



Encouraging circularity and doing our part to keep plastics out of natural spaces

What We Do

With a common vision of a world where no plastic waste ends up in nature – land or sea – the CGF’s Coalition of Action on Plastic Waste and its 38 member companies are committed to engage in the important effort of driving progress towards realising a low-waste, circular economy. Understanding the need for innovative thinking, quick action and the support of a critical mass of stakeholders to address the global epidemic of plastic pollution, the Coalition is developing a sustainable approach to the use of plastics that encourages circularity and helps keep natural spaces free of plastic waste.

Why We Do It

There is an urgent need to tackle the problems associated with plastic waste, especially as 95% of plastic packaging is created for single-use. The United Nations Environmental Programme estimates that of the 8.3 billion tonnes of plastics produced since the 1950s, about 60 percent has ended up in a landfill or the natural environment. The 8-12 million tonnes of plastic waste that ends up in the ocean every year is one of the most visible and alarming signs of the plastic pollution problem.



How We Do It

Solving the plastic waste problem requires us to re-think the life cycle of plastics as we know it. The Coalition is guided by the vision of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation for a New Plastics Economy, which the CGF endorsed in October 2018. Moving from a linear to a circular economy requires a different approach to plastic usage, from production, consumption

and reuse, to recycling and disposal. This new approach will require collaboration, knowledge and experience sharing, and creating partnerships with different sectors and organisations that, under different circumstances, might not normally have come together to act. The Coalition’s vision of accelerating progress towards a circular economy is embodied in its four priorities: packaging redesign, developing a framework for optimal Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programmes, encouraging recycling innovation, and supporting the improvement of waste management programmes in advanced and transitional markets.



Packaging Redesign

In order to realise a New Plastics Economy, we not only have to rethink how plastic is used, collected, and processed, but we also need to rethink the design of packaging itself to optimise it for a circular economy. One reason why plastic packaging ends up in nature is due to the complexity of the recycling process, which can be complicated by poor packaging design, the inclusion of problematic materials and the presence of excess packaging. Coalition members are aligning on a series of “Golden Design Rules” for the design of plastic packaging which are designed to accelerate progress towards their aim of using less and better plastic. These rules aim to help reduce the complexity of the recycling process for different types of materials, thereby increasing recycling rates. The first two Golden Design Rules, finalised in December 2020, focus on increasing the value of PET recycling and removing problematic elements from packaging.



Extended Producer Responsibility

The Coalition has developed an optimal framework for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programmes to help aid members in their engagement with governments and policymakers. EPR programmes guide facilitated collaboration between the industry and governments to help ensure circularity of the lifespan of packaging.



Chemical Recycling

The Coalition seeks to explore the future of recycling innovation by engaging with stakeholders to ensure broad support for chemical recycling and send a strong demand signal to upstream suppliers for packaging that can be processed using chemical recycling methods.



Plastic Waste



Support Improved Waste Management Systems

Finally, recognising that a circular approach to the use of plastics is an inclusive one with seamless transitions from production, use and processing, the Coalition will work with governments from advanced and transitional markets to improve or implement optimal waste management systems.

Partnerships and Collaborations

We recognise that the plastic waste challenge will only be solved by global collaboration between companies, national and local governments, multinational organisations, the recycling industry and consumers. For each of our three workstreams, we have partnered with key organisations who are also actively working towards finding solutions in these different areas.

The Coalition aims to bring unique value to the existing efforts against plastic waste through the CGF’s emphasis on retailer-manufacturer collaboration and action-oriented focus. To this end, the Coalition is looking to partner with key organisations across different geographies to build on the work that is already being done and avoid duplication.

The Coalition has been working with SYSTEMIQ to create a blueprint for reaching its ambitions, receiving particular support from SYSTEMIQ on its work developing packaging design guidelines.

Creating a Blueprint for Success

In 2018, the CGF partnered with SYSTEMIQ and McKinsey, with the support of CGF members to undertake a year-long study. As a result, we were able to create a blueprint for reaching our ambitions through the development of a simulation model comparing collection and recycling rates, material flows, as well as associated financial and social implications for different combinations of waste management system design choices. The results of this study helped influence and shape the priorities of the Coalition.

Membership and Governance

Thirty-eight of the world’s largest consumer goods companies are members of the Plastic Waste Coalition of Action. It is sponsored at the CGF Board level by Alan Jope, CEO, Unilever, and Galen Weston, CEO, Loblaw Companies Limited. Its Steering Committee is chaired by Barry Parkin, Chief Procurement and Sustainability Officer, Mars, Incorporated, and Robert Nicol, Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Walmart Canada.



“Solving the plastic waste problem requires us to re-think the life of plastics as we know it. I know the Coalition will make significant progress in reaching a circular economy.”



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