Better packaging for

BETTER RECYCLING

marques metro brands

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Contents

This guide includes all the information you need for designing eco-responsible packaging.

Introduction

METRO's packaging and printed matter management policy

Thanks to numerous initiatives over the years, **METRO** has an effective process for guiding its teams and suppliers in managing packaging and printed matter, covering both optimization and reduction. With this important initiative, **METRO** will adopt practices designed to reduce the use of resources, limit the impact on the quality of ecosystems and on human health, limit product losses and reduce residual waste, while contributing to the global movement to eliminate single-use plastics.

Building on recognized product life-cycle and circular economy concepts, the Policy is based on the following four principles:

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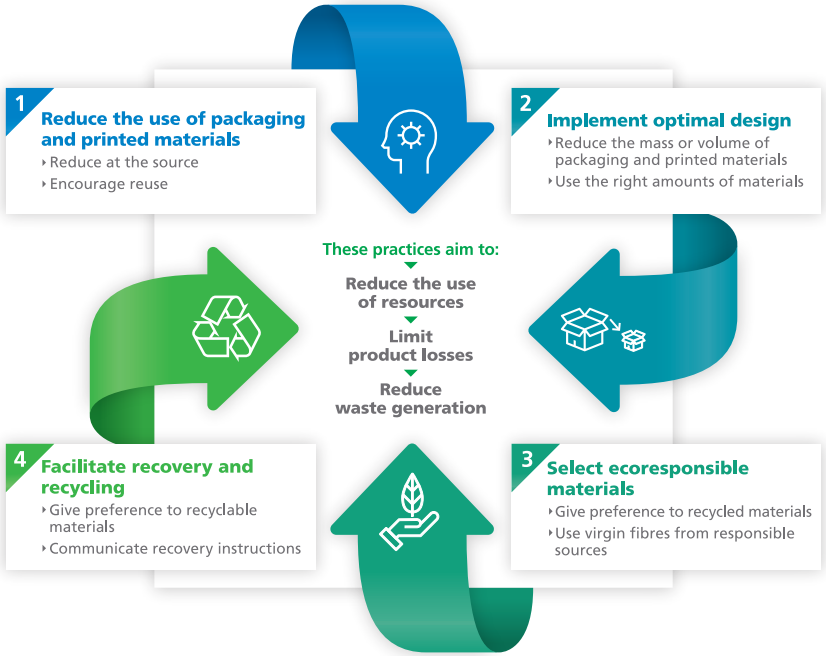
Our packaging and printed materials management approach



"In 2019, METRO published the first version of its packaging management policy. Our private labels are proud to be a cornerstone of the policy. Packaging is central to our efforts to protect and ensure the quality of the products we sell. However, once the product is consumed, its packaging becomes residual waste. Fortunately, we have the power to change things by working together.

For METRO, raising awareness about responsible packaging is one way to support a circular economy model.

By optimizing packaging design and increasing the proportion of recycled materials in our packaging, we will be able to reduce our environmental footprint.

Because we support the recycling of packaging and choose materials with a lower environmental impact, we can offer our customers more effective, innovative and sustainable packaging.

Now it's your turn to make the most of this unique opportunity.

Become one of METRO's partners in this transition to a responsible future."

—Marie-France Gibson
Vice-president, METRO Brands

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Key terms

Term	Definition
Recyclable	Any material that can be transformed and reintroduced into a production cycle for the manufacture of new packaging.
Post-consumer recycled content	Material collected through recycling after use by the consumer. The material is sent for recycling and transformed.
Post-industrial content	Packaging material from material producers and printers; may be combined with virgin material.
Responsible paper pulp	Virgin material certified by the FSC, SFI or PEFC or other recognized sustainable source.
Virgin material	Material sourced directly from the raw material, being used for the first time.
Recycled material	Material transformed and reintroduced into the production cycle for new packaging.

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Metal containers

Steel and aluminum have the benefit of being infinitely recyclable. Single-material packages are preferred.

Containers
- Opt for at least 70% recycled content for aluminum and 20% for steel.

Caps for aerosol cans
- Use additive-free polypropylene caps.

- BPA-based coatings are prohibited.

Labels

- Opt for direct printing on the container (fully recyclable);
- If a label must be added, use paper;
- Opt for glued (cut and stack) labels;
- Labels must contain at least 80% post-consumer recycled fibre.

Plastic shrink sleeves
- Use sleeves as little as possible, since they are challenging for people and recycling centres to separate.

- Avoid non-recyclable laminated paper or plastic;
- Do not use UV varnish;
- Avoid self-adhesive labels.

Metal can

Beverage can

Aerosol can

: recommended : to avoid

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Bottles and jugs

Single-material packages are preferred.

Opt for rPET, which is recycled, recyclable and lighter, when the conservation and the weight of the product allow it.

Plastic

- When possible, choose materials with recycled post-consumer content;
- Opt for recycled PET (rPET) (minimum 25%, 100% recommended);
- Opt for use of PET or HDPE.

- Do not use bioplastics from plant sources (e.g. made from sugarcane);
- Do not use biodegradable plastics (that break down in nature);
- Do not use industrially compostable materials;
- Do not use PLA, which is not recyclable with the current infrastructure;
- Do not use rigid PVC;
- Do not use BPA;
- Limit the use of phthalates;
- Limit the use of additives and dyes.

Glass

- Require post-consumer content for glass.

Labels

- If a label must be added, use paper or removable labels when possible;
- Opt for glued (cut and stack) labels;
- Labels must contain at least 80% post-consumer recycled material;
- Thermal printing is recommended for labels on plastic.

- Avoid plastic shrink sleeves;
- Avoid self-adhesive labels;
- Avoid non-recyclable laminated paper or plastic;
- Do not use UV varnish.

: recommended : avoid

Bottle

Jug

Boxes

Single-material packages are preferred (same material for box/carton and lid).

Plastic container and cap

- Opt for materials with recycled content when possible;
- Opt for rPET (minimum 25%, 100% recommended);
- Opt for single-material packaging;
- Choose HDPE (minimum 25% recycled material);
- Opt for PP.

- Do not use bioplastics from plant sources (e.g. made from sugarcane);
- Do not use biodegradable plastics (that break down in nature);
- Do not use industrially compostable materials;
- Avoid non-recyclable plastic laminate;
- Do not use rigid PVC;
- Do not use polystyrene and expanded polystyrene;
- Do not use BPA;
- Limit the use of phthalates;
- Limit the use of additives and dyes.

Labels

- Opt for direct printing (fully recyclable);
- If a label must be added, use paper;
- Opt for glued (cut and stack) labels;
- Labels must contain at least 80% post-consumer recycled fibre.

- Avoid non-recyclable laminated paper or plastic;
- Do not use UV varnish;
- Avoid self-adhesive labels.

Paper and cardboard

- Require at least 80% post-consumer recycled fibre;
- Virgin fibre content must come from sustainably managed forests;
- All virgin fibre must be certified (by FSC MIXED or FSC Recycled or PEFC-Recycled or SFI).

Windows

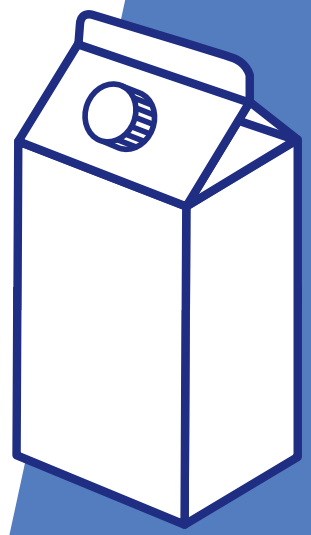
- If a window is used, it must be made of recyclable material and easily removable.

- The use of foil on boxes is prohibited, because it makes them non-recyclable;
- Avoid non-recyclable laminate;
- Do not use perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Steel

Metal cans

- Require a minimum of 80% post-consumer recycled content.



- Folding carton
- Window box
- Metal can
- Gable top carton
- Tetra Pak carton
- Thermoplastic box and lid

: recommended : avoid

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Clamshell packaging

Single-material packages are preferred.

Plastic

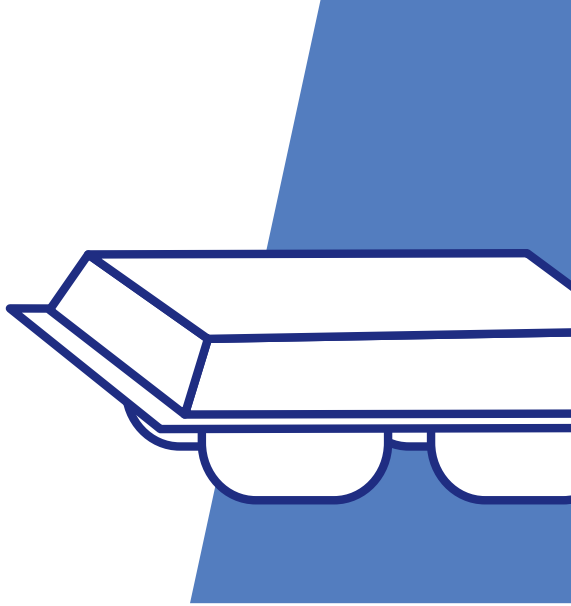
- Opt for a minimum of 50% post-consumer recycled content;
- Always choose recycled content when it is food-safe;
- Choose rPET.

- Do not use polystyrene and expanded polystyrene;
- Do not use rigid PVC;
- Do not use bioplastics from plant sources (e.g. made from sugarcane);
- Do not use biodegradable plastics (that break down in nature);
- Do not use industrially compostable materials;
- Avoid non-recyclable plastic laminate;
- Do not use BPA;
- Limit the use of phthalates;
- Limit the use of additives and dyes.

Paper and cardboard

- Use a minimum of 80% post-consumer recycled content;
- For clamshell packaging, opt for moulded paper (as in egg cartons);
- All virgin fibre must be certified (by FSC MIXED or FSC Recycled or PEFC-Recycled or SFI).

- Avoid non-recyclable laminate;
- Do not use perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).



Clamshell packaging

Dome

: recommended : avoid

Bags

Single-material is preferred when it does not impact the conservation of the product.

Plastic

- Minimum 50% post-consumer content for non-food-grade plastic;
- Opt for recycled content when food-grade;
- Opt for polyethylene (PE).

- Do not use bioplastics from plant sources (e.g. made from sugarcane);
- Do not use biodegradable plastics (that break down in nature);
- Do not use industrially compostable materials;
- Do not use PVC;
- Do not use nylon;
- Do not use BPA;
- Avoid non-recyclable plastic laminate when possible;
- Limit the use of phthalates;
- Limit the use of additives and dyes.

Paper and cardboard

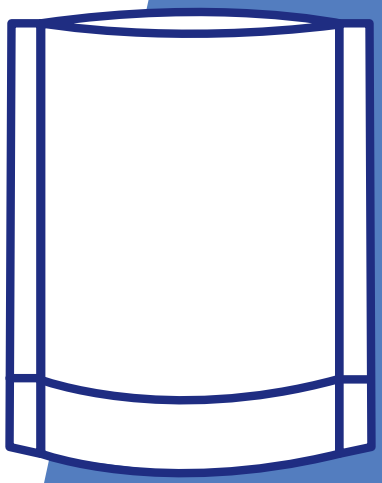
- For paper, a minimum of 80% post-consumer recycled fibre is necessary;
- All virgin fibre must be certified (by FSC MIXED or FSC Recycled or PEFC-Recycled or SFI).

- Avoid non-recyclable laminate.

Bag clips

- Opt for recycled cardboard bag clips.

- Do not use PS or PE bag clips.




Stand-up pouch (doypack)


Pillow pack

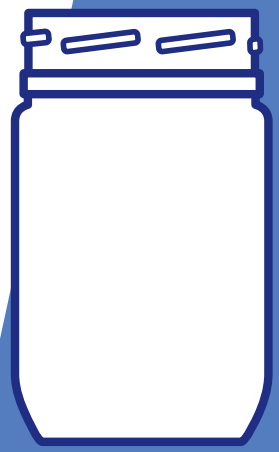

Side gusset


Flat-bottom gusset


Bread bag with clip

: recommended : avoid

Jars



Single-material is preferred (lid and main container), or aluminum lid.

Opt for rPET, which is recycled, recyclable and lighter, when the conservation of the product allows it.

Glass

- Require post-consumer content for glass.

Plastic shrink sleeves

- Minimize the use of plastic shrink sleeves, as they are difficult to separate by people and recycling centres, which limits their recycling.

Labels

- Recycled content greater than 80%;
- All virgin fibre must be certified (by FSC MIXED or FSC Recycled or PEFC-Recycled or SFI);
- Opt for thermal printing or direct printing of labels on jars;
- If a label must be added, use paper;
- Opt for glued (cut and stack) labels.

- Avoid non-recyclable laminated paper or plastic;
- Do not use UV varnish;
- Avoid self-adhesive labels.

Plastic

- When possible, opt for recycled content;
- Opt for rPET (minimum 25%, 100% recommended);
- Opt for HDPE (minimum 25% of recycled material);
- Opt for single-material plastics.

- Do not use bioplastics from plant sources (e.g. made from sugarcane);
- Do not use biodegradable plastics (that break down in nature);
- Do not use industrially compostable materials;
- Do not use rigid PVC;
- Do not use BPA;
- Do not use polystyrene and expanded polystyrene;
- Avoid non-recyclable plastic laminate;
- Limit the use of phthalates;
- Limit the use of additives and dyes.

Lids

- Opt for metal lids for glass jars;
- Opt for PP, rPET, PET, and HDPE plastic lids for plastic jars;
- Opt for post-consumer recycled content when possible.

: recommended : avoid

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Other types of packaging

Single-material is preferred (lid and main container).

Plastic

- Opt for recycled content when possible;
- Opt for rPET;
- Choose single-material recyclable plastics.

- Do not use bioplastics from plant sources (e.g. made from sugarcane);
- Do not use biodegradable plastics (that break down in nature);
- Do not use industrially compostable materials;
- Do not use PVC;
- Do not use BPA;
- Do not use polystyrene and expanded polystyrene;
- Avoid non-recyclable plastic laminate;
- Limit the use of phthalates;
- Limit the use of additives and dyes.

Paper and cardboard

- Minimum 80% post-consumer recycled fibre;
- All virgin fibre must be certified (by FSC MIXED or FSC Recycled or PEFC-Recycled or SFI).

- Avoid non-recyclable laminate.

Container

Lid

Induction seal

Cup

Tamper-evident seal

Tray

: recommended : avoid

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Checklist: environmentally responsible packaging

Preferred practices for designing responsible packaging.

Optimized design requirements

Preferred practices	Yes
1. Eliminate overpackaging	
1.1 Have non-structural components been eliminated?	
1.2 Has the total number of components been minimized?	
2. Reduce the quantity of material (without compromising product integrity)	
2.1 Has the weight of components been minimized?	
3. Reduce head-space	
3.1 Has unnecessary head-space or empty-space been eliminated?	
3.2 Has the nesting process been considered?	
4. Improve the consumer experience	
4.1 Does the packaging help minimize product loss and/or food waste at the consumption stage (if applicable)?	
4.2 Does the packaging maximize the product's shelf-life?	
4.3 Does the packaging facilitate portioning?	
4.4 Is the packaging easy to handle or open?	
4.5 Is the packaging resealable?	
5. Optimize packaging for handling and shipping	
5.1 Have palettization and cube configuration been optimized?	
5.2 Has the amount of secondary packaging been reduced?	
5.3 Has the amount of tertiary packaging been reduced?	

Recyclability requirements

Preferred practices	Yes
1. Opt for single-material	
2. Opt for packaging composed of several easily separable materials	
3. Opt for packaging compliant with recycling practices in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick (no collection, sorting and recycling issues)	
4. Clearly identify the nature of the different materials used in the packaging	
4.1 Does each plastic have the identified resin symbol in a triangle, and not in a mobius?	
4.2 Is each material well identified?	
5. Opt for local production of the packaging (when possible)	

What about plastic?

Preferred practices	Yes
1. The package is made of PET, HDPE, LDPE, LLDPE or PP	
2. The package is transparent or light-coloured	
3. The package contains no degradable additives	
4. The label is made of the same material as the container	
5. The closure is made of the same material as the container	
6. Removable caps are made of HDPE or PP	
7. Non-removable elements are made of the same material as the packaging	
8. When authorized by law, the recycled content is more than 25%	

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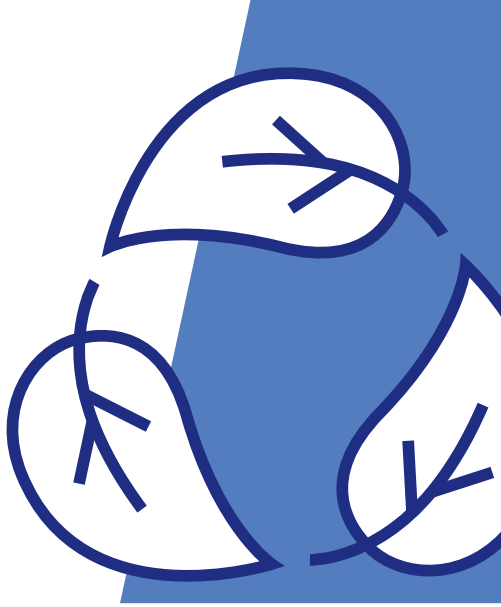
Composting

To be compostable, packaging must follow these rules:

1. It must decompose and become indistinguishable in the final compost. After three months, the mass of residue must be less than 10% of the initial mass.
2. It must be biodegradable, i.e. the compostable material must have the capacity to convert into CO_2 through the action of microorganisms (90% of the biodegradation must occur within 6 months).
3. It must not have any negative effects on the composting process.
4. The heavy metal content must be lower than prescribed maximum values and must not have any negative effect on the final compost.

Warning

- Never accept biodegradable additives: they disrupt recycling processes and do not improve compostability.
- Avoid so-called oxo-degradable plastics, because they lead to the formation of microplastics.
- Avoid putting plastic packaging in your household compost.



Did you know?

The use of compostable plastic packaging should be avoided as it is usually rejected at municipal composting or biomethanization facilities (not all materials currently used to create compostable plastic packaging are designed to degrade under the conditions found in these facilities). Also, if this type of packaging ends up in the recycling bin, it can contaminate the recycling process or simply end up in a landfill.

Source: AGECO

External resources

Partner	Contact / address	Mission statement	Sustainability-related products and services
Sustainable STRAT	**Marina Pietrosel** SustainableStrat Inc. Consulting services in Quebec, Ontario, other provinces and the United States 3870 rue de la Goudrelle, Saint-Lazare, Quebec, J7T 2N1 mpietrosel@sustainablestrat.com 450-458-1599 / 514-898-1599	• Knowledge / determination / reliability / honesty ; • Benefit from vast expertise for all your sustainability projects, particularly those concerning waste materials. Find tangible, reliable and viable solutions using technology, strategy, communications and policy actions.	• Turnkey consulting services: guidance, development and support for all your sustainability projects; • Ecodesign, systems optimization, processes and packaging, legislation, regulation, performance measurement, strategic communication, re-use of resources, circular economy; • Analysis of the process is based on the logical principles of the value chain: the design of an environmentally responsible package or product must consider the entire reclamation and recycling system. This process guarantees a positive outcome at the end of the useful life of a container, package or product. As a result, the process moderates, stabilizes and optimizes legal and regulatory compliance and extended producer responsibility (EPR). This obligation comprises reimbursement of collection costs, and the sorting and processing of containers, packaging, printed matter and other products subject to environmental quality laws in Quebec and across Canada.
PACKAGING CONSORTIUM pac	**Andrea May** PAC Packaging Consortium Toronto, Ontario amay@pac.ca 416-995-1927 http://www.pac.ca/Programs/Next/	• A world without packaging waste.	• PAC Next, PAC Food.
ITEGA Institut de technologie des emballages et du génie alimentaire Collège de Maisonneuve	**Zoraide Bentellis** ITEGA Montreal, Quebec zbentellis@cmaisonneuve.qc.ca 514-255-4444, ext. 6223 www.itega.ca	• ITEGA works with companies on their packaging and food-engineering related innovation processes through applied research, technical support and technology watch.	• Development and optimization of packaging (ecodesign) ; • R&D on new materials and packaging solutions; • R&D on active packaging designed to reduce food waste; • Performance testing of packaging materials; • Technology transfer in processes and packaging, to improve the shelf life of foods.

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Partner	Contact / address	Mission statement	Sustainability-related products and services
GROUPE AGÉCO	**Julie-Anne Chayer** Vice-president, Corporate responsibility department Groupe AGECO Montreal and Quebec City julie-anne.chayer@groupeageco.ca 514-439-9724, ext. 239 www.groupeageco.ca	• Groupe AGÉCO offers consulting and custom projects to help you navigate the new business environment that requires a balance between performance, quality and social acceptability.	• Ecodesign, packaging optimization, environmental fees consulting, responsible sourcing, consulting on corporate social responsibility strategy, carbon budget, GHG targets, CSR report, life-cycle analysis, green buildings, total cost of ownership, environmental certification.
Éco Entreprises Québec	**Geneviève Dionne** Director, eco-design and circular economy Éco Entreprises Québec 1600 René-Lévesque Blvd. West, Montreal, Quebec, H3B 1P9 service@eeq.ca 514-987-1491, ext. 222 www.eeq.ca	• Éco Entreprises Québec is a private non-profit corporation working toward the establishment of a circular economy for recyclable materials by supporting the development of environmentally responsible, collaborative and innovative solutions. Focusing on sustainable development and extended producer responsibility, the organization represents companies that sell containers, packaging and printed materials while fulfilling their obligation to fund selective collection in Quebec. Over the last 15 years, nearly $1B has been invested in Quebec in this way. For more information, visit eeq.ca.	• Represent companies required to pay their share of net costs for efficient and effective selective collection programs, from a sustainability perspective. • Guide companies in the development of eco-responsible packaging, including: – Customized guidance under certain conditions, including training for companies seeking to initiate a process for designing eco-responsible packaging. – With the OptimEco.ca portal, which also offers a large set of tools for helping companies implement an eco-design process, including concrete examples of eco-design by companies in a variety of industries, as well as case studies. • Encourage efforts to increase the use of reclaimed materials, in partnership with municipalities and other industry partners, through selective collection at the lowest possible cost. • Help the industry find market opportunities and improve sorting technologies.
PIGEON	**Peter Pigeon** Director of operations Pigeon Brands 480 Saint-Laurent Blvd., 7th floor, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 3Y7 ppigeon@pigeonbrands.com 514-871-1322, ext. 48 www.pigeonbrands.com	• Pigeon is a brand strategy and design agency, and a packaging design consulting firm; • Our services include environmentally responsible packaging solutions to help our clients minimize their environmental footprint; • Our goal is to offer our clients sustainable solutions, whether iterative or optimized; • Our mission is to develop solutions for our clients that are well designed, structural and that use packaging materials with a truly circular life cycle.	• Evaluate the needs and expectations of our clients at the start of each project. • Provide a comprehensive vision and concrete ideas for reducing the packaging footprint at each step in the process, from strategy to design to production. • Provide effective counsel to help our clients avoid greenwashing. • Work closely with our packaging scientists, suppliers and buyers to meet marketing requirements. • Recommend materials with optimal recycled-material content. • Work to design packages that can be easily recycled with existing infrastructure, avoiding the "product life cycle" scenario.

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