

BESTSELLER POLICY
FOR PLASTIC PACKAGING

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BESTSELLER®

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At BESTSELLER, we are moving away from how we currently use plastic. In our Fashion FWD strategy, we have set out two goals specifically in this area:

- By 2025, we will phase out single-use virgin plastic wherever possible.
- By 2025, all consumer-facing packaging will be 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable.

BACKGROUND

According to the United Nations (UN), more than 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic has been produced since the early 1950s. About 60% of that of plastic has ended up in either a landfill or the natural environment, and more than 99% of plastics are produced from chemicals derived from oil, natural gas and coal¹.

Every year, BESTSELLER use a huge amount of plastic packaging; for our polybags, for wrapping, for how we present our fashion products (such as shorts and shirts) to our customers. Our biggest consumption of plastics is for polybags. Annually, it is estimated that we use more than 175.000.000 polybags – equalling more than 1.750 tons of plastics – to protect the clothes we sell, plus more than 4 million shipping bags and at least 60 tons of transparent shrink wrap film for wrapping pallets.

A key way to reduce our consumption of plastics and packaging and to support innovation of new materials is to set up design criteria to support high quality recycling of plastics. These criteria constitute our BESTSELLER policy for plastic packaging which covers all of our activities from sourcing from our suppliers to selling to our wholesale and retail customers.

THE POLICY

As soon as possible, all new orders of plastic packaging materials in BESTSELLER must implement the following criteria, so that **all our plastic packaging materials**:

- Are made of mono-material PE (Polyethylene, which include both LDPE and HDPE)
- Have the highest possible content – preferable 100% – recycled PE certified by Global Recycling Standard, or biobased PE content (from non-food (2. and 3. generation feedstock) or non-edible by-products of the production of food crops)
- Are as small and light weight as possible – and only use plastic packaging when needed
- Are unpigmented (no colouring) and transparent or translucent for scanning
- Have laser marking or minimal print
- Have water-based ink
- Have adhesives that are water soluble at a temperature less than 60°C
- Have covers and labels that can be entirely removed in use or by simple dismantling
- Can entirely be emptied of residues after normal use
- Have no coatings or additives or solvent based ink
- Are not laminated with layers of different types of plastic or other materials (like for example metals)
- Have no compostable or biodegradable content as it takes highly technical plants to biologically degrade

¹ Source and quotes: <https://www.unenvironment.org/interactive/beat-plastic-pollution/>

- Have no oxo-degradable content as it is legally banned by EU
- Is in compliance with BESTSELLER's Restricted Substance List (PRSL) for Packaging and our supplier manual

If support in implementing these criteria is needed, then do not hesitate to contact your local sourcing office or BESTSELLER Sustainability.

THE COMPLEXITIES

Plastic is a 'great' material fit for so many purposes and applications. If we for example eliminated the use of polybags, garments would be damaged, resulting in both financial and environmental costs. A damaged product that is unwearable has a far greater environmental cost than manufacturing a polybag. But the polybags and the plastics we use need to be recyclable.

Next important step for BESTSELLER is to support high quality recycling via sorting, collecting and recovering of plastic packaging material used in our distribution, E-commerce and retail operations. We will do so by collaborating on recycling infrastructures across of our key markets and with external experts, stakeholders and peers.

We are a part of various initiatives and working groups such as Fashion for Good, EMF, RE100 etc. Through these partnerships, we gain more knowledge on the topic and collaborate in finding solutions to plastic use. At BESTSELLER, we understand that in order to solve these challenges we face, a systemic change that calls for collaboration with other industries and companies is needed.

A few facts about plastic:

- Today, most plastics are made of fossil fuel and some are recycled although it typically goes into lower quality products.
- In many countries, plastics are either disposed of in a mixed recycling waste stream or as part of mixed non-recyclable waste to landfill or incineration; or going into water streams, rivers and oceans, breaking it down into micro plastics.
- If plastic is recycled properly it can provide the lowest carbon emissions of available materials. It is the main conclusion in a analyse of over 70 life-cycle assessments that evaluate the environmental impacts of packaging alternatives over their life-time, including impacts from mining, manufacturing, logistics, usage and end-of-life management covering recycling or disposal; recycling saves between 30% and 80% of the carbon emissions that virgin plastic processing and manufacturing generate, and it prevents plastic from entering the marine environment.²
- The new EU recycling target of 55% by 2030 obliges to further increase the collection rates.
- More and more countries implement legislation and handling systems that benefit packaging containing recycled or reusable materials. Conventional plastic will be more expensive in fees and taxes than more sustainable plastic.
- High quality recycling of plastic is possible if our plastic live up to the criteria in our policy for plastic packaging.

² 'Examining Material Evidence - The Carbon Fingerprint' (2020), source and quotes: <https://www.veolia.co.uk/press-releases/veolia-launches-new-plastic-recycling-report>

IS BIOBASED OR BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC BETTER?

Some claim that plastic can be biodegradable or compostable. This is currently only true in few highly technical composting plants. In composting bins or in nature such plastics will become waste and eventually end up a micro plastic – no studies show otherwise. BESTSELLER's policy is therefore currently not to use plastic with biodegradable or compostable content.

High quality and efficient recycling of plastics is possible – no matter its origin, biobased or not. It means that also so called biodegradable or compostable plastic can be recycled by melting it to produce small plastic pellets that can be used in the production of new plastic. This is called recycled plastic, and it is produced at numerous recycling plants throughout the world and there is therefore a global market for recycled plastic. As PE (Polyethylene, which include both LDPE and HDPE) is the most commonly used plastic for packaging, PE is also very suitable for high quality recycling. BESTSELLER's policy is therefore to use mono-material PE with the highest possible content – preferable 100% – recycled PE certified by Global Recycling Standard, or biobased PE content from non-food (2. and 3. generation feedstock) or non-edible by-products of the production of food crops.

A DYNAMIC POLICY

As the plastic industry continuously evolves, this policy is also not a static document. The policy is dynamic and will continuously be updated and modified to always be in line with new developments, innovation and practices.

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