Sustainable FIBC Virtual Conference 2022

– Questions & Answers –

EPR, Taxes and Incentives

What is the real definition of Single-use Plastic for B2B?

Single-use plastics are any plastic that are only used one time. The EU Single use plastic directive identifies a number of B2C plastic products that can easily be replaced and are therefore banned, however these do not include B2B products.

During the session about the changing financial landscape, a contribution of 0.80€/kg of plastic was mentioned. Does this refer to kg of plastic produced, sold or used per country?

The EU Packaging Levy was published in 2020 and covers all EU member states. Each EU member state must contribute €0.80/kg (=€800/Mt) for each kilogramme of plastic packaging waste that is not recycled at end of life. Each EU Member State can decide how to finance this contribution, either from the national budget or by creating new taxes or fee systems such as a plastic tax, a producer responsibility scheme, or other measures.

When an FIBC producer claims to use post-consumer material in plastic packaging, how can this be controlled and guaranteed?

The presence of recycled material in a product should be rigorously proven using appropriate documentation. LC Packaging has traceability documentation in place to show the input material for any given end-product and is working on external certification.

In our view this is critical as there is a large potential for incorrect labelling. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between post-industrial waste, which was already being recycled, and the use of post-consumer recyclate.

What is, or will be, the plastic tax in France?

To date there is no indication of a plastic tax in France. However, the AJEC law does specify that industrial packaging must have a producer responsibility scheme in place by the 1 January 2025. We expect this to be similar to the scheme operated in the agricultural sector by Adivalor. For more detailed information on this, please reach out to the LC France team who has researched this topic.

FIBC Reuse

If we want to switch to reusable FIBCs, do we need to increase the safety factor and thickness of our current product to ensure this is possible?

Yes, according to the ISO standard, FIBCs intended for reuse must be certified 6:1. This may require a slight increase in the weight of the fabric and loops. However, this increase in material use is more than compensated by the multiple reuse of the FIBC.

Is the WorldBag programme suitable for food contact FIBCs?

We are committed to deliver high quality food safe and pharma clean packaging, also when reusing your FIBCs. Therefore, dry-cleaning for food contact materials is something that needs to be assessed case by case. Additionally, the wet-washing technology presented during our sustainability event is very suitable for food contact packaging. Please contact us at WorldBag to discuss the possibilities.

What are the possibilities of re-using FIBCs used in extreme hygiene production environments, such as bags used for milk powder?

Only wet-washing is suitable for such sensitive product applications.

It is very difficult to get customers to adhere to the FIBC reuse solution. What is your strategy to strengthen the promotion of the reuse of FIBCs?

Experience from other sectors such as pallets and IBCs show that it is possible to make this transition in an industry. And we have momentum: the financial landscape changes and as a result, the commercial probability of business cases does too. It is our ambition, to simplify processes for customers and end users as much as possible. To make it as simple as possible for the end-user of the bags to return the FIBCs, we can support with training, pallets for storing the used FIBCs, and regular collection. We are continuously working on further improvements.

I assume Reusing FIBCs is also not possible for Food Clean use. Do you offer the possibility of collecting our used FIBCs and distribute them to other companies that do not require Food Clean?

In general, dependent from the application and product in scope, dry cleaning or the wet-washing technology presented during our sustainability event are suitable for food contact materials. In some cases, we can also collect used FIBCs for use in other sectors, but this depends on the design of the bag and the product that was packaged. For more information, please contact us at WorldBag.

When FIBCs are reused, they have to be cleaned in a way. What is the impact of the cleaning material on the environment? And what happens with the waste water? Because it is good to reuse a big bag, but when the environment will suffer because of the chemical cleaning process, I don't think it is worth it.

We operate two cleaning technologies: dry-cleaning and wet-cleaning (wet-washing). Dry-cleaning uses energy (for air pumps, suction etc.), and wet-washing uses energy and water.

For wet-washing we only wash organic products, no chemicals, and use approved cleaning agents. The waste water can therefore be returned to the municipal waste water system.

LC Packaging has conducted a carbon footprint analysis, performed by an external party. This assessment confirms that reusing FIBCs has a far lower carbon footprint as the footprint of producing new plastic is very high. We are happy to share the results of this assessment if you. Don't hesitate to contact us directly at LC Packaging International or your local office.

When it comes to the FIBC washing solution, how are the strength and 'safe working load' affected after washing?

We have conducted extensive tests on this, as safety is a key concern. To assess this, we have performed safety tests following the standard EN 21898 – test criteria for reusable FIBCs. The results show that the strength and safe working load of the FIBC stays the same.

Reuse – IBC industry example

Is Schuetz GmbH collecting only their own sold IBC's or do they allow 3rd party IBC's as well?

We have a clear claim: we want to be EASY FOR ALL. We have expanded our system several years ago and opened it up to packaging of other established IBC manufacturers. The returned containers from other manufacturers are also reprocessed. The used inner bottle is replaced with a new SCHÜTZ universal inner bottle - A special development, designed for an optimum fit. All IBCs get a new universal label plate. The result is our RECONTAINER, a reconditioned IBC of SCHÜTZ with the highest SCHÜTZ quality standards,

My company already buys IBCs from Schuetz GmbH. How can we convert the one way model to the collection and reconditioning? What is the impact on costs?

The SCHÜTZ TICKET SERVICE system is open to any sender of IBCs. With the SCHÜTZ TICKET SERVICE, we have created an open loop system that has been helping to keep the costs of industrial packaging and its ecological footprint low for decades. A general statement on the effects on costs can hardly be made due to the many parameters that have to be taken into account. However, you are welcome to contact us directly and we will examine all further possibilities together.

Recycled Content

During the Conference, it was stated that PIR material in FIBC production is counted as recycled material in the UK, but also that there was no source of food grade recycled material. Can you confirm if PIR material is already allowed / used for food grade bags? I assume that the volumes are too low to make any contribution towards a 30% PCR content for our bags, but it would be great to have a better understanding if we have questions coming later on.

In general PIR cannot be considered food grade material as PIR (Post Industrial Recyclate) could be coming from any industry with unknown contamination. The specific case of in-house process waste from our own production can also be counted as recycled material for the purposes of the UK Plastic Packaging Tax, however even though it is not contaminated, it remains a recycled material and therefore currently not allowed for food grade production.

In-house recyclate is limited in quantity and will not be enough to produce 30% rPP FIBCs in the future. Therefore, LC Packaging is already working with post-consumer recyclate (PCR).

In the future we expect there to be developments that will allow closed controlled loop recycled material to be used in food contact applications. For more information about this, please reach out directly to our Circular Economy Lead, Tom Harrison-Prentice at LC Packaging.

Is recycled food grade PP available in the right volumes already to support the 30% recycled content in the FIBCs?

There is currently NO food grade rPP available according to EFSA regulations. However, In the future we expect there to be developments that will allow closed controlled loop recycled material to be used in food contact applications. For more information about this, please reach out directly to our Circular Economy Lead, Tom Harrison-Prentice at LC Packaging.

For non-food grade applications we are scaling up the volumes, but this requires that FIBCs are returned for recycling. Customers who collaborate on this will be priority for receiving FIBCs with recycled content in the future.

Are your big bags with rPP content suitable for food contact?

No, recycled material is currently not allowed for direct food contact packaging. However, in the future we expect there to be developments that will allow closed controlled loop recycled material to be used in food contact applications. For more information about this, please reach out directly to our Circular Economy Lead, Tom Harrison-Prentice at LC Packaging.

What about FIBCs produced out of recycled PET? Is LC Packaging working on that as well?

LC Packaging has extensively researched FIBCs produced from recycled PET, including visiting producers and conducting lab tests.

The PET flakes used for this process are taken from the bottle industry where they could be reused over and over again to make new bottles. To make FIBCs with this PET, LDPE must be added. This means they can never be recycled back into a bottle. So, this technology is taking a material that is recycled to create a single-use product that cannot be recycled. This is not a sustainable solution. Therefore, we do not yet believe this is a sustainable solution and focus our efforts on recycled PP.