



Nestlé Good food, Good life



What is Nestlé doing to tackle plastic packaging waste?

Our vision is that none of our packaging, including plastics, ends up in landfill, oceans, lakes and rivers. We are working hard to deliver on it and help achieve a waste-free future.

To achieve this, our commitment is that 100% of our packaging is recyclable or reusable by 2025. To date, 85.4% of our total packaging is already recyclable or reusable, but we know we have more work to do. As the world's largest food and beverage company, our actions matter, and we are committed to putting our size and scale to work.

We aim to reduce our use of virgin plastics in packaging by one third by 2025 and we are pioneering alternative packaging materials to facilitate recycling. We have already achieved a reduction of 8.1% as of year-end 2021. Packaging plays an important role in safely delivering high-quality food and drinks to consumers, and in reducing food loss and waste. We need to consider alternatives carefully before making changes to packaging, whether plastic, paper, metal, or glass.

We are also supporting the development of well-functioning collection, sorting and recycling schemes wherever we operate, and scaling up reusable and refillable alternatives where possible.

Our ambition is to use less packaging and better packaging, and to help build a better system for collection and materials recovery.

In early 2020, [we announced an investment of up to CHF 2 billion to lead the shift from virgin plastics to food-grade recycled plastics, and to accelerate the development of innovative packaging solutions](#). Collaboration and collective action are vital for transforming how packaging is managed at end of life, particularly if we are to advance the circular economy. Recognizing this, we opened the Institute of Packaging Sciences

in 2019 to enable us to accelerate our efforts to bring functional, safe and more sustainable packaging solutions to the market and to address the global challenge of plastic packaging waste.

In addition to the work of the Institute, we are working with value chain partners, industry associations and the civil society to explore different packaging concepts to shape a waste-free future. Such system-wide change takes time, but we are committed to creating a world without waste and delivering on the commitments we have made to achieve this.

Improving consumer information is also vital, and we're committed to helping improve it by labeling our product packaging with recycling information – to help ensure it is disposed of in the right way. We are determined to look at every option to solve these complex challenges and embrace multiple solutions that can have an impact now and in the future.



Why do you use plastic in your packaging?

Our packaging plays a key role in protecting food, preventing food waste and ensuring the quality and safety of our products, so we need to carefully consider alternatives before making changes. We use a range of materials, including glass, metal, paper and plastics.

Plastics offer a unique combination of malleability, availability, hygiene and safety, making them ideal packaging materials. We use the minimum adequate amount of plastic packaging to pack products safely, and aim to support the recovery of plastic at the end of its useful life.



How much plastic packaging did Nestlé use in 2021?

Nestlé's total plastics packaging usage in 2021 was 1 million metric tons. This represents approximately a quarter of the total packaging we use across our businesses.



How is Nestlé reducing its plastic usage?

We want to use less packaging material, including less virgin plastic. Examples of how we're doing this include removing unnecessary plastic lids, accessories, layers and films.

We have removed plastic straws by end of 2020 by developing paper-based alternatives and 'straw-less' designs. We are also phasing out plastics that are non-recyclable or hard to recycle for all our products worldwide by 2024. For example, in Egypt, we removed the plastic tear-offs that cover the bottle cap and neck from *Nestlé Pure Life* water bottles, removing close to 240 metric tons of PVC. In the US, we eliminated the over-cap lids from all our *Gerber* 1st Food and 2nd Food puree tubs, removing over 2300 metric tons of plastics.



How are you phasing-out non-recyclable or hard-to-recycle plastics?

To eliminate the need for disposable packaging, we are working hard to eliminate non-recyclable plastics and investing in innovative, alternative delivery systems.

Many of these solutions are already being used in markets around the world, including a bulk refill delivery system in Chile for *Purina Dog Chow* products in Chile, reusable stainless-steel containers for *Häagen-Dazs* in Canada, for *Nesquik* cocoa powder, *Ricoré* chicory and coffee drink and *Chocapic Bio* cereals in France and bulk dispensers for *Nescafé* and *Milo* in many countries around the world.

In 2019, we launched paper-based packaging, which are either recyclable or designed to be recyclable for products such as *Nesquik All Natural*, *YES!* Snack bars, *Nama Orange* ice cream, *Nescafé ProSlim* and *KitKat* (secondary packaging), *Smarties* block as well as paper straws for *Nesquik*, *Nescau*, *Milo* and *Nescafé*. In Malaysia, we launched mono-material pouches for *Nescafé* and *Milo* outer bag designed for the future of recycling. All of our water bottles are already recyclable, and we will increase our use of recycled content for these bottles to 50% by 2025. In Chile, we introduced mono-material laminate for *Maggi* Soups and Cream, replacing over 260 metric tons of multi-material laminate.



How are you developing alternative materials?

We are evaluating and developing various packaging materials in collaboration with industry partners. Our efforts include increasing the quantity of food-grade recycled plastic beyond rPET, paper packaging, and mono-material packaging to increase recyclability.

With regards to packaging innovation, we want to lead efforts in developing the most sustainable packaging solutions for our products. That is why we established the Nestlé Institute of Packaging Sciences - the first of its kind in the food industry. Our team of 50 packaging experts, together with partners, is working to develop and test functional, safe and environmentally friendly packaging solutions. The Institute collaborates closely with more than 180 packaging experts embedded in our global R&D network, as well as with research institutions, start-ups, and suppliers.



What are you doing to increase your use of recycled plastics?

Globally, our overall recycled plastic content use is currently 4.3%. Additionally, we use more than 12% recycled content in our PET water bottles today. We are committed to increasing the proportion of recycled content we use in our packaging and continue to explore all opportunities to create and obtain sufficient volumes of food-grade quality recycled content.

We also want to reduce our use of virgin plastics, therefore we want to source food-grade recycled plastics and drive higher recycling rates with that. For this reason, we allocated more than CHF 1.5 billion to pay a premium for post-consumer recycled plastics, to incentivize the marketplace for these materials.



You said that you were keen to 'create a market for food-grade recycled plastics' – what does this mean?

We are keen to increase our share of recycled food-grade plastics. But recycled food-grade plastics come in limited supply. The economics of plastic recycling are complex, but in nutshell, it's cheaper today for plastic manufacturers to produce virgin plastics than it is to produce food-grade recycled plastics. Our plastic suppliers need to receive financial assurances to make the leap.

Our CHF 1.5 billion investment in procuring recycled plastics aims to reverse that trend by making recycled food-grade plastic a more attractive financial proposition to suppliers – in hopes this will help to encourage the adoption of recyclable food-grade plastic in the industry.



You stated that you were keen to explore a wider range of recycled food-grade plastics – what do you mean by that?

We are planning to source recycled polyethylene (PE) and polypropylene (PP). These are plastics that are far more difficult to recycle for food packaging than PET, which is widely used in plastic bottles.



What will be the focus of the sustainability fund and what is its investment horizon?

Nestlé's sustainability fund focuses on catalyzing investments which develop innovative packaging solutions, refill or reuse systems and improve collection sorting and recycling infrastructure. The fund selects investment opportunities that best support our market needs moving into the future.



What do you mean by the 'simplification' of packaging?

The simplification of packaging is important to help improve its recyclability. In order to simplify our packaging materials and packaging structures we have developed and circulated to suppliers a set of '[Golden Rules \(pdf, 700Kb\) ↗](#)' for the design and development of our packaging.

There are rules that apply to all packaging:

1. Optimize the environmental performance of the packed product
2. Optimize weight and volume of primary, secondary and transport packaging
3. Use maximum possible recycled content
4. Consider locally available infrastructure and technology
5. Prepare appropriate disposal and/or recovery communication

The following rules apply specifically to plastics and coated paper:

1. Do not use oxo-degradable plastics unless obliged by law
2. Consider bio-based content for packaging
3. Do not use polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyvinylidene chloride (PVDC), polystyrene (PS), Expanded polystyrene (EPS)

4. Prefer transparent or lightly tinted material, avoid carbon-based masterbatches
5. Ensure residual products can be easily removed



How are you exploring reusable packaging?

We are fully committed to reuse systems and are working on a range of pilots with our partners, particularly with the Loop initiative from Terracycle. Reusable packaging requires a system change and we will be playing a leading role by working with our partners to make it a reality. The findings from the pilots across our extensive product portfolio in different markets and retail environments will be used to deliver our products to consumers in ways that meet our safety and quality standards. In Switzerland we are scaling up reusable and refillable options for petcare and soluble coffee products, for instance, through collaboration with the start-up company MIWA.



How are you exploring bio-based and compostable packaging materials?

In September 2019, we inaugurated the Nestlé Institute of Packaging Sciences based in Lausanne, Switzerland. It has been mandated to accelerate the delivery of solutions to help us meet our packaging commitments for 2025.

The institute will conduct world class research to fundamentally rethink packaging materials and how we use them to deliver longer-term sustainable solutions. The institute, together with our global [R&D](#) network, universities and innovation partners, conducts leading-edge scientific research that spans all aspects of packaging. As well as conventionally material types, which are known to be recyclable, we are also exploring the potential of bio-based and biodegradable materials and systems to determine which role they can play in packaging food products safely and sustainably in the future.



How will you help develop plastics collection, sorting and recycling schemes?

To address the global issue of plastic packaging waste effectively, we must work collaboratively with industry, local and national governments, civil society and consumers to create systems solutions. We aim to do our part.

Too often, plastic packaging lacks a dedicated collection system, is not disposed of properly or cannot be recycled. We are determined to change this, which is why we are taking action to make our own packaging recyclable, support improving waste collection systems, using new types of packaging and helping make recycling the easy thing to do.

As part of this approach, Nestlé aims to take an active role in the development of well-functioning collection, sorting and recycling schemes across the countries where we operate.

Successful recycling requires an adequate infrastructure, which is currently not always

in place. We have identified several countries where we are focusing efforts to increase recycling rates, and further countries where we are focusing on achieving plastics neutrality. The exact nature and scope of the role we play depends on the local context.

We identified 12 countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) where waste is often mismanaged and leaking into lands and waterways. These 12 countries account for over 10% of Nestlé plastic usage. Today we have 65 neutrality projects in these 12 countries, working with partners and associations to scale up collection, sorting and recycling of packaging waste. The aim is keeping packaging material in the economy and out of the environment. Here our ambition is to collect and recycle the same amount of plastic as we use in our products, while aiming to support the improvement of recycling rates and infrastructure. This includes support for well-designed and effective mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility and Deposit Return Programs.



What are you doing about plastic water bottles?

Regarding our plastic bottles, we are increasing the amount of recycled PET we use across our brands globally to 50% by 2025, by incorporating rPET into our bottles where it is technically and economically feasible. Over the past 10 years, we have reduced by 22% the quantity of PET needed for each liter of bottled water we produce. In 2016, Nestlé co-founded the NaturALL Bottle Alliance to scale up a next generation of bio-sourced PET, using biomass feedstocks that do not divert resources or land from food production, such as previously used cardboard and wood pulp. Our aim is to reduce the use of virgin plastics by one third by 2025.



How can you help consumers recycle product packaging correctly?

We are committed to raising awareness and informing our consumers about the right way to dispose and recycle our product packaging, including by on-pack labeling. Consumers have a vital role to play in improving recycling rates and we will engage them through educational campaigns on responsible consumer behavior. We will do this through our brands and through our corporate communications channels.

For example we have introduced a digital platform to help consumers dispose of their packaging waste appropriately in Italy and our *Nescafé Dolce Gusto* brand launched a consumer education campaign to promote recycling in Germany and in Mexico. To accelerate internal change toward our packaging objectives, we have developed and rolled out a packaging sustainability training program for all of our employees.



What about micro-plastics in bottled water?

Please visit our dedicated [Ask Nestlé page on micro-plastics](#).

Find out more

- [Read about our commitment to improve the environmental performance of our packaging](#)

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