



## **Plastic packaging producers involved in reuse**

### The 10 Principles of a responsible Reuse of Plastic Packaging

[Paris, August 9, 2024] The reuse of plastic packaging is a complementary solution to single use, provided, as pointed out by the French Packaging Council (CNE)<sup>1</sup>, environmental interest, sustainable economic model, safety, social acceptance and industrial sovereignty are taken into consideration. Therefore, reuse practices must be evaluated be contextualized on a case-by-case basis: it cannot be general and absolute.

<sup>1</sup> [Packaging and reuse: Challenges, opportunities and prospects](#), the French Packaging Council, 2024.

To advance equitable reuse practices, ELIPSO calls for consideration of 10 principles.

#### Regulatory enforcement and standardization

Reuse is a regulatory requirement that the plastics industry has turned into an opportunity for certain applications. Its benefit on the circular economy requires a fair balance between, on the one hand, the reduction in raw materials used and single use, and on the other, the environmental, economic, health and social impact.

At European and national level, regulations are evolving, with challenges to be met to harmonize perimeters and ensure fair competition while respecting product specificities.

Packaging standardization relies on the pooling of collection, deposit and return systems, transport and traceability systems for standardized packaging. The entire value chain needs to be on board, especially packaging manufacturers, who are best positioned on design packaging. Flexibility in specifications will enable adjustments to formats and functional dimensions, while ensuring integrity after a defined minimum number of uses.

The development of a French national standard will have to comply with European regulatory requirements - definition, objectives, deadlines, scope - without compromising national sovereignty.

Stakeholders mobilized by authorities for the development of standards must preserve competitive equity between materials. **It is therefore essential for all packaging (household and industrial) that these 10 principles are followed.**

- 1. Standardization must define a set of specifications** for collection, deposit, washing, and packaging, **without imposing a single design;**
- 2. Specifications need to be developed transparently to combine technical success and societal acceptability**, such as test protocols to ensure safety (e.g. washing);
- 3. Specifications must be accessible to all;**
- 4. Standardization must be developed within timeframes for all materials;**
- 5. Packaging manufacturers must be able to join technical meetings** dedicated to drawing up **standard packaging specifications.**

Some packaging, including plastic, cannot be standardized, given the sensitivity of the applications (e.g. food contact, medical, etc.), the low turnover or low volume of certain references (constraints on massification) and the need for differentiation (e.g. cosmetics, luxury goods, food, etc.). **As a result :**

- 6. Standards should not be imposed when non-standardized initiatives have demonstrated their environmental relevance** (local scale, return systems already in place, specific format or standardized household/CHR/EIC packaging already in existence, operational and commonly used).

#### Economic and environmental sustainability

The costs associated with collecting, sorting, washing, repairing and recycling reusable packaging represent significant challenges.

However, any reuse initiative must be economically viable if it is to prosper, beyond the environmental interest for which it was initiated.

The implementation of a reuse system needs to be based on competitive equity, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region.

To this end:

- 7. Financial incentives must support reuse infrastructures in all regions of France, including the DROM-COM**, with the need to establish clear criteria and transparent mechanisms for allocating funds, to ensure equitable distribution and efficient use in all regions;

#### **Technological maturity and innovation**

While reuse is feasible for some plastic packaging, others still require significant technological advances: sensitive applications, flexible packaging. In addition, technical innovations may raise the question of recyclability and recycling (e.g. co-polyesters) and, further down the line, the incorporation of recycled materials.

To promote technological advances in reuse:

- 8. The materials innovation needed to develop reuse must be supported financially and technically to emerge without major disruption to existing recycling channels** (e.g. new packaging materials);
- 9. There are cases where the useful and irreplaceable function of single-use plastic packaging must be prioritized** for health, technical or environmental reasons.

#### **Social acceptability and effective implementation by consumers**

Social acceptance of reuse is essential to its success in changing consumer habits.

- 10. ELIPSO calls the entire value chain to educate the public**, with a view to raising awareness and educating consumers **about fair reuse**, including the end-of-life of reusable packaging. **For reasons of insularity, the DROM-COM require specific communication to** develop and prioritize reuse and recycling, followed by the export of waste that cannot be economically exploited locally, and energy recovery.