Request for Information (RFI) on Upcoming Requirements on Packaging in Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) Procurement

**1.0 Context**

The Government of Canada is committed to being a global leader in reducing plastic waste and pollution. Over the past year, Canada has championed an international [Ocean Plastics Charter](https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/international-commitments/ocean-plastics-charter.html); worked with provinces and territories to launch a [Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste](https://www.ccme.ca/en/current_priorities/waste/waste/strategy-on-zero-plastic-waste.html) and accompanying [Phase 1 Action Plan](https://www.ccme.ca/files/Resources/waste/plastics/1289_CCME%20Canada-wide%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Zero%20Plastic%20Waste_EN_June%2027-19.pdf); and [announced major federal actions](https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2019/06/10/government-canada-taking-action-reduce-plastic-pollution), such as funding for Canadian plastics innovation and a commitment to ban single-use plastics that cause harm as early as 2021 – where supported by evidence and warranted.

The Government’s vision of “zero plastic waste” is an ambitious one, where all plastics – including packaging, single-use products and durable goods – are kept in the economy and out of landfills and the environment.

In 2018, the Government of Canada announced the following commitments as part of its *Actions on plastic waste in federal operations*:

* To divert at least 75% of plastic waste from federal operations by 2030,
* To eliminate the unnecessary use of single-use plastics in government operations, meetings and events, and
* To promote the purchase of sustainable plastic products.

To support these commitments, the Government of Canada is looking closely at all types of procurements with a view to promoting **sustainable** plastic and moving towards procuring only sustainable packaging (that is, reusable, recyclable or compostable). This covers all goods that come in packaging, and all Government of Canada purchases of packaging unless exempted.

**2.0 Sustainable packaging definitions**

This section provides ***working*** definitions for the terms **reusable**, **recyclable** and **compostable** – all key characteristics associated with **sustainable packaging**. The Government of Canada will be developing these definitions as part of its work with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) on the *Canada-wide Zero Plastic Waste Strategy* and Action Plan, which will facilitate the standardisation and harmonisation of approaches across jurisdictions.

2.1 Reusable

Capable of being used multiple times for the same purpose with minimal, if any, processing.

Reuse of packaging

Operation by which packaging is refilled or used for the same purpose for which it was conceived, with or without the support of auxiliary products present on the market, enabling the packaging to be refilled.

(Source: EMF New Plastics Economy Global Commitment; ISO 18603:2013, Packaging and the environment - Reuse, modified)

Reusable packaging

Packaging which has been designed to accomplish or proves its ability to accomplish a minimum number of trips or rotations in a system for reuse.

(Source: Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) New Plastics Economy Global Commitment; ISO 18603:2013 - Packaging and the environment - Reuse, modified)

2.2 Recyclable

Capable of being diverted from the waste stream through available processes and programmes and can be collected, processed and returned to use in the form of raw materials or products. (Source CAN/CSA-ISO 14021, Clause 7.7.1)

Recyclable packaging

A packaging or packaging component is recyclable if its successful post-consumer collection, sorting, and recycling is proven to work in practice and at scale. This means that there is an existing (collection, sorting and recycling) system in place that actually recycles the packaging and that covers significant and relevant geographical areas as measured by population size. (Source: adapted from the EMF New Plastics Economy Global Commitment)

2.3 Compostable

A characteristic of a product, packaging or associated component that allows it to biodegrade, generating a relatively homogeneous and stable humus-like substance.

NOTE: for packaging to be considered compostable it must be certified against the current standards (CAN/BNQ 0017-08 or ASTM D6400); it should also be proven that the certified packaging can be composted in practice and at scale, meaning that there is an existing (collection, sorting and recycling) system in place that actually composts the packaging and that covers significant and relevant geographical areas as measured by population size.

**3.0 Standard language**

The Government of Canada is exploring options to develop standard language related to packaging for inclusion in most Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) procurement instruments. Accessibility, health, national safety and security needs will be taken into consideration in the development of this standard language.

Through this Request for Information (RFI), PSPC and its partner departments are informing stakeholders, including industry and suppliers, of the Government of Canada’s intention to move towards and request the most sustainable material in the packaging of products that we buy.

PSPC is also seeking to understand suppliers’ readiness for any sustainable packaging requirements, and the challenges and the impacts of meeting those requirements in various categories of goods.

**4.0 Participation**

Below you will find 16 questions that we request you consider and respond to by November 15, 2019. This RFI will officially close as of that date, however, we welcome any information that you wish to share after this date. Please send responses to:

[TPSGC.PAPiloteSocioEconomique-APSocioEconomicPilot.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:TPSGC.PAPiloteSocioEconomique-APSocioEconomicPilot.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)

**5.0 RFI Questions**

***Note: If you prefer to answer in a table format, it is available in Annex B.***

### **Question 1: Sustainable packaging definition - your suggestions**

### Do you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns with the Government of Canada’s proposed sustainable packaging working definitions outlined in section 2.0 above?

**Question 2: Goods**

Please indicate which category(ies) of goods packaging you wish to comment on. If you offer a wide range of goods you may choose to answer for the five best selling goods to the Government of Canada. Please refer to Appendix A to select the applicable tangible good category(ies) based on the Good and Services Identification Number (GSIN).

### **Question 3: Sustainable packaging alternatives**

Do you use sustainable packaging as defined in section 2.0 above? If yes, please describe the sustainable materials component and the associated characteristic(s) offered as defined in section 2.0.

### **Question 4: Certified sustainable packaging**

Is your sustainable packaging certified by a third party?

If yes, please provide link to the certification info.

If not, do you have suggestions on how the Government of Canada should verify and assess the environmental characteristics of sustainable packaging?

### **Question 5: Post-consumer recycled content in packaging**

Is post-consumer recycled content included in your sustainable packaging?

If yes, from what source, what is the percentage of recycled content included and is it certified by a third party?

If not, what is preventing your company from including recycled material in the packaging used?

**Question 6: Take-back packaging program**

Do you take-back and/or reuse packaging such as durable delivery totes instead of cardboard boxes?

If yes, please describe your take-back program and the material used.

If not, what is preventing your company from taking-back packaging and/or reusing it?

### **Question 7: Barriers to using sustainable packaging**

If you do not use sustainable packaging, what are the barriers that prevent your business from doing so?

Please state the actual material component you are using and the reason(s) why you selected this material.

### **Question 8: Sustainable packaging usage**

If the Government of Canada requires that all packaging material be 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable (as defined above), what would be the impact on your product/business and desire to do business with the Government of Canada?

### **Question 9: Minimum recycled content**

Currently, the Government of Canada has a minimum recycled content requirement (30%) for the procurement of paper. Other governments have signalled that they will start to include minimum recycled content requirements for packaging materials. In line with our Ocean Plastics Charter commitments, the Government of Canada is moving towards including minimum recycled content requirements for all packaging materials. What would the impact be on your product/business and on your desire to do business with the Government of Canada?

**Question 10: Accessibility, health, security and safety exemptions**

The Government of Canada intends to allow exemptions for accessibility, health, security or safety reasons. If applicable, please describe the exemption or category of exemption that your product would meet. Please state the product category/(ies) using appendix A and provide the exemption rationale.

**Question 11: Hard to recycle material**

A majority of packaging materials are capable of being recycled, and many items will feature the Mobius loop as an indicator of recyclability. This symbol, however, does not indicate that the object will be accepted in all recycling collection systems in Canada. The Government of Canada seeks to accept only sustainable packaging material that is being recycled widely in Canada. Can you provide evidence that your packaging is being recycled in Canada? What would be the impact on your product/business and desire to do business with the Government of Canada if it only accepted packaging that was widely recycled in Canada?

**Question 12: Sustainable packaging products**

The Government of Canada intends to use the concepts and definitions included in this RFI to integrate criteria for the purchase of packaging and single-use products (e.g., requiring that all packaging purchased contain a minimum percentage of recycled content). Do you have any comments, suggestions or feedback on this initiative?

### **Question 13: Small or Medium Enterprise (SME)**

Is your business considered a small or medium enterprise (SME)? SMEs are defined as enterprises with less than 500 employees.

### **Question 14: Place of business**

Is your company’s business operation primarily based in Canada?

### **Question 15: Doing business with the Government of Canada**

Have you ever done business with the Government of Canada?

If not, would you consider doing business with the Government of Canada in the future?

**Question 16: Additional Comments**

Do you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on sustainable packaging that you would like to share?

The Government of Canada want to thank you in advance for your participation!

Annex A

List of applicable tangible Good Identification Number (GSIN) categories

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| GSIN | Description |
| N10 | Weapon and Ammunition |
| N12 | Fire Control Systems |
| N15 | Fixed and Rotary Winged Aircraft |
| N16 | Aircraft Accessories and Components |
| N17 | Aircraft Landing and Ground Handling Equipme |
| N19 | Ships, Small Craft, Pontoons & Floating Dock |
| N20 | Ship and Marine Equipment |
| N23 | Ground Effect Vehicles, Motor Vehicles, Trai |
| N24 | Tractors |
| N25 | Vehicular Components Miscellaneous |
| N26 | Tires and Tubes |
| N28 | Engines, Turbines and Components |
| N29 | Engine Accessories Non-Aircraft |
| N34 | Machine Tools, Furnaces, Electric, Gas, Oil, |
| N36 | Photocopying, Printing and Food Products Equ |
| N37 | Lawn, Gardening and Agricultural Equipment |
| N38 | Truck and Tractor Equipment |
| N39 | Material Handling Equipment |
| N41 | Refrigeration, Air Conditioning and Air Circ |
| N42 | Firefighting Rescue and Safety Equipment |
| N43 | Compressors and Pumps |
| N44 | Air Purification Equipment |
| N45 | Plumbing, Heating and Sanitation Equipment |
| N46 | Water Purification and Sewage Treatment Equi |
| N47 | Pipe, Tubing, Hose, Fittings |
| N51 | Hand Tools |
| N53 | Hardware (Nuts, Bolts, Etc.) and Abrasives |
| N54 | Prefabricated Structures, Bridges, Storage T |
| N55 | Lumber and Related Materials |
| N56 | Construction and Building Materials |
| N58 | Telecommunications Equipment and Accessories |
| N59 | Electrical and Electronic Equipment Componen |
| N61 | Electric Wire, and Power and Distribution Eq |
| N62 | Lighting Fixtures and Lamps |
| N63 | Alarm and Signal Systems |
| N65 | Medical Kits, Equipment, Drugs and Supplies |
| N66 | Instruments and Laboratory Equipment |
| N67 | Photographic Equipment |
| N68 | Chemicals, Chemical Products and Gases |
| N69 | Training Aids and Devices |
| N70 | IT Equipment, Software, Supplies and Support |
| N71 | Office Furniture |
| N72 | Household and Commercial Furnishings and App |
| N73 | Food Preparation and Serving Equipment |
| N74 | Office Machines, Text Processing Systems and |
| N75 | Office Supplies and Devices |
| N78 | Recreational and Athletic Equipment |
| N79 | Cleaning Equipment and Supplies |
| N80 | Paints, Varnishes, Adhesives and Related Pro |
| N81 | Containers, Packaging and Packing Supplies |
| N83 | Textiles, Leather, Furs, Apparel, Shoes, Ten |
| N84 | Clothing, Accessories and Insignia |
| N85 | Personal Toiletry Articles |
| N87 | Seeds, Sod, and Nursery Stock |
| N88 | Live Animals |
| N89 | Food and Beverages |
| N91 | Fuels, Lubricants, Oils and Waxes |
| N93 | Non-Metallic Fabricated Materials such as Pa |
| N95 | Non-Ferrous Materials Products. |
| N99 | Miscellaneous |

Annex B

Questions in a table format

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question Number** | **Title** | **Question** | **Answer** |
| 1 | **Sustainable packaging definition - your suggestions** | Do you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns with the Government of Canada’s proposed sustainable packaging working definitions outlined in section 2.0 above? |  |
| 2 | **Goods** | Please indicate which category(ies) of goods packaging you wish to comment on. If you offer a wide range of goods you may choose to answer for the five best selling goods to the Government of Canada. Please refer to Appendix A to select the applicable tangible good category(ies) based on the Good and Services Identification Number (GSIN). |  |
| 3 | **Sustainable packaging alternatives** | Do you use sustainable packaging as defined in section 2.0 above? If yes, please describe the sustainable materials component and the associated characteristic(s) offered as defined in section 2.0. |  |
| 4 | **Certified sustainable packaging** | Is your sustainable packaging certified by a third party?  If yes, please provide link to the certification info.  If not, do you have suggestions on how the Government of Canada should verify and assess the environmental characteristics of sustainable packaging? |  |
| 5 | **Post-consumer recycled content in packaging** | Is post-consumer recycled content included in your sustainable packaging?  If yes, from what source, what is the percentage of recycled content included and is it certified by a third party?  If not, what is preventing your company from including recycled material in the packaging used? |  |
| 6 | **Take-back packaging program** | Do you take-back and/or reuse packaging such as durable delivery totes instead of cardboard boxes?  If yes, please describe your take-back program and the material used.  If not, what is preventing your company from taking-back packaging and/or reusing it? |  |
| 7 | **Barriers to using sustainable packaging** | If you do not use sustainable packaging, what are the barriers that prevent your business from doing so?  Please state the actual material component you are using and the reason(s) why you selected this material. |  |
| 8 | **Sustainable packaging usage** | If the Government of Canada requires that all packaging material be 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable (as defined above), what would be the impact on your product/business and desire to do business with the Government of Canada? |  |
| 9 | **Minimum recycled content** | Currently, the Government of Canada has a minimum recycled content requirement (30%) for the procurement of paper. Other governments have signalled that they will start to include minimum recycled content requirements for packaging materials. In line with our Ocean Plastics Charter commitments, the Government of Canada is moving towards including minimum recycled content requirements for all packaging materials. What would the impact be on your product/business and on your desire to do business with the Government of Canada? |  |
| 10 | **Accessibility, health, security and safety exemptions** | The Government of Canada intends to allow exemptions for accessibility, health, security or safety reasons. If applicable, please describe the exemption or category of exemption that your product would meet. Please state the product category/(ies) using appendix A and provide the exemption rationale. |  |
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| 12 | **Sustainable packaging products** | The Government of Canada intends to use the concepts and definitions included in this RFI to integrate criteria for the purchase of packaging and single-use products (e.g., requiring that all packaging purchased contain a minimum percentage of recycled content). Do you have any comments, suggestions or feedback on this initiative? |  |
| 13 | **Small or Medium Enterprise (SME)** | Is your business considered a small or medium enterprise (SME)? SMEs are defined as enterprises with less than 500 employees. |  |
| 14 | **Place of business** | Is your company’s business operation primarily based in Canada? |  |
| 15 | **Doing business with the Government of Canada** | Have you ever done business with the Government of Canada?  If not, would you consider doing business with the Government of Canada in the future? |  |
| 16 | **Additional Comments** | Do you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on sustainable packaging that you would like to share? |  |

The Government of Canada want to thank you in advance for your participation!