



Definitional Framework

Circular Flexible Plastic Packaging

GOALS

To provide a consistent definition amongst CPP Partners and others in industry (e.g., producers, stewardship agencies, etc.) on how to describe flexible packaging within the Canadian system.

To develop a definitional framework that is aligned with the mandate of the CPP and with Golden Design Rule #6 (i.e., moving to mono-material for flexibles).

To develop a definitional framework that is outcome-focused rather than prescriptive (i.e., sets goals or minimum thresholds, but doesn't dictate how to get there).

To provide a national definitional framework that still recognizes there is variation at a provincial / territorial level and doesn't have negative / unintended consequences.

AUDIENCES

Primary

- Packaging manufacturers / converters
- Producers / brand owners
- Processors and recyclers
- Stewardship agencies / PROs

Secondary

- Governments / government agencies
- Industry associations

Definitional Framework

STEP 1 - NON-RECYCLABLE

Flexible plastic packaging (including films) that has been designed with a purpose (e.g., to protect a product, provide information to consumer, etc.) and for its related supply chain, but is not collected and cannot be recycled under current recycling programs or systems and has little to no end-of-life value.

STEP 2 - COLLECTABLE

Flexible plastic packaging that is included in a collection stream that is accessible to the population in a particular jurisdiction, but is not being effectively recycled or repurposed into a new product by an end market (although it may be recovered, such as into an engineered fuel).

STEP 3 - RECYCLE-READY

Flexible plastic packaging that has been designed to be recycled, ideally as a mono-material flexible package (inline with GDR 6), and is included in a collection stream that is accessible to the population in a particular jurisdiction, but is not being effectively recycled or repurposed into a new product by an end market (although it may be downcycled).

STEP 4 - RECYCLABLE

Recycle-ready flexible plastic packaging that is included in a collection stream accessible to the population in a particular jurisdiction, where the packaging collected is effectively recycled and repurposed by an end market, although not into a product of similar or higher value with its original use.

STEP 5 - CIRCULAR

Recyclable flexible plastic packaging that is included in a collection stream accessible to the population in a particular jurisdiction, and where the packaging is effectively recycled and repurposed by an end market into a similar or higher value product compared with its original use.

Note: Not all flexible plastic packaging must start at Step 1; Some flexible packaging in Canada has already reached Steps 3 and 4 in some jurisdictions.

¹ In the future, a minimum percentage access rate may be added to this definition.

² In the future, a minimum percentage access rate may be added to this definition.

³ Downcycled is defined as the act of recycling something in such a way that the resulting product is of a lower value than the original item.

⁴ In the future, a minimum percentage access rate may be added to this definition.

⁵ In the future, a minimum percentage in terms of the effective recycling rate may be added to this definition.

⁶ In the future, a minimum percentage access rate may be added to this definition.