a packaging component is a part of packaging that can be separated by hand or by using simple physical means (for example a cap, a lid, a (non-in-mold) label).

Examples packaging can be reused in different ways:

- Business-to-business applications: packaging is reused through a redistribution system between one or more companies (for example pallets loaded with the same or different product, crates, pallet wraps).
- Business-to-consumer applications: packaging returned to the supplier or a third party to be cleaned and reused for the distribution and sale of an identical or similar product (for example a container that is part of a deposit return or refund system for reuse, a returnable transportation packaging item, a reusable container in the food service industry) or packaging not returned to the supplier, but instead reused by the user as a container or as a dispenser for the same product supplied by the manufacturer for the same purpose (such as a reusable spray bottle for cleaning products for which the manufacturer provides refills).





REUSABLE PACKAGING

Packaging which has been designed to accomplish and proves its ability to accomplish a minimum number of trips or rotations (1,2) in a system for reuse (3,4).

Source: ISO 18603:2013 — Packaging and the environment — Reuse, modified (packaging component mentioned in notes).

Notes:

1. A trip is defined as transfer of packaging, from filling/loading to emptying/unloading. A rotation is defined as a cycle undergone by reusable packaging from filling/loading to filling/loading (ISO 18603).
2. The minimum number of trips or rotations refers to the fact that the 'system for reuse' in place should be proven to work in practice, i.e., that a significant share of the package is actually reused (measured e.g., by an average reuse rate or an average number of use-cycles per package).
3. A system for reuse is defined as established arrangements (organisational, technical, or financial) which ensure the possibility of reuse, in closed-loop, open-loop or in a hybrid system (ISO 18603).
4. See above for the definition of reuse, which stresses amongst other things the need for the packaging to be refilled or used again for the same purpose for which it was conceived.

Further explanatory notes:

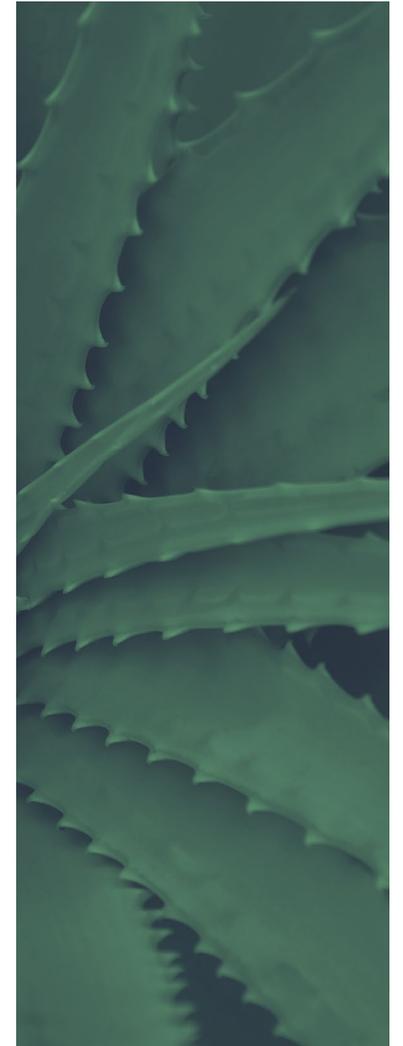
- a. For a container to qualify as reusable, there needs to be a 'system for reuse' in place that enables the user of the package to ensure it is reused in practice where the item is placed on the market. Such a system for reuse should be able to prove a significant actual reuse rate, or average number of use-cycles of a package, in normal conditions of use.
- b. A package is considered reusable if the design of the packaging enables the principal components to accomplish a number of trips or rotations in normally predictable conditions of use (ISO 18603:2013). According to ISO 18601, a packaging component is a part of packaging that can be separated by hand or by using simple physical means (e.g., a cap, a lid, a (non in-mold) label). (ISO 18601:2013, Packaging component definition.)
- c. Single-use packaging (i.e., designed to be used once) aimed at delivering a refill for a reusable package is not considered reusable packaging.
- d. A reusable item can undergo reconditioning, that is operations necessary to restore a reusable packaging to a functional state for further reuse (ISO 18603:2013).
- e. Reusable packaging should be designed to be recyclable, as it will inevitably reach the maximum number of reuse cycles at some point, after which recycling ensures, the material is kept in the economy.
- f. Updated reuse frameworks can be adopted to ensure cohesive, consistent action across the U.S. landscape.

APPENDIX



REFERENCES

- 1 See the guidelines from the Bioplastic Feedstock Alliance, [WWF's Principles for Credible Certifications and Standards](#).
- 2 WWF supported certifications and continuous improvement platforms relevant to responsibly-sourced, biobased materials are as follows:
 - Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB)
 - Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS)
 - Bonsucro
 - Rainforest Alliance / Sustainable Agriculture Network (WWF acknowledges this certification when a commodity-specific certification is not available)
 - Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
 - Field to Market
 - Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)
 - Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
- 3 Internal U.S. Pact operations will include the following tasks:
 - Establish a workstream for Target 1 and develop criteria for 'problematic' and 'unnecessary' plastic packaging items.
 - Establish a policy-focused workstream and develop a plan for how/when to feed into government policy/strategy on 'problematic' plastic items where relevant.
- 4 Integrate the agreed upon list into the annual reporting template to allow progress against Target 1 to be monitored.
- 5 Internal U.S. Pact operations will include the following tasks:
 - Establish a workstream to address the detailed Scope of the U.S. Plastics Pact and publish the outcomes of this for all Activators. The workstream will identify packaging types/resins/formats included in the Pact (aligned with reporting mechanisms).
 - Establish a policy-focused workstream and develop a plan with respect to reuse policy enablers, recyclability enablers, and compostability enablers. Establish a workstream on Design for Recyclability (including the incorporation of postconsumer recycled content).
- 6 The U.S. Pact plans to work closely with the Closed Loop Partners Composting Consortium, as well as others.
- 7 <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/explore/the-circular-economy-in-detail>
- 8 <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/>
- 9 Biobased content must be responsibly sourced in accordance with guidelines from the Bioplastic Feedstock Alliance or certified by a relevant and credible certification (see [WWF's Principles for Credible Certifications and Standards](#) for more information).



ACTIVATORS OF THE U.S. PLASTICS PACT

The U.S. Plastics Pact is a collaborative initiative led by The Recycling Partnership and World Wildlife Fund US and advised by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation as part of the Foundation's Plastics Pact Network.



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