

ON THE JOURNEY TO A CIRCULAR SYSTEM FOR PLASTICS

wrap

THE UK
PLASTICS
PACT



**Annual
Report**

2020-2021

FOREWORD

Citizens might not necessarily be aware of it, but a stealthy evolution of the way they shop is unfolding.

Colour-free is the new black when it comes to plastic trays; things have never been clearer for previously green drinks bottles; the number of items in the top 5 hit list for elimination like plastic stirrers, straws, and plastic cotton buds, has almost halved, and shoppers are being invited to experiment with refill and reuse options around the country.

MARCUS GOVER,
CEO, WRAP



There's no doubt we've come a long way since The UK Plastics Pact pledged to help rid the planet of plastic pollution in 2018. The figures you will read about in this report are impressive. Standouts for me are demonstrable progress in all four targets, exciting developments in reuse and refill trials, a saving of over a million barrels of oil through the doubling of recycled plastic in packaging, and a record high in citizens recycling. This is especially pleasing considering that the retail sector has faced possibly the most tumultuous period in its history.

Pact members should rightly take the plaudits for this progress, and we are grateful for their continued commitment to The UK Plastics Pact.

The truth is though, that the overall picture remains a mixed bag. We still have a long way to go, and an ever-shorter timeframe to get there.

There is still too much plastic packaging being used where it could either be safely removed, substituted, or alternative options offered to consumers – exploring how this can be done without displacing the environmental cost elsewhere is a priority for WRAP and the Pact.

I remain concerned that if we don't seriously up the pace on tackling plastic bags and wrapping – reducing it where possible, recycling it where needed – then it threatens to derail our ambition. We need to see prominent collection points become the norm for shoppers. And investors need to open their wallets to fund the infrastructure which would make some of the exciting innovation taking place a reality.

There is an active engine room steering the Pact, driven by WRAP, and made up of members from right across the plastics supply chain. It has been busy gathering evidence, producing guidance, sharing knowledge, and offering strategic advice and governance. I've attended many meetings, and I'm always impressed by the willingness of everyone involved to confront the often uncomfortable and complex challenges we face. We will have some difficult conversations ahead and some serious obstacles to overcome. We need everyone to continue to maintain that spirit of unity and collaboration as we push on to the next level.

There are so many compelling reasons why continuing full pelt on our mission to transform our relationship with plastics forever is an imperative. And this ambition is being replicated across the globe. There is now a Plastics Pact on every populated continent on the planet. It's worth pointing out in this year of COP26 that a circular economy for plastics doesn't only cure the world of the scourge of pollution, but also contributes to the fight against climate change, for example the recycled plastic now being used by Pact members is saving 140,000 tonnes of CO₂e.

The world is looking to The UK Plastics Pact to continue to lead the way. We cannot let ourselves, or it, down. We've come so far. Let's finish the job.

SUMMARY

The UK Plastics Pact members are demonstrating significant collective and individual progress towards each of the Pact targets.

TARGET 1

Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging through redesign, innovation, or alternative (reuse) delivery models.

46%

reduction in plastic items since 2018.

TARGET 2

100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable, or compostable.

70%

of plastic packaging is reusable or recyclable.

TARGET 3

70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted.

52%

of plastic packaging recycled; up from 44% in 2018.

TARGET 4

30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging.

18%

average recycled content; up from 9% in 2018.

The UK Plastics Pact Members and Supporters

The UK Plastics Pact members account for two thirds of all consumer packaging used in the UK.

96 full business members made up of:

56 Manufacturers

15 Retailers

3 Hospitality / Foodservice

22 Resin producers, packaging converters, machinery, and the recycling industry

23 Associate members

46 Supporters

[A full list of members and supporting organisations can be found here](#)

TARGET 1

ELIMINATING PROBLEM PLASTICS

46%

reduction in problematic and unnecessary plastic items since 2018

The number of plastic items (numbered 1–5 in the list) has reduced by 46% since 2018 to 398 million items. The tonnage of all items has reduced by 42%, from 22,700 tonnes to 13,100 tonnes.

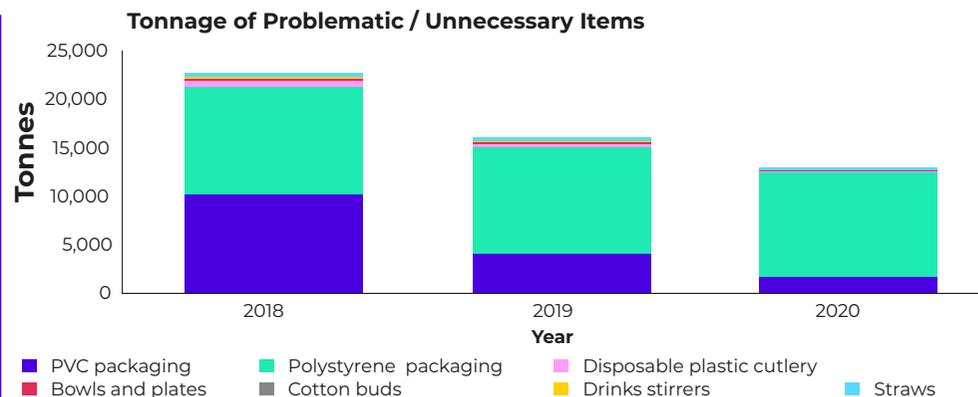
The most significant reduction has been achieved in polyvinyl chloride (PVC) packaging, which has fallen by more than 80% since 2018. It was acknowledged from the outset that there would be areas where elimination would be more difficult to deliver than in others. Progress has been slower on polystyrene (a 3% reduction) which, amongst other things, is used to package multi-pack yoghurts and white goods. Business members report that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on making the necessary changes, with a key barrier to change being cost. Despite this, 20% of members have already successfully removed polystyrene, a further 20% will have removed it by the end of 2021, and most others will remove it in 2022².

These numbers are based on members who reported each year since 2018 to give a meaningful data comparison¹.

10% reduction in consumer plastic packaging, that's a 335kt CO₂e reduction, equivalent to taking 150,000 cars off the road.

¹The membership of the Pact has grown by 20% since 2018; despite this, the overall tonnage of problematic items has fallen by 30% and the number of items by 36%.

²It will not be possible to confirm the extent to which the 8 items were eliminated by the end of 2020 (the original target date for removal as far as possible) until next year when WRAP will review data for 2021.



The eight problematic or unnecessary items:

1. Plastic cutlery
2. Plastic plates and bowls
3. Plastic straws and straws with cartons
4. Cotton buds with plastic stems
5. Plastic drinks stirrers
6. Household Polystyrene packaging
7. Oxo-degradable plastics
8. PVC packaging.

It is not only the 8 items and materials where Pact members are required to act. An additional 19 items are included on the 'investigation' list, to address the underlying causes of plastic packaging being problematic.

Since 2018 the weight of single use consumer (primary) plastic packaging placed on the market by members has decreased by around 10%. There has also been a 9% reduction in the weight of single use transit plastic packaging.

TARGET 1

PACT ACTION

WRAP believe that a targeted approach to removing and reducing unnecessary or problematic plastic is essential to avoid unintended environmental consequences.

We must continue to drive forward, and the time is now right to increase the range of items that Pact members should eliminate from their portfolios as far as possible. A review has been ongoing during 2021 to consider latest developments and evidence, particularly in relation to the effect of packaging on household food waste. An updated position and call to action for industry will be published early in 2022. Since all packaging materials have an environmental impact, it is important that we do not simply switch to an alternative unwittingly. We all have a role to play, including citizens, many of whom will need to be brought on a journey to adopt more sustainable solutions.

Improving citizen understanding on the role of plastic packaging

Clear on Plastics™ is a campaign by WRAP supported by The UK Plastics Pact. It launched in March 2020 and its purpose is to cut through the confusion and give citizens clear, evidence-based information on plastics and sustainability, allowing them to make their own informed choices.

SINCE ITS LAUNCH, CLEAR ON PLASTICS SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS HAVE REACHED MORE THAN 10 MILLION CITIZENS THROUGH CAMPAIGNS, ORGANIC CONTENT AND INFLUENCER SUPPORT.

Our regular social listening activity informs our campaigns and recently highlighted that beauty products were an area to be explored. So, in November and December of 2020, our '4Rs' Beauty Campaign launched; directing citizens to reduce, refill, recycle, and return their beauty plastics. The campaign ran across Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook with influencer content on TikTok. We were joined by partners on the campaign including the Cosmetic, Toiletry and Perfumery Association Ltd (CTPA), Procter and Gamble (Gillette & Venus, Olay, Aussie, Head & Shoulders, Pantene, Herbal Essences), L'Oreal & Garnier, TerraCycle, Maybelline, Carex, and L'Occitane.



TARGET 1

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Removing unnecessary plastic

In September 2021 **Morrisons** announced the removal of plastic bags from bananas, the second most bought fresh product in its stores. Once rolled out, it will reduce the use of unnecessary plastic by 180 tonnes, that's 45 million bags each year.



Lidl is set to have removed 1 billion items of plastic packaging by the end of 2021. This includes 24 million plastic trays and punnets from fresh fruit and vegetables and 25 million plastic lids from yoghurt and other dairy products.

Wilko has removed a total of 824 tonnes of plastic through a variety of ways such as light-weighting packaging within their cleaning and laundry range, removal of wrapping across greetings cards and DIY products, and redesign of pack formats in children's stationery.

PepsiCo's brand Quaker has removed the plastic lids from the Oat So Simple range of porridge pots resulting in a 14% overall saving in the range's annual plastic usage.

Sainsbury's has removed the plastic film from its 'By Sainsbury's' broccoli, saving 49 tonnes of plastic each year. It has also removed lids from own brand cream pots saving 106 tonnes of plastic each year.



Reducing unnecessary plastic

Nestlé UK & Ireland has redesigned its confectionery sharing bags to use significantly less packaging. Narrower pouches for its brands including Milkybar, Aero Bubbles, Munchies, Rolo, Yorkie, and Rowntree's Randoms will save 83 tonnes of plastic, the equivalent in area of 131 football pitches.



Britvic has reduced the amount of plastic used in bottles across its brands including Fruit Shoot and Robinsons. This is saving 1,241 tonnes of plastic annually.

TARGET 1

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Danone has launched a new 5l water dispenser 'evian (re)new'. They are made from 100% recycled plastic and use 60% less plastic compared to 1.5l evian bottles.

innocent drinks has reduced plastic in its 900ml juice and 420ml Juicy Water bottles saving 273 tonnes of plastic each year.

Waitrose & Partners has reduced the amount of plastic in its own brand Easter eggs by nearly half (44%), with 18% less card too. It has also reduced the amount of plastic in its British strawberry punnets and toilet roll packaging to save a further 29 tonnes of plastic every year.

Mars Petcare UK has reduced the plastic packaging in its Pedigree Schmackos and Dreamies 60g brands resulting in 27 tonnes of plastic being saved annually.

Addressing problematic plastic

Klockner Pentaplast has launched a Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) blister pack for pharmaceuticals. Three years of research and development has resulted in a PET-only blister as an alternative to foil and PVC.



Mondelez has started rolling out fully recyclable packaging across its Dairy Lea and Philadelphia lines in the UK and Ireland. Starting with Philadelphia mini tubs and Dairy Lea handi snacks, non-recyclable polystyrene has been switched to recyclable PET – removing about 487 tonnes of polystyrene from its supply chain.

Sainsbury's has replaced polystyrene in its own brand 2l ice cream tubs, meaning that 215 tonnes of plastic is now recyclable.

Premier Foods has moved Mr Kipling, Cadbury and Plantastics flat pack slices from polystyrene to PET, meaning 250 tonnes of plastic is now recyclable. The trays also now contain at least 50% recycled plastic. Premier Foods has also replaced polystyrene lids for its Saxa Speciality brand.

Samworth Brothers has reduced the plastic packaging on its Screen by 20%.

Danone has transitioned its Activia brand of yogurts from polystyrene to PET and has celebrated by using on-pack and online messaging to ask its customers to recycle the packs.



Britvic has redesigned its Robinsons 1.75l double concentrate bottle to enable non-recyclable polystyrene shelf display trays to be replaced with reusable ones. This has also enabled more bottles to be packed onto pallets which reduces the number of lorries on the road.

TARGET 2

REUSABLE OR RECYCLABLE

70%

of plastic packaging is reusable or recyclable

65%

of plastic packaging continues to be recyclable

For the first time under The UK Plastics Pact, we can report on levels of reusable packaging. There are high levels of reuse in transit packaging, and we have seen positive small-scale developments in consumer options for reuse and refill, but more needs to be done. We need more trials and scaling up of pilot projects on everyday household items if we are to make refill mainstream by 2025.

Citizens tell us that they are receptive to, or are already using refill services, but very few are using them habitually. To become mainstream, refill needs to be an attractive and convenient option when we shop.

Table 1. Reusable / recyclable packaging – primary and transit tonnage in 2020.

	Non-recyclable	Recyclable	Reusable	Total	Recyclable	Recyclable or reusable
Primary Packaging	330,000	578,000	1,700	910,000	64%	64%
Transit Packaging	15,000	61,000	151,000	227,000	80%	93%
Total	345,000	639,000	152,000	1,140,000	65%	70%

TARGET 2

REUSABLE OR RECYCLABLE (CONT.)

70%

Reduction in the amount of hard to recycle packaging such as non-Near-Infrared (NIR) detectable colours, metal or PVC components since 2018.

There has been good progress by Pact members in the redesign of packaging to remove non-recyclable elements and improve material quality for recycling and reprocessing, but until the recycling of consumer plastic bags and wrapping is scaled up significantly, we will not make major progress towards the 100% target.

IF MONO-MATERIAL POLYETHYLENE (E.G. BREAD BAGS) AND POLYPROPYLENE FILMS (E.G. CRISP PACKETS) WERE RECYCLED, 83% OF PACKAGING WOULD BE CLASSED AS RECYCLABLE*.

We need to roll out supermarket collection points further and urgently engage with citizens so that they know that they can use them to recycle this material ahead of collection directly from homes in a few years' time. But it is not enough to simply collect the material; investment in sorting and reprocessing is also required as well as further commitment from industry to use the recycled material.

Table 2. The remaining non-recyclable or non-compostable packaging materials.

	% of primary packaging non-recyclable
Polypropylene (PP) film	9.5%
Polyethylene (PE) film	8.6%
Multilayer film	3.7%
Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) film	2.7%
Polystyrene (PS)	1.5%
Multilayer rigids	1.4%
Metal components	0.7%
Non-Near infrared (NIR)	0.5%
Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) components	0.2%
Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)	0.2%
	0.1%
Other / unknown	7.8%

*To be classed as recyclable, a material must be recycled in practice and at scale. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation define "at scale" to mean 30% of material placed on the market is recycled.

TARGET 2

PACT ACTION

Improving material quality

WRAP has been working with Pact members on several critical issues to simplify packaging design.

WRAP provides guidance to members and wider industry on packaging design strategy including [design guidance for recyclability](#) and [compostable packaging](#).

Members are expected to align with our guidance for rigid plastics by the end of 2022 and flexible plastics by the end of 2023. There are still challenges to overcome, e.g. small formats, where our Collaborative Action Groups help members to develop and share solutions.

After 8 years and 45 prototypes, **Heinz** will be introducing a new cap for tomato ketchup which sees the removal of silicone valves which are a contaminant to the recycling system. The new caps will be rolled out in 2022 to the squeezable ketchup bottles.



PepsiCo and **Britvic** have transitioned 7UP from green to clear plastic bottles. Research undertaken by Britvic, who manufactures the drink in the UK on behalf of PepsiCo, indicated that 40% of consumers were more likely to recycle clear bottles over coloured. Importantly, the move from green to clear will significantly improve the value of the material and enable the bottles to be recycled back into new bottles.



Coca-Cola Europacific Partners has continued with its action away from coloured plastic, with Lilt bottles moving from green to clear. Sprite was moved to clear PET in 2019.



SPAR UK Ltd has removed non-recyclable black plastic resulting in an annual saving of 113 tonnes of non-recyclable plastic.

TARGET 2

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Co-op and **Dunbia** worked together with suppliers to roll out mono-material PET trays across red meat packs. Previously the packs contained a layer of different plastic (PE) which impeded the trays from being recycled effectively. The innovation enables Dunbia group, suppliers to many UK supermarkets, to transition all trays to the mono-material.



From disposable to refillable

WRAP's research shows that many citizens say they are trying lots of different refill / reuse behaviours and around half of those that haven't are receptive to trying it. However, few have adopted refill as a habit.

WRAP is strategising on what needs to happen for reuse and refill to become mainstream by 2025 with input from members and is sharing learnings from those businesses already trialling reuse and refill. Work is being done to review the key opportunities and barriers, regulatory issues, and to better monitor progress.

A project funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has been initiated by partners WRAP, Asda, and Unilever to research refill behaviours in the home and how they impact refill behaviours in-store. This world-leading research will for the first time explore the entire shopping journey, enabling us to understand the barriers and opportunities for citizens to plan for and use in-store refill. It will also help us find solutions to help them embed refill behaviours in their daily lives, unlocking the full potential of refill for citizens.

What's happening in-store?

Following the launch of its refill zone in Middleton, Leeds in 2020, in collaboration with several brands, **Asda** has added more than 50 new product lines and extended the trial to more stores including in York and Glasgow, with Milton Keynes to follow. There are more choices of Kellogg's cereal; a greater range of Yorkshire Tea products; additional pasta shapes; additional varieties of rice; Silver Spoon sugar; seeds and nuts; Mars pet food; Dreamies cat treats and pre-filled bottles of Coca-Cola.



TARGET 2

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Unilever has continued to grow their refill trials, now in Asda, Co-op and Tesco stores, testing a range of Persil, Radox, Simple and Alberto Balsam products in refillable bottles.



Following an online pilot, **Tesco** has taken the Loop refill system into 10 stores. Brands in the service include Bisto, Brewdog, Bulldog, Carex, Coca-Cola, Ecover, Fever Tree, Finish, Good4U, Heinz Mud House, Naked Noodle, Original Source, Persil, Quaker Oats, Radox, Simple, Sipsmiths and Tetley. Tesco has included 35 own-brand essentials in the range, such as pasta, rice, oil, and sugar. The range comes in pre-filled packaging and customers pay a deposit ranging from 20p to £5 at the checkout

which is refunded via an app when the empty container is returned to a collection point in-store.



Morrisons is reporting early success of introducing a reuse option with glass milk bottles across 11 stores in Kent and Sheffield, displacing single-use plastic bottles. The bottles are delivered directly to Morrisons supermarkets by local dairy farms and once returned are collected, sanitised, and refilled. Morrisons aim to roll this out across more stores and report that CO₂ emissions from the initiative are limited as delivery from local suppliers means milk is transported short distances.

Morrisons is also offering free water refills at its petrol forecourts. The move comes after a 12-week trial in August 2020 where 18% fewer bottles of water were sold, in comparison to the same period the previous year. The retailer has already installed over 300 stand-alone water fountains in the Food-to-Go sections of its stores for customers to fill their bottles on the go.

Procter and Gamble has launched refill options across its haircare brands including Head & Shoulders, Pantene, Herbal Essences, and Aussie.



Waitrose & Partners has added 13 new products into its 'unpacked' lines across the four stores where refill is being piloted. It reports that refill sales grew 9% in the first half of 2021, with sales of frozen fruit and vegetables increasing more than 50%, detergent and washing liquid by 24% and pasta and grains 9%. The new lines include tea, dried fruits, popcorn, and frozen vegetables.

TARGET 2

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Aldi Stores Ltd. has launched its first refill trial in Ulverston, Cumbria, for a variety of dried rice and pasta. The trial has already evolved to enable customers to bring their own containers and will be monitored to understand how refill will fit with the Aldi business model within other product ranges.



SPAR UK Ltd has introduced refill to two stores and is trialling in a further two stores.

McDonalds is currently piloting returnable coffee cups in six restaurants in the UK. The project is running in conjunction with Loop with the aim of reducing the amount of single use coffee cups being used. Customers pay a £1 deposit for the cup but receive a 20p discount off their hot drink. After use, customers return the cups to specific Loop branded collection bins to initiate the refund of their deposit via the Loop app. The cups are collected by Loop to be cleaned and reused.

Closing the loop on plastic bags and wrapping

Plastic bags and wrapping (flexible plastics) make up over a fifth of consumer plastic packaging but only 6% is collected for recycling. For this reason, it continues to be our number one priority. WRAP has set the strategic direction on the solutions and is working closely with Pact members, and we are seeing progress.

Activity includes:

- collection trials from households;
- guidance for Pact members on how to collect and recycle plastic bags and wrapping from **front of store collection points**;
- bringing retailers together to share learnings from front of store trials;
- end market investigation for the material collected through front of store collection points;
- collaborative action to achieve commercial scale non-mechanical recycling;
- engagement across industry such as with OPRL to broaden the labelling of flexible plastics for recycling at supermarkets; and
- preparation for a nationwide citizen recycling campaign in early 2022 to encourage more citizens to use the collection points.

The Recycling Locator tool,

a solution provided by WRAP's Recycle Now brand, is enabling citizens to know what and where to recycle household items. In the past year it has been growing in popularity with usage soaring. We updated the Locator in July 2021 to increase the range of plastic bags and wrapping items searchable. It was also updated to include more location data from supermarkets and other retailers collecting plastic bags and wrapping.

IN THE SIX MONTHS TO SEPTEMBER 2021 MORE THAN 200,000 PEOPLE HAD SUCCESSFULLY SEARCHED FOR PLASTIC BAGS AND WRAPPING ITEMS SUCH AS CRISP PACKETS, FROZEN FOOD BAGS, AND BUBBLE WRAP.

We hope to increase this even further when we run our citizen recycling campaign in 2022.

TARGET 2

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Design for recyclability

Mars Food UK launched a new mono polypropylene (PP) microwaveable pouch for its Ben's Original rice. This material is not widely collected by local authorities, the packs will be collected for recycling at supermarkets offering comprehensive collections of plastic bags and wrapping. Items like these will be labelled as recyclable at supermarkets from January 2022.



Procter and Gamble has transitioned its fabric and home care brands, including Ariel, Lenor and Daz pod bags, and Fairy automatic dishwashing capsule bags, from multilayer, non-recyclable, flexible packaging to single layer polyethylene. This new packaging uses less plastic and can be recycled in supermarkets across the UK.



TARGET 2

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Front of store collections for plastic bags and wrapping

Following the publication of **The UK Plastics Pact Roadmap** to creating a circular economy for flexible plastic packaging in 2020, where WRAP called upon supermarkets to collect a full range of plastic bags and wrapping, **Tesco, Co-op** and **Sainsbury's** are now offering national collection points. **Aldi Stores Ltd, Asda, Lidl, Marks and Spencer, Morrisons** and **Waitrose & Partners** are all piloting similar collections, and the number of collection points are anticipated to reach more than 6,000 in January 2022.

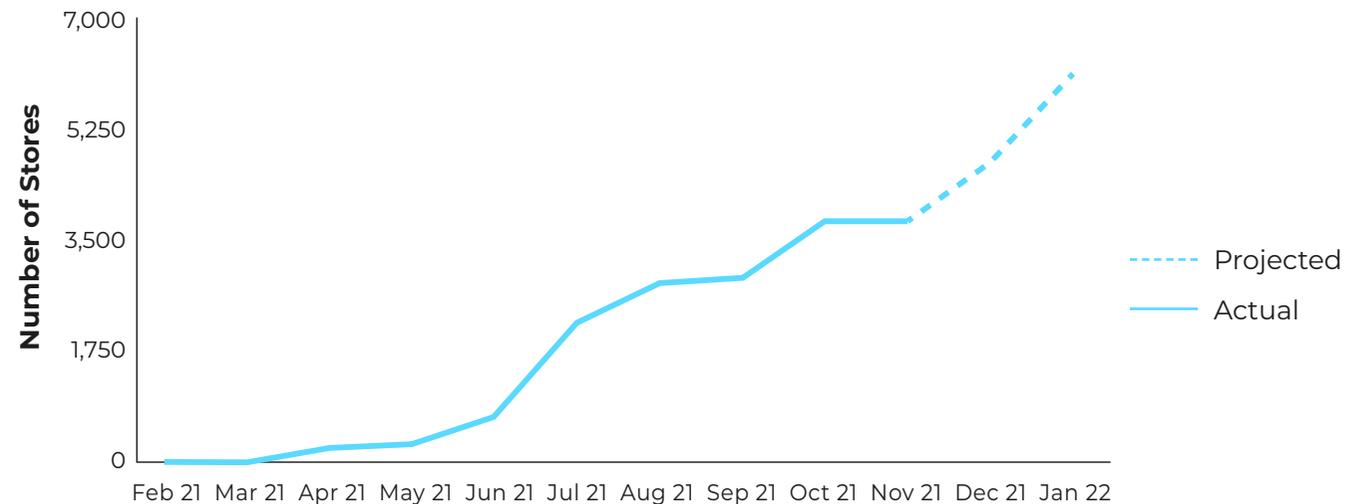


Supporting plastics recyclers

The **Flexible Plastic Fund** was launched by Ecosurety in Summer 2021. It is a collaboration across manufacturers, retailers, and recyclers and aims to improve flexible packaging recycling by encouraging recycling infrastructure in the UK. Manufacturers including **Mars, Mondelez,**

Nestlé UK & Ireland, PepsiCo, and **Unilever** have invested in the Fund, which incentivises the recycling of plastic bags and wrapping through a guaranteed minimum price for packaging recovery notes.

Comprehensive Front of Store Bag and Wrapping Collections



TARGET 3

BOOSTING PLASTICS RECYCLING TO 70%

52%

of plastic packaging recycled
– the amount of UK plastic
packaging recycled has
increased from 44% in 2018
to 52% in 2020.

Nearly 9 in 10 people are
regularly recycling.

**OVER 1.5 MILLION
MORE HOUSEHOLDS
CAN RECYCLE A WIDER
RANGE OF PLASTICS AT
HOME, WITH PLASTIC
POTS / TUBS / TRAYS
COLLECTIONS ROLLING
OUT ACROSS MORE LOCAL
AUTHORITY AREAS.**

This is significantly beneficial for the environment. According to Viridor, plastic waste makes up 16% of residual waste while accounting for 70% of fossil fuel emissions from energy from waste facilities³.

WRAP's research⁴ shows that more people are engaging with recycling. However, despite all local authorities collecting plastic bottles and 84% collecting pots / tubs / trays, according to RECOUP, the collection

rate for plastic bottles is only 59% and just 33% for pots / tubs / trays.⁵

Meanwhile WRAP's research highlights that while limited amounts of plastic bags and wrapping are collected for recycling (by only 17% of local authorities), these materials are the ones most commonly placed into recycling by householders; this leads to contamination issues in the remaining 83% of local authorities who are not collecting the material. Targeted engagement is needed to significantly boost plastics recycling.

³[Viridor decarbonisation strategy](#)

⁴[WRAP Recycling Tracker 2021](#).

⁵[RECOUP Plastics Collection Survey 2020](#).

TARGET 3

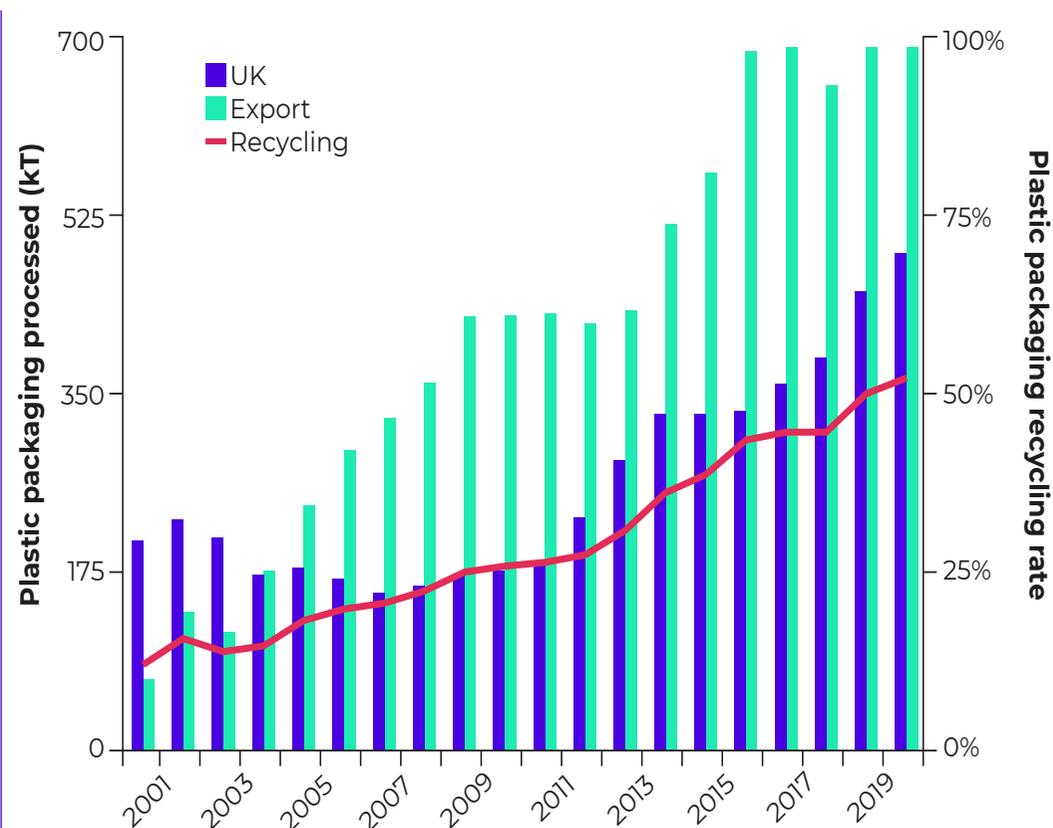
BOOSTING PLASTICS RECYCLING TO 70% (CONT.)

50%

UK processing of plastics has grown by nearly 50% in the last 5 years.

It is very encouraging to see the growth in the UK's processing of plastic packaging and WRAP expects this to increase. Increased UK processing reduces reliance on export markets, particularly important given the restrictions made by countries to which the UK has historically sent material. The Plastics Tax, Extended Producer Responsibility, and Consistency in Collections policies support the case for investment in recycling; however, WRAP is concerned that despite this, there may be a shortfall in the scale of processing necessary. If we are to achieve a 70% effective recycling rate, it will require more than 550kt of new capacity.

We can't forget that the whole point of recycling is to remanufacture items and give them a new life, so the material is used again and again. Stable end markets are vital, and it is difficult to make the case for investment in recycling facilities without them. Long term contracts for the off-take of material will be increasingly important and further action may be required. A particular area of focus must be household plastic bags and wrapping. While it is preferable for recycled plastic packaging to be remanufactured into plastic packaging, the replacement of virgin plastic in products is also beneficial. All manufacturers of plastic product and packaging design, and packaging are called upon to support the circular system by specifying recycled plastic in product and packaging design, particularly in household plastic bags and wrapping.



TARGET 3

PACT ACTION

WRAP has convened Pact members to develop solutions in critical areas such as:

- developing end markets for flexible plastics;
- recycling of small items that can get 'lost' in the recycling system designed to remove contamination; and
- deciding what action will be needed to support investment in critical infrastructure.

WRAP continues to support government in the development of important policies including Extended Producer Responsibility and Consistency of Collections. WRAP also operates a dedicated Local Authority support programme and has continued to advise Local Authorities on the most efficient and effective methods to communicate, collect, and sort recycling from households.

Engaging with citizens to recycle more

Recycle Now is all about behaviour change:

8.9 MILLION

citizens changed their behaviour in 2019 / 20 as a result of campaign activity, including Recycle Week.

Recycle Week 2021

Recycle Week is now in its 18th year and in September 2021 the Week galvanised the public to recycle more under the banner 'Step It Up this Recycle Week'. The theme of the Week showed how recycling can help combat climate change ahead of COP26. The campaign included 14 financial donations

from Danone, Ocado, PepsiCo, Co-op, Britvic, Waitrose & Partners, Coca-Cola, Amazon, British Soft Drinks Association, innocent drinks, McDonald's, NSWA, Bantam Materials, and Listerine.

Highlights include 29 million digital impressions, that's a 9% increase in 2020, 4 million out of home impressions and 2.4 million TV views of Recycle Now's The One Show debut.



The [Recycling Locator](#) was used 151,000 times in Recycle Week. This is a 41% increase on 2020.

3.5 MILLION

In 2020 the [Recycle Now](#) website received 3.5 million users, up 16% on 2019. In addition to this there were over 6.7 million completed searches on the [Recycling Locator](#), up 36% on 2019.

TARGET 3

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

WRAP's Recycle Now campaign conducted trials with Boots and Unilever's brand Radox using front-of-pack messaging to drive up levels of recycling.

Including a simple message 'most people recycle me' on the front of the packs, as well as the standard OPRL on the reverse, significantly increased the number of packs recycled.

Read the report [here](#).



Bathroom campaign

WRAP's research shows that products used in the bathroom are frequently missed for recycling⁶. In 2021 WRAP's Recycle Now and Clear on Plastics behaviour change campaigns focussed on this area. With Recycle Now covering the recycling aspect and Clear on Plastics focussing on plastic reduction, refill, recycle, and return messaging, the

"Don't bottle it, put it in the (recycling) bin" messaging really hit home with citizens with an overall reach of 8.6 million and over 20 million impressions. Contributing to the campaign we had partner content from TerraCycle (Carex, Kiehl's, L'Occitane, Marigold, Spontex, Baylis and Harding, Sanofi) and Nuddy.



Working in partnership with WRAP's Clear on Plastics campaign, Procter and Gamble delivered a consumer awareness campaign which encouraged responsible recycling of packaging in the beauty industry.

It highlighted the positive role that plastic packaging plays in keeping products safe and hygienic during transit and highlighted the ways in which everyone can reduce their individual plastic consumption by thinking more carefully about their

beauty regime. Built around the four Rs – reduce, refill, recycle, and return – the campaign highlighted a number of ways in which Pact members are helping citizens to make more sustainable choices throughout their beauty regime. Procter and Gamble showcased examples of their own sustainable innovation including their aluminium haircare refill bottles, refills introduced on Olay Regenerist Whip moisturiser to be used within existing jars, and the Gillette TerraCycle® takeback programme.

⁶WRAP Recycling Tracker Report 2021.

TARGET 3

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Development of critical infrastructure

Viridor's Avonmouth Polymers Reprocessing Facility has achieved a positive safety assessment from the European Food Safety Authority to produce food-grade PET. Commissioning of the new plant has begun and once fully operational will become the UK's largest multi-polymer facility. It will produce 18,000 tonnes of food-grade PET annually. In total, Avonmouth will put 60,000 tonnes of recycled plastic from bottles, pots, tubs, and trays (PET, High Density Polyethylene (HDPE), and PP) back into the economy every year as a viable and quality alternative to virgin plastic.

Jayplas has announced plans to build a 150,000 tonnes per year capacity plastics recycling plant in Wales. If approved, the facility will process around 75,000 tonnes per year of film / flexibles and a similar amount of bottles and pots, tubs and trays.

Nestlé UK & Ireland has partnered with a new recycling firm, Yes Recycling, in Fife, Scotland to process plastic bags and wrapping. **Nestlé UK & Ireland** has provided a pre-investment of £1.65 million towards the site which has the capacity to process 15,000 tonnes of all types of flexible plastics. The product made is an alternative to plywood to be used in construction, retail spaces, and the agriculture industry.

Renew ELP is building a facility in Teesside to process flexible plastic packaging using a hydrothermal plastic recycling technology – HydroPRS™. The process can recycle all types of plastic bags and wrapping into food contact recyclate. The first 20,000 tonnes per year line is expected to be operational in 2022 and once fully operational it will be able to recycle 80,000 tonnes per year.

Mainetti is working with several retailers including Superdry, Very, and Morrisons to provide a closed loop recycling service for polyethylene flexible plastic. Its process removes print and labelling to provide maximum clarity in the finished product and supports its customers to achieve 30% recycled content.

Co-funded by WRAP, **Berry BPI** has increased recycling capacity at its operation in Derbyshire to enable polyethylene material sourced from households to be processed. It uses an advanced purification process and produces high quality recyclate that can be used in a variety of industrial and consumer rigid and flexible plastic applications such as storage boxes and collation shrink films.

TARGET 3

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Collection of difficult to recycle packaging

Following a 50-store trial, **Boots** has rolled out a recycling scheme for cosmetic packaging to 700 stores across the UK. The scheme encourages its customers to bring back empty difficult to recycle products. Customers are rewarded with Boots Advantage Card Points (worth £2.50) for every 5 items brought back. The packaging is recycled by MYGroup where it is remanufactured into new items such as reusable storage containers that are used at Boots warehouses.

The sites have been entered onto Recycle Now's Recycling Locator tool to enable people to search for their nearest drop off point for used beauty and grooming items.

THE RECYCLING LOCATOR WAS USED 151,000 TIMES IN RECYCLE WEEK. THIS IS A 41% INCREASE ON 2020.



TARGET 4

WORKING TOWARDS AN AVERAGE OF 30% RECYCLED CONTENT

18%

Average recycled content up from 9% in 2018.

This equates to saving just over a million barrels of virgin oil production and 140,000 tonnes of CO₂e.

The amount of recycled plastic used by Pact members in packaging has doubled since 2018 and this is really encouraging particularly given the challenges in the last 12 months. There is a relationship between the price of oil and the price of virgin plastic; when the cost of producing oil falls, so does the cost of producing plastic. If it falls low enough this can

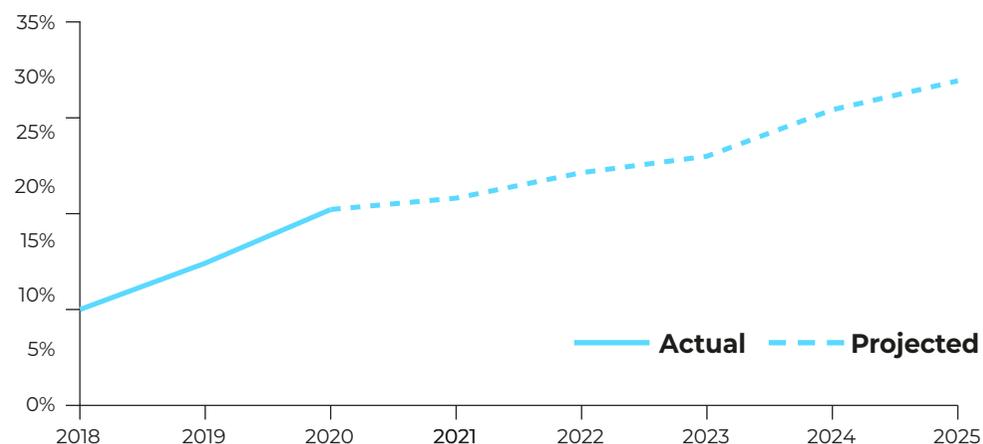
mean that it is cheaper to buy virgin than recycled plastic. As outlined in [WRAP's Plastics Market Situation Report 2021](#) this has been the case for food grade Recycled Polyethylene Terephthalate (rPET) and Recycled High Density Polyethylene (rHDPE). While some businesses may see a short-term benefit to switching to the cheaper virgin material, commitment to The UK Plastics Pact target and the upcoming Plastics Packaging Tax have seen demand remain strong and businesses continuing to specify recycled content in design.

WRAP is concerned that a shortfall in supply of high-quality recycled plastic will impede businesses from achieving stretch targets for recycled content in packaging. Longer term contracts between suppliers of recycled plastic and manufacturers will likely be needed to support the case for investment in the recycling sector.

Further simplification of packaging is also necessary to improve material quality and reduce processing costs. Packaging should be designed to enable it to be recycled back into plastic packaging and this is the purpose of [WRAP's Polymer Choice](#) guidance which is regularly updated to reflect changes in the sector.

Investment in processing, both mechanical and non-mechanical recycling, will be required, the latter particularly to enable food contact flexible plastic to be recycled back into food packaging. Enhanced sorting technology to enable food grade Recycled Polypropylene (rPP) now also needs to be commercially scaled.

Average recycled content across The UK Plastics Pact



TARGET 4

PACT ACTION

WRAP has convened Pact members in action groups to overcome the challenges in achieving higher levels of recycled content. They include:

- a group that has agreed positions on the use of coloured (jazz) plastic packaging and how to incorporate it back into plastic packaging for PET, HDPE and PP;
- a group focused on recycling PET trays back into trays, rather than using bottle derived material;
- a food grade rPP group which will build on activity underway with connected industry groups seeking to commercialise enhanced sorting technologies; and
- a group focussed on the inclusion of recycled content in caps and closures – currently an untapped opportunity.

Mondelez is to move its Cadbury Dairy Milk sharing bars into recycled plastic packaging. The new packs, which contain up to 30% recycled plastic, will be rolled out across more than 28 million sharing bars in 2022.



Premier Foods is transitioning its Paxo Stuffings inner bags to incorporate 30% recycled content.

Sainsbury's PET water bottles now have at least 30% recycled content, with bottles up to 2l containing up to 51% recycled plastic, resulting in a reduction in virgin plastic of over 1,000 tonnes.

Unilever has redesigned its Persil HDPE bottles to incorporate 50% recycled content while also removing the dosing ball provided with every bottle, all of which reduce the amount of virgin plastic in Persil bottles by more than 1,000 tonnes annually.



Pepsi has switched its single serve brands Pepsi MAX and 7UP to 100% recycled content plastic bottles. The company aims to use 100% recycled plastic for all its ready-to-drink beverage bottles in the Great Britain by the end of 2022.

75%

It takes 75% less energy to make a plastic bottle from recycled plastic compared with using 'virgin' materials.

TARGET 4

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

In 2020 **Coca-Cola Europacific Partners** announced all plastic bottles across its core brands in the UK (Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola Zero Sugar, Diet Coke, Fanta, Sprite, Dr Pepper, Lilt and Oasis) were made with 50% recycled content. In 2021 its single serve bottles across these brands will transition to 100% recycled content, saving 29,000 tonnes of virgin plastic production each year.

Hellman's, one of Unilever's condiment brands, will transition its 'squeeze' range in the UK to bottles made from 100% rPET. Nearly half of the range has already moved to the recycled plastic material, with plans for the full range to have switched by the end of 2022. Once complete it will save approximately 1,480 tonnes of virgin plastic every year.

Waitrose & Partners, across their mid-tier toilet roll range, have removed the handles, wound the toilet tissue tighter and included 30% recycled content in the plastic film packaging. This will save 11.9 tonnes of virgin plastic and 94.9 tonnes of CO₂e, while maintaining the same number of sheets, size of sheets and quality.



Pact members **Tesco** and **Faerch** have collaborated to achieve PET tray to tray recycling. PET shelf-ready secondary packaging will be collected from Tesco and recycled using Faerch's advanced recycling process to make new primary food contact packaging. This move is important since PET trays are frequently downcycled into non-food applications and therefore enables more food packaging to be recycled back into food packaging at a time when food grade rPET is in high demand and supply is challenging.



TARGET 4

PACT ACTION (CONT.)

Suntory Beverage and Food GB & Ireland has redesigned its iconic Ribena and Lucozade Sports branded bottles to reduce the size of sleeves to ensure that they are detected in the recycling system and increase the proportion of the pack that gets recycled. By the end of 2021 the Lucozade Sports bottles will be made from 100% recycled plastic and feature a label that is half the size of the original. The move saves 3,500 tonnes of virgin plastic each year and 9,000 tonnes of CO₂e. In January 2021 all 500ml bottles of Ribena moved to a significantly reduced sleeve and 100% recycled content.



Lakeland Ltd has redesigned its carrier bags to be made from 100% recycled content.

All of **Co-op's** own brand PET bottles for juices, mixers, cider, carbonated soft drinks, and still and sparkling water now have 100% recycled content, avoiding 1,635 tonnes of virgin plastic each year.

SPAR UK Ltd has now included 51% recycled content within their bottled waters and cooking oils.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

To deliver the radical system change that achieving our Pact targets will require, we need to reach beyond our current Pact Membership to help all businesses across the UK play their part in creating a circular economy for plastics.

For this reason, in November 2020 we launched The UK Plastics Pact Associate Membership category. It was introduced to provide support and guidance to businesses with smaller plastic packaging portfolios to enable them to embed the Pact's targets into their business strategies.

So far, 24 businesses have joined as Associate Members, representing businesses across a variety of sectors including Textiles, Clothing, Food & Drink, Retail and Packaging. They include: Abel & Cole, AM Fresh, AMC Natural Drinks, Avara Foods Ltd, Barfoots, Church and Dwight, Foyle Food Group, Gousto Ltd, Harrods, IG Design Group UK Limited, Jokey, KellyDeli Company Ltd, Mayborn Group Ltd, Moulton Bulb Company Ltd, Next Retail Ltd, Nice Pak International Ltd, Pact Retail Accessories Ltd, Portwest, Purity Soft Drinks, Tilda Ltd, Waddington Europe, Wipak UK Ltd, and Winterbotham Darby.

We are collecting data from our Associate Members and will be able to report progress towards the targets in next year's annual report.

Progress examples from our Associate Members:

Target 1 – Church and Dwight has redesigned its toothpaste packaging to a 100% recyclable mono-material HDPE tube and lid.

Target 2 – Onion and garlic producer **Moulton Bulb** has invested in machinery to replace metal clips in its nets to enable them to be recycled with other plastic bags and wrapping at supermarkets.

Target 4 – AMC Natural Drinks has reduced the weight of its PET drinks bottles while increasing the use of rPET to at least 52% across its ranges.

GLOBAL COLLABORATION – WRAP’S ROLE

The UK Plastics Pact – A global catalyst for change

There is now a Plastics Pact on every populated continent on the planet – covering millions of miles of coastline, millions of tonnes of plastic, and billions of people. And the number of Pacts is growing, with more in development. The total now stands at 13. These Pacts sit under, or are aligned with, The Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s Global Plastics Pact Network, all working towards a circular economy for plastics.

The newest Pacts to join the map are:

- US Plastics Pact
- Canada Plastics Pact
- ANZPac – The Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Plastics Pact including the island nations of Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa
- India Plastics Pact
- Kenya Plastics Pact

WRAP continues as secretariat to the European Plastics Pact.

WRAP has been influential in helping nations unfamiliar with how to set up and run a voluntary agreement get off the ground, taking them from a seed of an idea right through to implementation and beyond into the delivery against measurable targets.

We work closely with local and other international partners, notably with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation on the Pacts that sit under their global network. This mix of local partners and international collaborators working towards solutions on plastic waste is what is helping make our world more sustainable so that people and planet thrive now and in the future.

India Plastics Pact

This collaboration is evident in the recently launched India Plastics Pact, the first Pact on the Asia continent.

WRAP is bringing operational and technical expertise, working

closely with lead organisations the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and WWF-India to develop and launch the Pact.

“...THERE WAS THE PROVEN IMPACT FROM THE UK AND ELSEWHERE. THAT SPOKE VOLUMES THAT THIS MODEL ACTUALLY WORKS... WE ARE VERY, VERY OPTIMISTIC THAT THIS MODEL IS GOING TO WORK VERY WELL HERE, WITH THE GUIDANCE, WITH ALL THE KNOWLEDGE AND ALL THE EXPERTISE THAT WRAP BRINGS TO THE TABLE.”

Varun Aggarwal, WWF-India

WRAP is extremely grateful to the range of funders who have made this international outreach possible including DEFRA, UKRI, Mava Foundation, Stewart Investors and government members of the European Plastics Pact.

Global Plastics Action Partnership (GPAP)

WRAP has been supporting The Global Plastics Action Partnership (GPAP) run by the World Economic Forum. Co-founded by partners across the public and private sectors, GPAP harnesses the convening power of the World Economic Forum to bring together governments, businesses, and civil society to translate commitments into meaningful action – at both global and national levels. WRAP has brought its experience of successfully running multi-stakeholder collaborative agreements and system change approach to tackling plastics to support the delivery of National Plastics Action Partnerships (NPAP) in Ghana, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED

WRAP IS CALLING FOR URGENT ACTION FROM ALL BUSINESSES TO JOIN PACT MEMBERS IN:

- Removing unnecessary plastic, while being careful to avoid unintended environmental consequences such as wasted food.
- Conducting more trials, share learning, and scale up reuse / refill pilots on everyday household items.
- Further simplifying plastic packaging – moving to mono-materials across all pack formats and away from polystyrene (PS) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC).
- Running targeted engagement with citizens to inform and motivate increased recycling, particularly plastic bags and wrapping at supermarket collection points.
- Specifying recycled content in products and packaging (particularly bags and wrapping).
- Increasing collection of plastic packaging and setting up longer-term contracts to support the case for investment in critical infrastructure.

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT
BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE UK PLASTICS PACT

THANK YOU



The UK Plastics Pact is led by WRAP with the support of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. The UK Plastics Pact was co-created by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WRAP to accelerate the transition to a circular economy for plastics in the UK and is one of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's national and regional implementation initiatives around the world. The opinions expressed, and materials made available, by WRAP or EMF or The UK Plastics Pact signatories do not necessarily reflect the views of the other parties who are not responsible for the same.

The UK Plastics Pact Annual Report 2020/21

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**THE UK
PLASTICS
PACT**



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[@WRAP_UK](https://twitter.com/WRAP_UK)

WRAP's vision is a world in which resources are used sustainably. Our mission is to accelerate the move to a sustainable resource-efficient economy through re-inventing how we design, produce and sell products; re-thinking how we use and consume products; and re-defining what is possible through re-use and recycling.

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