

A Journey to Reuse

Tools and resources to help you
adopt refill and reuse in your business



About this playbook

This playbook enables beauty brands to adopt more sustainable practices. It highlights case studies and encourages interactive sessions to kick-start business conversations around current practices, pressure points preventing change and relevant issues. It helps brands to identify refill and re-use solutions that suit their business.

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How to use this playbook

This guide is for sustainability and packaging teams in beauty brands, retailers, and suppliers looking to move from pilot stage to scale in the beauty sector. It is meant to spark conversation, inspire, provide information and encourage brands to take actionable steps towards more reusable and refillable packaging in the beauty sector.

Each chapter contains relevant information and interactive sections that can guide internal strategic conversations to help you build the business case for why transitioning away from single-use to reusable packaging is vital.

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A Collaborative Effort

By promoting reusable and refillable products, beauty brands can lead the cultural shift toward packaging that's valued rather than discarded.

This playbook is a collaborative project from the Reuse & Refill Taskforce of the [Sustainable Beauty Coalition](#) (SBC), part of the British Beauty Council. Designed in-kind by [SLG Brands](#).

The Sustainable Beauty Coalition aims to accelerate sustainability in the beauty sector through collaboration, policy advocacy, and strategic action. Key goals include:

- Unified Industry Collaboration
- Policy Development
- Cross-Sector Partnerships
- Climate Strategy
- Support for Green Initiatives

The Reuse & Refill Taskforce

The Reuse & Refill taskforce came together with a shared understanding that when beauty packaging is designed for single use, it drives waste, pollution, and resource depletion.

The industry now has a unique opportunity to move reuse beyond pilots by developing circular packaging systems and encouraging consumers to adopt new behaviors.

This toolkit was compiled by the below taskforce members:



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Progression Over Perfection

If widespread adoption of reusable, low-impact packaging for beauty is the goal, the journey must be collaborative. Each player moves at their own pace and style, and we are here to meet you where you are and encourage you through commitment and action. Progress has been made now it is time to scale up the change!

Your journey towards refill starts now!

Q1 2025 sales of product refills increased by +20% vs. 2024

Some progress has been made with refill

Moving from linear to circular system will take time

Packaging circularity in beauty can be complex

We can help shift culture

Our destination needs to be ambitious



Our Vision for Circular Beauty Packaging

Diverse Circular Packaging Strategies

Multiple packaging solutions that close the loop, maintain material value, and eliminate waste

New Business and Retail Models

Packaging as a service, refill and zero waste local shopping

Collaborative and Interoperable Infrastructure

Shared systems enabling packaging to be returned anywhere

Consumer Empowerment

Understanding their role as part of the loop

Wellbeing and Self-Expression

Packaging and products for self-care that don't need to cost the earth

01

Get Started

Where you are and why it matters

This section helps you honestly assess your current packaging approach and understand the compelling reasons to move toward reuse. The workshops included will help you map your existing packaging journey, and identify the key drivers - regulatory pressure, consumer demand, or environmental impact - that make this the right time for your business to act.

By the end, you'll have a stronger business case for why refill and reuse deserves priority attention and investment.

Find your why: The momentum for change is here

The case for reusable packaging has never been stronger. Three powerful forces are converging to make this the right moment for the beauty industry to act: planetary and human health, legislative momentum, consumer demand.

Together, these forces create an unmistakable imperative: the beauty industry must move beyond pilots to mainstream reuse models. The question is no longer “why change?” but “how quickly can we act?”



Planetary and human health are under unprecedented pressure from plastic pollution. With 390 million tons of plastic produced annually - projected to nearly triple by 2050 - and growing evidence of microplastics impact on human health, the environmental and health costs of single-use packaging can no longer be ignored. Reusable systems can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, water use, and material consumption by up to 60%.



Legislative momentum is accelerating across the UK and EU. From the EU’s Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation to Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility schemes, regulations are making single-use packaging increasingly expensive while creating financial incentives for reuse. The full life-cycle cost of single-use packaging will continue to rise, strengthening the business case for returnable systems.



Consumer demand is driving market transformation. With 40% of UK consumers factoring in sustainability in their beauty and personal care decisions, 30% willing to pay more for sustainability and 72% saying it will become an even greater priority in the next 5 years, sustainable packaging is no longer a nice-to-have - it’s a competitive advantage that builds loyalty and justifies premium positioning. What’s more packaging recyclability and reusability are considered high sustainability indicators for consumers.

Find your why: Make it cost-effective

“Our modelling shows that a collaboratively designed return system with standardised packaging and shared infrastructure can provide, at high scale, cost parity for beverage and personal care applications.”

Unlocking Reuse, EMF

Circular economy needs scale and collaboration

Transitioning to reusable packaging is key to building a circular economy.

However, this shift requires scale and collaboration.

No single brand can do it alone. By working together, businesses can share infrastructure, set standards, and create demand, making sustainable packaging more affordable and accessible for all.

Externalizing packaging costs to society

We are already paying the high costs of a throw-away economy through pollution and climate change. Waste mismanagement and environmental damage, like ocean pollution and the burden on local communities dealing with our plastic waste, aren't factored into the price of products. These costs are passed on to society, harming ecosystems and straining public resources. Shifting to reusable packaging helps internalize these costs.

Reusable packaging needs scale to be cost-effective

For reusable packaging to become cost-efficient, it needs widespread adoption. Without enough participants, infrastructure and logistics remain expensive. But as more brands join, costs drop, benefiting everyone. The “Unlocking Reuse” report by EMF found that for Personal Care packaging, a systemic-level move to reusables would reduce costs up to 23% for everyone.

The fallacy of waiting for the market

Waiting for reusable packaging to become cheap or for the market to be “ready” holds back progress.

When everyone waits, no one leads. Real change requires bold, immediate action. Brands that move first can shape the future market, setting new standards and driving innovation that others will follow.

SPOTLIGHT



Spotlight: Ellen MacArthur Foundation Journey

The [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#) (EMF) mission is to accelerate the circular economy transition. Their approach to the circular economy has evolved, becoming more focused on reuse over time.

Early Years: Conceptualizing the Circular Economy

Initial Focus (2010-2015): EMF initially focused on broad principles of the circular economy, emphasizing designing out waste and keeping products and materials in use. Reports like [Towards the Circular Economy](#) (2012) laid the foundation for this new economic model, which included concepts like remanufacturing, recycling, and maintaining materials at their highest value.

Mid Years: Emphasizing Practical Applications

Expansion and Partnerships (2015-2020): During this period, EMF developed partnerships with major corporations and governments to demonstrate circular economy principles in action. The [New Plastics Economy](#) initiative launched in 2016, emphasized redesigning plastic products and systems to eliminate waste, with increasing mentions of reuse strategies as a critical component of circular economy practices.

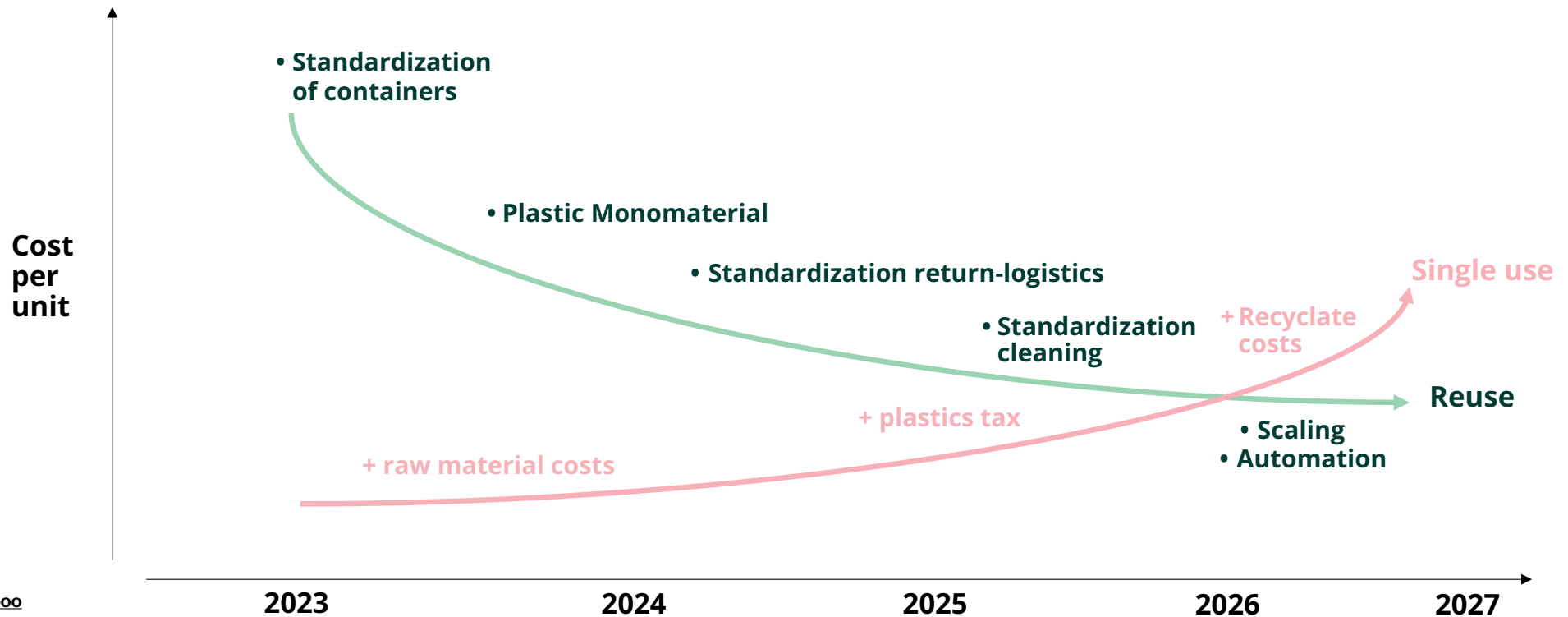
Recent Years: Strong Focus on Reuse

Shift Towards Reuse (2020-Present): In recent years, EMF has increasingly highlighted reuse as a pivotal element of the circular economy. The [Reuse – Rethinking Packaging](#) report (2019) specifically targets the business-to-consumer (B2C) sector, advocating for scalable reuse models. The foundation has become more vocal about the importance of integrating reuse systems into supply chains to reduce reliance on single-use packaging and achieve substantial environmental benefits.

Costs of Single-use vs Reuse over time

Until now the main argument has been that reusable packaging is more expensive. However, there is evidence that reuse can compete with the cost of single use. One company providing this evidence is zerooo. zerooo is a returnable packaging system for personal care and home care that was created by German start-up SEA ME.

In light of new plastic tax, EPR legislation and limited recycled material supply, zerooo anticipates reuse will become more cost-effective than single use through standardised containers, optimised logistics and shared infrastructure. Germany's beverage industry demonstrates this: washing bottles costs less than manufacturing new ones.



SPOTLIGHT



A 30%+ Reuse Report




GoUnpackaged's [latest research](#) offers a data-driven view of achieving reuse at scale for UK grocery retail, including infrastructure requirements for a 30%+ Reuse Future. Developed with an expert Advisory Panel (Amco, Biffa, CHEP, DEFRA, Ecosurety, Innovate UK, Ocado Retail, Reath, Suez, Tesco, WRAP, and WWF), the research spans multiple product categories - from coffee to ready meals to shower gel - providing objective, evidence-based insights.

Assessment Approach

The report compared three packaging systems: single-use, reusables ("pre-fill"), and refill in-store. For reuse scenarios, they modelled 30% market penetration and 97% return rates representing a mature, well-functioning system.

Key Takeaways

The report underscores that reuse at scale delivers significant economic and environmental benefits across the value chain, including to citizens and society. Moving to 30% reuse delivers:

- ££ • £136m saving per year in pEPR costs (an average of a 94% reduction in pEPR per item switched to reuse)
- ££ • £314m - £577m (12-22%) saving per year in end-to-end system costs
-  • 95% reduction in CO2e emissions, for the products in scope
-  • 95% reduction in packaging materials and waste, for the products in scope
-  • 13,000 net new jobs

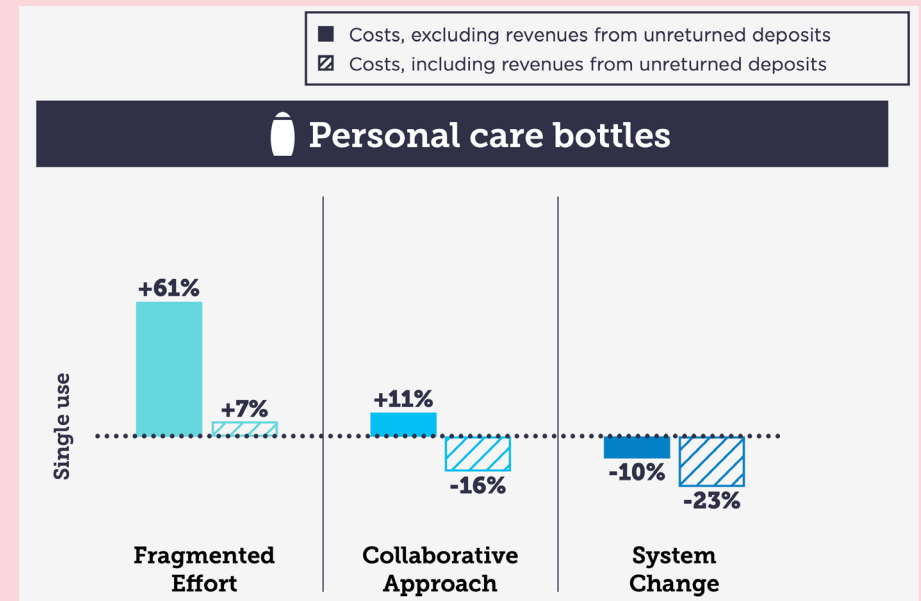


Unlocking A Reuse Revolution Report

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s 2023 report, Unlocking a Reuse Revolution, explores the urgent need for scaling reusable packaging systems to reduce plastic waste. The report presents a clear case for why reusable packaging - rather than relying on single-use or recycling alone - is key to reducing plastic pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and water use. It highlights that shifting to reusable packaging could reduce plastic waste in oceans by over 20% by 2040 and significantly decrease the use of virgin materials.

The report assessed environmental and economic impact. When it comes to costs, the main takeaways were:

- ££ • Fragmented efforts result in increased costs for early adopters
- ££ • Accelerated collaboration towards a systemic approach can significantly reduce costs for all players in the markets
- ££ • Advocating for reuse legislation will help level the playing field and make reuse more cost effective
- 🌍 • The message is clear, the reuse economy is one of collaboration and if change can happen at a system levels it is a win-win-win, for businesses, consumers and the planet.



Find out where you are

Moving away from single-use materials towards reusable is essential to reduce the pressures on the environment and create a truly circular economy. That journey starts now.

Here are simplified ways of assessing where you are on your journey.



Packaging Hierarchy

The next page has a quick diagram that can be adapted to your organisation. You can use it to give internal visibility and engage leadership on your packaging journey. It is a quick assessment that can be used before more robust tools like [SPICE](#) and [B Corp Beauty Coalition Beauty Navigator](#).

Ask yourselves these questions whilst using the next page to place your current product offering on the packaging hierarchy:

- **How do your current practices fit into the hierarchy? Do you have an existing hierarchy?**
- **Where do each of your product lines sit on the packaging hierarchy?**
- **How far have you travelled along the packaging hierarchy so far? What successes can be celebrated?**
- **What has been trialed or piloted to move up the hierarchy? What did you learn?**
- **What can you implement in the future to move up the hierarchy?**

Under the UK's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme, the Recycling Assessment Methodology (RAM) determines modulated fees based on how recyclable your packaging is. While designing for recyclability reduces EPR costs, it still addresses only the bottom of the packaging hierarchy. Moving up to reuse and refill eliminates packaging waste entirely!

INTERACTIVE

Cosmetics Packaging Hierarchy

Place your current packaging lines on this standardised sustainable packaging hierarchy.

Reduce

Remove secondary packaging, reduce weight & unnecessary components

Develop solid cosmetics that require no or less packaging

Reuse

Pre-fill; refillable packaging professionally cleaned

Long-term storage for solid products

Re-fill

Refillable packaging that customers can clean and refill in store

Re-purpose

Use packaging for something else

Take back: closed loop

Take back scheme for recyclable packaging that ensures item closed loop

Take back: hard to recycle

Take back for hard to recycle items that ensures items get recycled

Compost

When the material is low-impact and can be added to food waste (no additives)

To replace a non-recyclable equivalent, when a recyclable option does not exist

Incineration /Landfill

When it is not technically possible to use recyclable or compostable materials, provided we actively work with suppliers and wider market to change that.
Non-toxic if incinerated

INTERACTIVE

How have the narratives around sustainable packaging changed in your business?

Businesses that are resilient and stay relevant are those that can change with their customers, new scientific information and adapt wisely to legislation. Understanding how change happens in your business can support you in accelerating decisions towards a circular future. Here are simplified ways of assessing where you are on your journey.

Using yellow post-its (online or offline), create a timeline of significant packaging changes in your business towards more sustainable options. Consider:

- lightweighting or elimination
- change in materials
- increase recycled content
- introducing and evolving take-back schemes

Using a green post-it, take note of the environmental impacts of those changes and any material improvements.

Using a pink post-it name the drivers behind those decisions: consumer-awareness, cost, legislation, significant new information, internal awareness?

Reflect, celebrate and discuss your story with packaging and how change happens in your business.

What are the main drivers for change?



Credit: Sébastien Bonneval

02

Get Inspired

Meet those already on the journey

The path to reusable packaging becomes clearer when you see others walking it. This section showcases brands, retailers, and system innovators proving that reuse works now, at scale, across diverse business models.

From independent brands pioneering deposit-return schemes to major retailers testing multi-brand systems, these case studies reveal what's working in practice. You'll discover how different models operate - from "return on the go" to in-store refill - and see solutions to common challenges like deposit management, reverse logistics, and consumer engagement.

Each example is classified using the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's framework to help you identify approaches relevant to your business. The variety demonstrates that there's no single "right" way. What matters is taking that first step - and learning from those who've already begun.

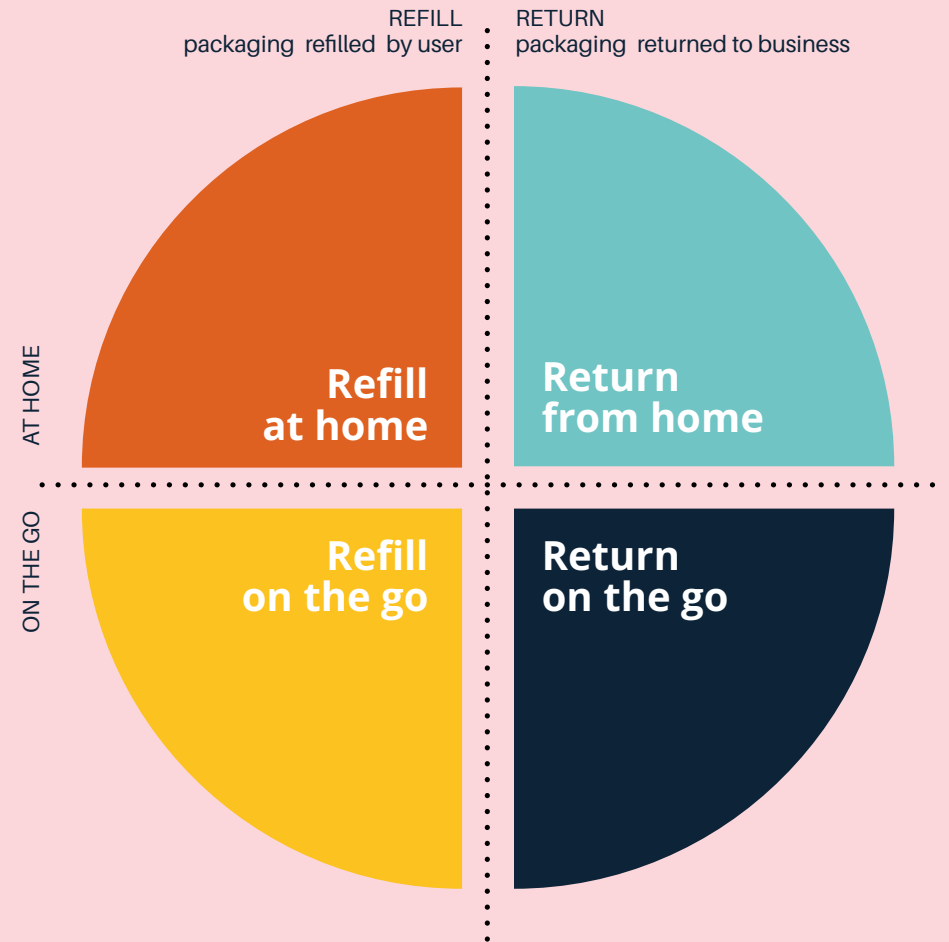
Ellen MacArthur Foundation Packaging Framework

On the right are the different classifications of refill and returnable packaging systems, according to the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#). They have been used to classify the following case studies. Visit EMF's website for the full [definitions](#) and their great [Reuse: Rethinking Packaging Report](#).

"There are four different business-to-consumer (B2C) reuse models that differ depending on whether the packaging is refilled by the user or returned to the business, and whether that refill/return takes place from home or on the go."

- [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#)

To deliver most impact, reuse requires a systemic approach, so we focus on the exciting and emerging case studies for the brands and ecosystems players paving the way for a more circular approach to beauty.

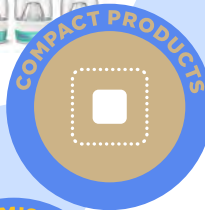


Source: [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#).
[Reuse - Rethinking Packaging \(2019\)](#)

Reuse can...

Cut costs

Packaging and transportation costs can be reduced by supplying refills for reusable containers in compact form, such as in concentrates or solids e.g. as tablets.

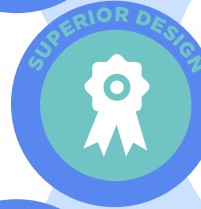


Build brand loyalty

Brand loyalty and customer retention can be achieved through deposit and reward schemes for reusable packaging.

Adapt to individual needs

Individual needs can be accommodated by reuse models that let users mix and match flavours, personalise packaging or choose desired quantities.

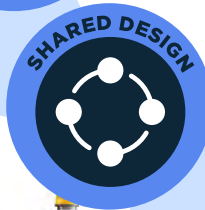


Improve user experience

User experience can be improved by enhancing the look, feel or functionality of reusable packaging (which can be more high-end as initial production costs is divided over many uses).

Optimise operations

Economies of scale for distribution and logistics can be achieved through sharing reusable packaging across brands, sectors or wider networks.



Gather intelligence

Information on user preferences and system performance can be gathered by incorporating digital technologies such as RFID tags, sensors, and GPS tracking into the reusable packaging system.

Multi-retailer, multi-brands trials in Europe

Multi-brand, multi-retailer collaborations deliver scalability and environmental benefits.



Source: Zerooo & Müller

Zerooo - Germany & Austria

Established in 2021, Zerooo is Germany's first pool system for reusable cosmetic packaging. The system uses durable PET bottles designed for up to 30 rotations, each with a laser-engraved 2D tracking code. Operating through a €0.50 deposit-return network across nearly 1,000 locations in Germany and Austria. Ten brands now participate, with expansion to Switzerland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy planned for Q4 2025.

Featured Partnership: German retailer Müller became the first to offer its own brand (AVEO) in Zerooo's reusable packaging across 700+ locations. The line includes body lotion, hand soap, bubble bath, shampoo, and shower gel - demonstrating reuse at scale with accessible pricing.

Return on the go

Pharma-Recharge - France

Launched in 2023 by a consortium of French dermocosmetic brands (Garancia, Bioderma, Pierre Fabre, La Rosée, Mustela), Pharma-Recharge installs refill fountains in pharmacies for multi-brand products like shampoos, shower gels, and micellar waters.

Model: Customers purchase a standard 500ml glass bottle (€1.99) and refill through sealed, automated dispensing systems that print regulatory labels for each refill. Refills offer 15-20% savings. After four months, 90% user satisfaction and 99% support for reuse. System ensures hygiene, traceability, and regulatory compliance across multiple brands.

CASE STUDY

M&S, Beauty Kitchen, Arran Aromatics with Reposit

Packaging as a service model enabling multi-brand reuse, Reposit's packaging and technology platform demonstrates how shared infrastructure makes reuse accessible for brands of all sizes - from major retailers to independent beauty companies.

M&S + Reposit - UK

Marks & Spencer (M&S), in collaboration with Reposit, City to Sea, and Ecover, launched a pioneering initiative to tackle single-use packaging through a scalable reusable packaging system. After a 2020 pilot with homecare products, it has now expanded to 25 stores and 10,000+ customers participating as of February, 2025.

Model: Customers pay a refundable deposit on standard reusable containers. "Buy anywhere, return anywhere" through participating stores or home collection. Reposit technology tracks containers throughout the system.

Return on the go



Source: Beauty Kitchen

Source: M&S

Beauty Kitchen + Arran Aromatics + Reposit - UK

Two prominent Scottish brands partnered to scale reusable packaging using Beauty Kitchen's Reposit platform. This initiative demonstrates how independent brands can align on a shared reuse model, leveraging Reposit's deposit-return system to make circular packaging viable for smaller players.

Model: Customers purchase products in standardized reusable containers and return empty packaging at either brand's points of sale or online through free post, enabling "buy from any brand, return to any participating location." Materials: Glass, aluminium, stainless steel throughout the system.

Take inspiration from these pilot schemes

Multi-brand, retail trial pilots offer crucial insights for scaling reuse solutions compared with isolated, single brand trials. While short-term individual pilots often end before behavioral change takes hold, multi-brand, retail trial learnings remain essential for understanding the infrastructure, digital technology and other system efficiencies needed to make reuse mainstream.

Return on the go

Tesco + Loop - UK (2020-2022)

This reusable packaging trial began online in July 2020 and expanded in-store across ten Tesco locations in 2021, offering 88 reusable-packaged products. Over two years, more than 80,000 items were sold, appealing mainly to eco-conscious shoppers. While awareness and education were key to broader uptake, the project provided valuable operational insights into returns, cleaning, and redistribution - emphasising the need for shared infrastructure for scale.

La Boucle Beauté: Coalition Cosmétique & Réemploi + Circul'R - France (2025)

Launched in January 2025, La Boucle Beauté was a six-month pilot testing deposit-return systems across 25 Sephora and Nocibé stores in France. Five brands (Chanel, Clarins, Clinique, Lancôme, Sephora Collection) participated, offering customers 50 loyalty points for returning empty containers, which are then sorted and reused or recycled. Led by Circul'R and We Don't Need Roads with Citeo funding, the trial will evaluate and report on shared collection and washing infrastructure, consumer appetite, and operational feasibility.

Consumer Goods Forum Plastic Waste Coalition + Reposit - Ottawa, Canada (2026)

Major retailers (Walmart, Loblaw) and CPG brands (Unilever, L'Oréal, Procter & Gamble) co-designed a return-to-store model with "return for reward" incentives. Using standardized, pooled packaging across brands will minimise costs while enabling differentiation through creative labeling and closures, the program represents a packaging-as-a-service model. Implementation planned for Q1 2026.

Refill In-Store

With the popularisation of zero waste stores, refill on the go has made a come back. Many brands offer options in their own selected stores:

Refill
on the go

The Body Shop Refill Program features refill stations in over 720 stores worldwide, allowing customers to top up reusable aluminium bottles with hair care and shower gel products, enjoying a discount on refill options.

L'OCCITANE Refill Fountains allow customers to top up their favourite products in 17 stores using Forever Bottles made from recycled, recyclable aluminium. The fountains are easy to use and specially engineered to handle L'OCCITANE's formulations while meeting strict standards for quality, traceability, and hygiene.

Dr. Bronner's Refill Options include in-store refill stations, launched with Wonderfil in select Whole Foods Market stores, where customers can refill their own containers and save 13% versus buying new bottles. The brand also offers concentrated Pure-Castile Soap Refill Cartons.

Faith in Nature offers a refillable packaging system to cut plastic waste. Customers can refill durable aluminium bottles with shampoo, conditioner, or body wash, or buy in bulk (5 L or 20 L) for convenience and lower plastic use. A return-and-refill scheme supports a simple circular model by reusing empty bottles.

PERFUME

Selfridges leads with an extensive programme offering 900 refillable fragrances from 48 brands - both online and in their beauty halls. **The Perfume Shop** launched the UK's first multi-brand fragrance refill station in Nottingham, partnering with L'Oréal to offer popular scents from brands like YSL, Prada, and Lancôme offering 29% savings. **Mugler** was an early adopter with in-store refill fountains, allowing customers to replenish their iconic fragrances using 100ml refill bottles.



Source: Body Shop



Source: L'Occitane



Source: Mugler

Refill at Home: Lightweighting Packaging

Many cosmetic brands are now offering refill-at-home options to promote more sustainable options. Brands like Elemis, L'Occitane, Charlotte Tilbury, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty offer refillable skincare, makeup, and haircare items, allowing consumers to save money and potentially minimize environmental impact.

The Sustainable Beauty Coalition considers some of the refill at home products on the market to be lightweighting of packaging rather than reuse because they offer a reduction in packaging material but could also be stand alone products. This aligns with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's view that refill-at-home products must involve the reuse of packaging containers and auxiliary packaging must not be designed to be reused alone without a container. Additionally refill at home pouches are often made from mixed materials and are currently not widely recyclable.

Here are some examples:



Pods



Source: Kora, [Cult Beauty](#)

Pouches



Source: [WildMint](#)

Lighter Bottles



Source: [Aesop](#)

Inserts



Source: [Rose Inc](#)

Concentrates



Source: [Neat](#)



Source: [Fussy](#)



Source: [Elemis](#)



Source: [Susanne Kaufmann](#)

03

Get Clued Up

The impact that matters and the data that proves it

This section shows the environmental and economic impact of reuse versus single-use packaging. Using LCA data from studies like Reposit and zero00, you'll see compelling evidence that reuse can reduce CO2 emissions by up to 60%, slash water consumption, and achieve cost parity at scale.

Reuse is essential for a truly circular economy, and the numbers prove that at scale it makes both environmental and business sense.

A Day in the Life of Single-Use Packaging

Only about 1 in 10 personal care containers are likely to be recycled back into new containers.



A Day in the Life of Returnable Packaging

Return for reuse is a proven model for beverages in Europe. Deposits and rewards can drive high return rates. Shared infrastructure makes it cheaper for all actors in the system.



Debunking Recycling Myths

A large proportion of toiletries packaging, even if added to co-mingled recycling will not get recycled, especially small items. Here, we debunk some of the key misconceptions:



Wishcycling: Definition and Impact

Wishcycling refers to the act of placing non-recyclable items into recycling bins in the hope they will be recycled. Unfortunately, this well-meaning habit can backfire. In the UK, around 84% of households are contaminating their recycling through well-intended 'wish cycling'. Contaminated recycling bins often result in entire batches being diverted to landfills or incineration instead of being properly recycled, increasing waste and costs.

Challenges Facing the Recycling Industry

The UK's recycling system struggles with inconsistent policies between local councils, leading to confusion over what can and cannot be recycled. This lack of standardization, which will be addressed by incoming Simpler Recycling legislation, combined with the inconsistent market for recycled materials, means that many items, even if collected end up incinerated.

Bathroom Waste is Recycled Less

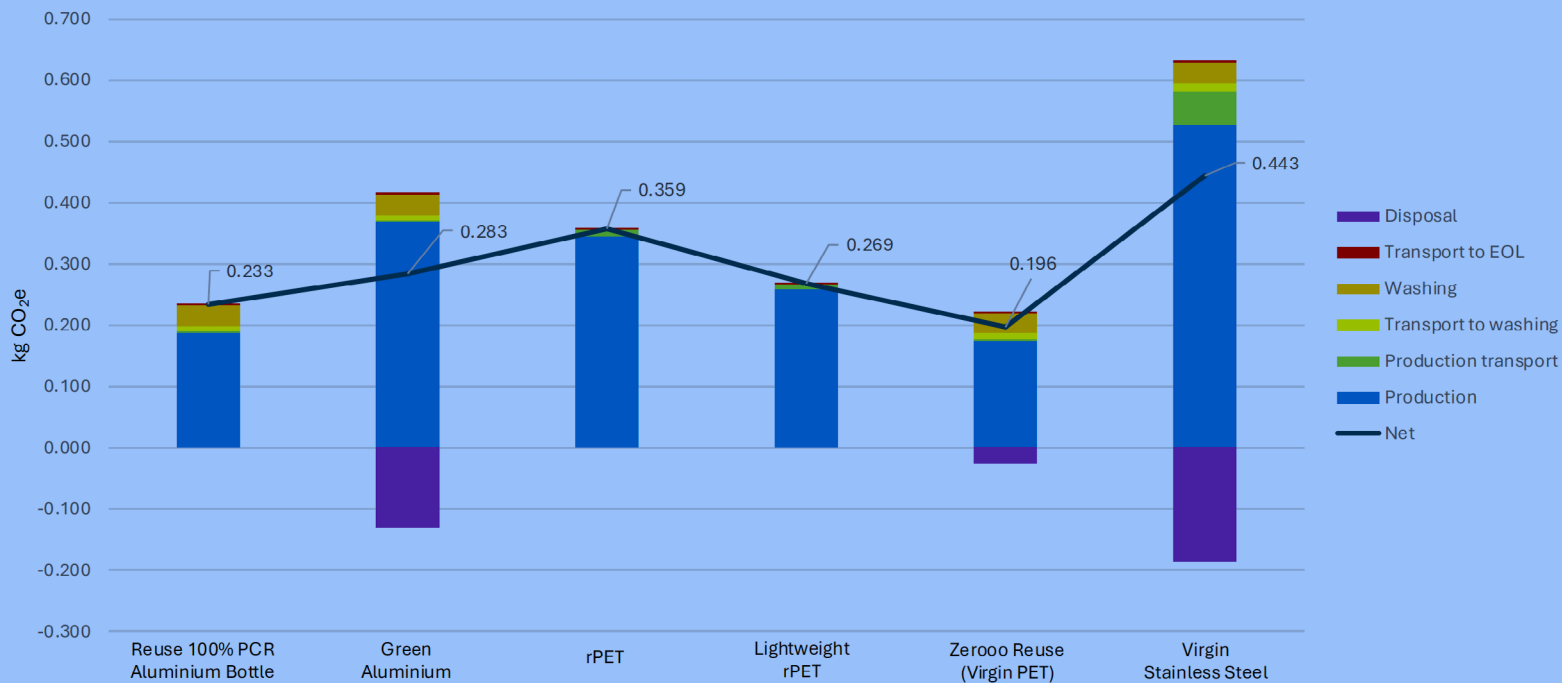
Lots of recyclable items in the bathroom end up in incineration or landfill. This is mostly due to habits and lack of separate recycling bins in the bathroom. Perfume bottles and aerosols are amongst the most binned items by UK consumers, and 56% of Brits don't recycle bathroom waste.

Low Return Rates

Single stream collections and specialised take-back schemes means that cosmetics packaging has a better chance of being recycled; however, low return rates means a fraction of that material reaches the correct disposal routes.

Insights into Reposit's Life Cycle Assessment

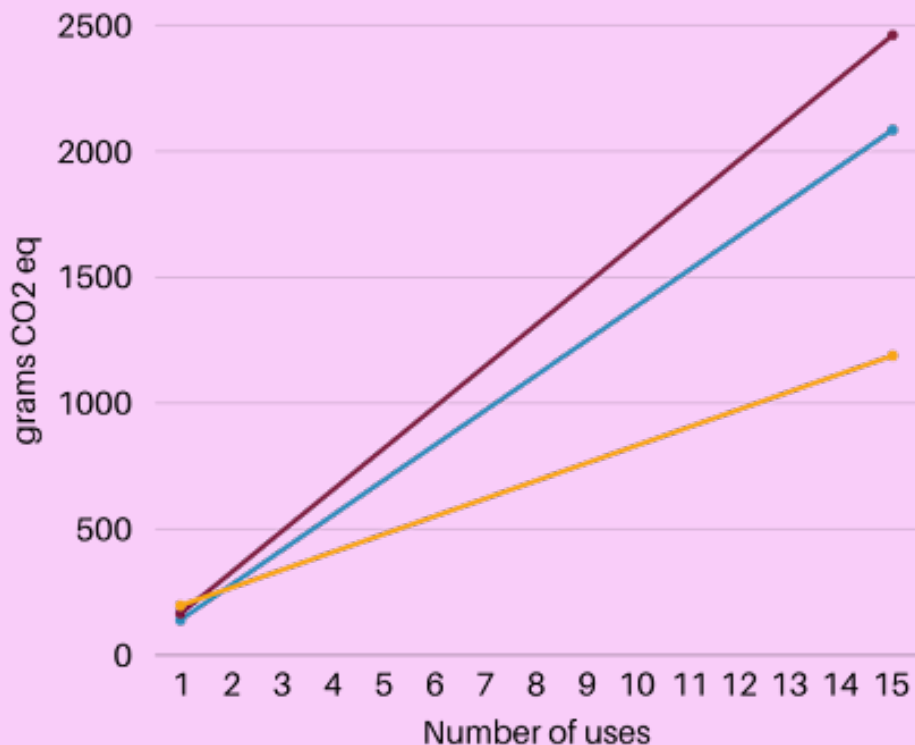
For the Ottawa project, Reposit compared the carbon emissions of six different materials, including the emissions of transporting and washing for the reusable materials. After 2 reuses both 100% PCR Aluminium and zerooo Virgin PET fare better than rPET, after 4 reuses both are considerably better than even lightweight rPET (image below). Washing and transporting do not impact as significantly as the production of the material.



Carbon emissions* (kgCO₂e) after 5 Uses (4 Reuses) 500ml Bottle in 6 different materials

* The full LCA is proprietary to Reposit and the Consumer Goods Forum in Canada and cannot be reproduced without written consent from Reposit.

Insights into Zeroo's Life Cycle Assessment



*30% recycled content. Pattern is consistent when compared across similar levels of recycled material.

** Life Cycle Analysis conducted by the Technical University of Hamburg Circular Materials and Engineering Institute and reviewed by an external panel of experts.

Source: zerooo proprietary LCA available to partners

A formal LCA** of the zerooo PET bottle showed that it can reduce carbon emissions after just **2 uses** compared to single use bottles made of PET or HDPE.

Even with the current return rate of about **80%**, Zerooo reduces carbon emissions by **20-30%**. Return rates of 95% or higher, yielding 15+ cycles, are expected at scale, based on experiences from the German beverage industry.

Washing and additional transportation together contribute only 3.7% of total lifecycle emissions for reuse, compared to 41.3% for bottle production, making reuse preferable to single use despite additional washing and transport.

PET shows significant advantage compared to aluminum because it creates far fewer emissions from production and **requires far fewer cycles** to show an environmental advantage compared to single use.

With bottle-to-bottle recycling technology, PET can be recycled into new bottles at the end of its life with a **97%** material recapture rate.

04

Bring Customers Along

The psychology and strategy of behavior change

The majority of Gen Z consumers say they would use refillable products if they were available and convenient, highlighting that access and system design, not motivation, remain the key barriers.

This section equips you with proven strategies to shift consumer behavior from disposal to return. Using the EAST framework (Easy, Attractive, Social, Timely), you'll learn how to design reuse systems that work with human psychology rather than against it. We share insights from successful trials showing that convenience matters more than deposits, that social influence drives adoption faster than environmental messaging alone, and that influencers can be your most powerful allies. You'll discover which consumer segments to target first, what messaging resonates, and how to create the habits that make reuse feel natural rather than burdensome. Real learnings from M&S, Tesco, and WRAP studies show exactly what moves customers from interest to action.

We highly recommend [Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Marketing Playbook for the Circular Economy](#) as a great guide to assist you in your decision making.

Consumer Behaviour Change

WRAP's proven model for driving behaviour change.

Where We Are Now

Citizens

Currently have one simple rule, or mental shortcut- 'put all packaging in the right bins at home'.

Have created a habit of waste disposal at home for over a generation, which is the social norm.

Currently perceive packaging as waste, with very little value- to be binned or recycled.

The Change Required

Reuse and Refill packaging systems for products will require citizens to:

Create a new mental shortcut or 'rule' i.e 'return the packaging away from home'.

Create a new habit- store and return packaging away from home, or refill in store.

Change their perception of the packaging from waste to something of value, and create value in the act of returning the packaging away from home.

The Behaviour Change Strategy

Develop behaviourally informed intervention strategies which are designed into reuse and refill systems by:

Utilising the way evolution has designed the human brain to love simple rules to remember and follow.

Influencing and incentivising the new behaviours to become lifelong habits and the new social norm and disincentivising the undesired old behaviours.

Creating financial, and non financial value to both the packaging, and the act of returning the packaging. This is via the right motivation and incentives, such as beliefs in consequences of returning packaging away from home that matches citizens values.

EAST Principles for Behaviour Change Strategies

EAST is a set of intuitive principles informed by behavioural science and developed by the [Behavioural Insights Team](#).

Make it **E**asy

Make it **A**tttractive

Make it **S**ocial

Make it **T**imely

Make it Easy

Make the purchase of products, and the return of reusable/refillable packaging as simple and convenient as possible

Design Rule 1

Buy Anywhere, Return/Refill Anywhere

Enable citizens to:

Buy the brand they want, where they want, return or refill where they want- online, instore or kerbside.

Make the purchase of products, and the return of multiple different reusable/refillable packaging as easy and convenient possible.

Design Rule 2

Instantly recognisable

Create returnable / refillable packaging that is intuitively recognisable, trusted, and with a clear call to action. It should intuitively trigger and reinforce a new, easy to remember, mental short cut or rule.

Design Rule 3

Collaborate within your category, and between categories

Standardise your packaging, standardise the return process.

Create your USP via the quality of your product, and your marketing. Not the physical packaging shape.

Collaborate on sharing pooled packaging to enable 'buy anywhere, return anywhere' capability for citizens.

Examples

Buy anywhere, return anywhere

An example of 'buy anywhere, return anywhere' (although a recycling scheme not a reusable return scheme) is Boots' scheme for easy recycling at in-store recycle points. Retailers should reimagine this for reusable packaging.

Cross-collaboration

If brands created reusable lipstick replacements which had the same size refill offering. Any refill lipstick could fit into any outer

Make it Attractive & Social

Make the purchase of products, and the return of reusable/refillable packaging irresistible and socially relevant

Design Rule 4

Attractive

Make the design of refill/reuse packaging attention grabbing and include CTA's surrounding incentives.

Design with your audience in mind to ensure it resonates and encourages new behaviours.

Design Rule 5

Social

Use what those influencing your audience are saying and doing, and create feelings of reciprocity.

Show and tell your audience what people like them are doing, not doing and saying about your product.

Tell your audiences what you are doing with respect to their values.

Spotlight

In 2023 [Unilever](#) partnered with the [Behavioural Insights Team](#) to understand how brands can maximise the power of social media influencers to positively impact consumer behaviour. Through a simulated platform, they measure behavioural change in 6000 UK, US and Canadian consumers.

Results were clear: influencers have the single biggest impact on people's green choices today. 75% of consumers are more likely to take up pro-environmental behaviour after watching content on social media and 8 in 10 consumers think TikTok and Instagram are good places to get advice about how to live sustainably.

Examples

Attractive

Providing incentives for return in the form of discounts, return of deposit, club/member points.

Utilise positive language such as 'return to earn'.

For example, Beauty Kitchen's 'Return For Rewards' offers a £2 discount per item returned.

Make it Timely

Make it timely, the timing of prompts, and information influences the response and behaviour of citizens

Design Rule 6

Provide prompts at various decision making points - from purchase to 'return/refill'.

Provide immediate value at time of purchase, not at time of return or refill.

Provide a plan for 'between' purchases and for the time of return or refill.

Timely

Link the action and value from purchase for today, to value for the future.

Brands should explore positive language like 'A Beautiful you, A Beautiful Tomorrow', although brands should be conscious of greenwashing.

Key actions for brands

Help customers understand price differences: Transparent communication of price differences between packaged and refill products encourages customers to try reuse by highlighting potential savings.

Combat consumer uncertainty: Well-placed step-by-step instructions, distinct signage, and staff support help reduce apprehension for first-time users of refill stations.

Enhance their experience: Engaging brand activities and staff presence create a fun, welcoming environment at refill zones, normalizing the experience and making it more attractive to shoppers.

Audience: who should you focus on?

Consumer segmentation helps you identify and target the right audiences with tailored messaging that resonates with their specific values and behaviors.

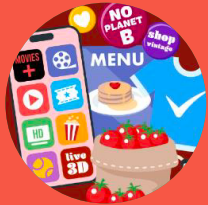
WRAP's [Circular Living Segmentation](#) outlines eight segments, or potential audiences you may wish to consider communicating to.

Do you want to:

- Choose a segment who are already undertaking reuse, get them to add beauty product reuse to their habits, and they become advocates for your brand? E.g. 1 and 2
- Choose a segment that is not undertaking reuse, high consumers, love fast fashion and tailor your marketing accordingly. E.g. 6 or 7.

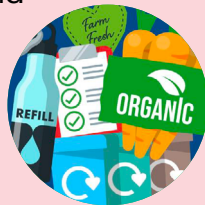
Segment 1

Get the why, not always the how. Think green and big consumer



Segment 2

Give the planet a chance. Green and acting on it



Segment 3

Pressured providers. Under pressure Greens



Segment 4

The strong, silent type. Actions not words, quietly green



Segment 5

Local, not global. Concerned about litter and fly tipping



Segment 6

Why should I care? Disengaged or indifferent



Segment 7

Green for the 'gram. Big consumers; words, not action



Segment 8

Got the actions, different motive. Climate rejectors but acting sustainably



Remove Barriers to Consumer Adoption

Consumer research consistently shows that financial incentives can encourage trial, but evidence from reuse pilots demonstrates that convenience, trust, and habit formation are more decisive for long-term adoption.

A year-long study published in June 2025, conducted by Senseva for FEBEA in France, with financial support from CITEO identified the key levers for increasing consumer acceptance and use of refill systems. The French market is ahead of the UK when it comes to refill and reuse and their learnings can help accelerate the market here. Here are some of the highlights.

59%

of french cosmetics consumers surveyed have purchased refill in cosmetics in the last year.



Drivers

Because it is more ecological (less packaging, less toxic materials ...) **70%**

Spend less money (price more affordable than regular format) **64%**

More Practical (easy to store, or to carry, etc.) **39%**

Keep the beautiful pack **21%**

Barriers

I can't find products in a refill format **44%**

I don't think about it **32%**

It's not practical **19%**

Recommendations

Price reduction on the refill compared to initial product **63%**

A better availability in store **38%**

Ensure no product loss at refill **35%**

Loyalty offer **35%**

Standout consumer profiles

BEAUTY ENTHUSIASATS & TRENDY

Innovation, trend, sensorial, practicality, nomadism, Influence, social networks

GREEN & CLEAN BEAUTY

Ecologie, values, organic beauty

ADEPTS OF LESS BUT BETTER

Premium, Luxury, Selective Segment

05

Make it Happen

Are you ready to create a culture of reuse?

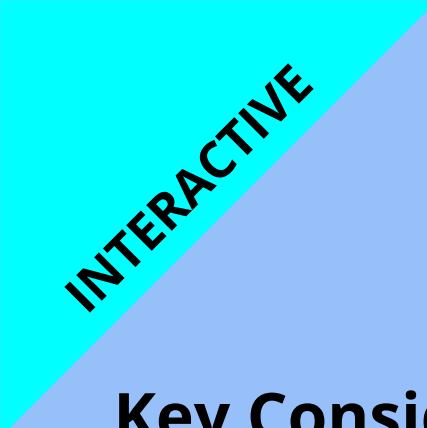
As we rethink consumption models, maintaining consumer trust and industry credibility is essential. Before launching refillable or reusable packaging, consider various scenarios to select the most suitable approach.

As shown in the previous section, bringing customers along will be key to success. Building consumer confidence requires both practicality and benefits beyond sustainability.

The following pages prompt important discussions around what you want to achieve and what matters most to your business - clarity of outcome will guide your reuse model development.

To support your planning, we've adapted a Business Model Canvas template for designing a Reuse Pilot. Use it with cross-functional teams to design a full scheme or build your business case.

Every journey starts with a first step. What will yours be?



INTERACTIVE

Key Considerations

In the following pages, you will find a series of questions to help you design your packaging reuse strategy. You can discuss them as a team, have the appropriate departments answer specific questions, and help you build a water-tight business case with all aspects considered.

Choosing the right products

What products in my portfolio might refill/reuse be most suitable for?

How do I think my customer would adapt to this?

Is it likely to be repeat-refilled or returned enough times to obtain the environmental benefit?

Will the refill product be in the finished format or concentrated?

Will the product need reformulation, for instance to change consistency, preservation and therefore will it need re-testing?

Will this change the durability of the product, and alter any period after opening (PAO)/ hourglass information?

What additional testing information will my Safety Assessor require?

Choosing The Right Packaging

What material will the packaging be made from and will I need to redo compatibility testing with the product?

Is there a better packaging option (size, shape) to maximise any transportation requirements?

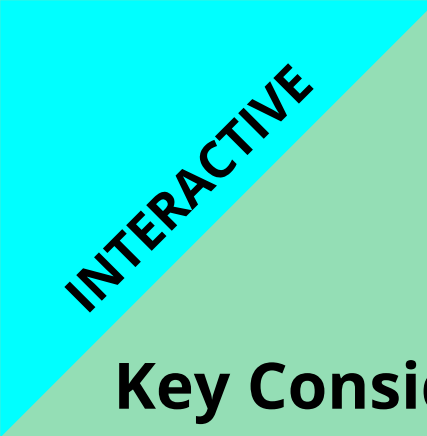
Will the packaging need to be reconsidered if a concentrated product is being proposed?

Will the packaging require additional robustness for repeated use?

Will your consumer enjoy the story of a scuffed container, or will they always select pristine packaging?

Will it be fully recyclable at the end of its life?

Will the packaging be owned or leased from a fulfillment provider?



INTERACTIVE

Key Considerations

Design The Right Labelling

How will any revised PAO be calculated and labelled?

How will I maintain traceability and ensure labelling compliance with UK Cosmetics Regulations or, if relevant under Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP)?

How will I ensure compliance with Weights & Measures and changing labels accordingly?

How can I communicate on the label to encourage consumers to reuse or return the packaging?

Fulfillment Considerations

Where will the returned packaging be cleaned and recharged?

What is the environmental impact of this? How can I reduce transport distances?

How will I ensure Good Manufacturing Practice throughout, including the training of staff and adaption of the Product Information File, refilling and return instructions for outsourced fulfilment?

Who can I collaborate with around fulfilment?

Choosing The Right Retail Model

What reuse model would suit my brand's selling model?

How will I conduct a LCA to determine whether the environmental benefits outweigh additional resources? How can I maximise the environmental benefits?

Will there be a deposit for consumers to pay and how will that be claimed back?

How will the refill version compare in price to the single-use version?

How many returns will I need to make it environmentally and financially sustainable (LCA)?

Will a Single Use format be on sale beside the refill version?

Reuse and refill should comply with the same regulatory requirements that exist for any packaged product.

For more information, check out CTPA's guidance on Refill and Reuse Models.

Reuse Pilot Business Model Canvas

Reuse Pilot Canvas

From insights to action - Design your reusable packaging pilot

<p>Key Partners</p> <p><i>Who do you need to make this work?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning/refilling facilities • Logistics providers • Other brands (collaboration) • Technology partners • Retailers/return points <p><i>From "Get Inspired": What collaboration opportunities did you identify?</i></p>	<p>Key Activities</p> <p><i>Core activities to manage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Container design & sourcing • Product reformulation • Collection & return logistics • Cleaning & sanitization • Customer education 	<p>Value Propositions</p> <p><i>Why will customers & business choose this?</i></p> <p>For Customers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental impact • Cost savings • Premium experience <p>For Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability goals • Competitive advantage • Future-proofing <p><i>Apply EAST: Easy, Attractive, Social, Timely</i></p>	<p>Customer Relationships</p> <p><i>How will you engage & retain?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deposit & reward schemes • Education & communication • Customer service • Community building • Social proof 	<p>Customer Segments</p> <p><i>Who are you designing for?</i></p> <p>WRAP Segments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segment 1: Think green, big consumer • Segment 2: Give planet a chance • Other: _____ <p>Their characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviors & motivations • Shopping preferences • Barriers to address 		
<p>Key Resources</p> <p><i>Assets & capabilities needed</i></p> <p>Physical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reusable containers • Infrastructure <p>Human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained staff • Compliance experts <p>Intellectual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulations • Brand guidelines 		<p>Channels</p> <p><i>Purchase & return points</i></p> <p>Sales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail locations • Online platforms • Direct-to-consumer <p>Returns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-store collection • Home collection • Drop-off points <p><i>Goal: "Buy anywhere, return anywhere"</i></p>			<p>Cost Structure</p> <p><i>Key costs for this pilot</i></p> <p>Setup Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Container design & production • Infrastructure setup • Technology development • Staff training <p>Operational Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection & cleaning per cycle • Transportation & logistics • Deposit management • Customer service 	
		<p>Success Metrics & Revenue Streams</p> <p><i>How will you measure success & generate revenue?</i></p> <p>Environmental KPIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return rates (target 80%+) • CO₂ reduction vs single-use • Water & material savings <p>Business KPIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer acquisition & retention • Reuse cycles per container • Operational efficiency <p>Revenue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product sales (premium?) • Deposit management • Cost savings 				

Follow this [link](#) for an interactive version of the canvas to workshop with your colleagues

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