

achieving

SUSTAINABILITY

in the home entertainment industry

Produced by BASE & BPI



BRITISH ASSOCIATION for SCREEN ENTERTAINMENT



SUSTAINABILITY – A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Wasteful use of resources is a major problem and it is getting worse. There has been an intensification in the drive towards sustainable consumption and production since world leaders adopted the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.

(www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/12.pdf)

The focus on sustainability in the home entertainment industry is on its use of plastics, paper and cardboard in products and packaging. Paper and cardboard are very widely recycled and can be sourced sustainably. Plastics are more problematic. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the appeal to consumers of physical home entertainment products. Whenever possible, all reasonable efforts should be made to ensure consumers' aspirations to own, collect or gift a product are not diminished.

PLASTIC

Without action, plastic consumption is predicted to increase fourfold to 1,600 million tonnes a year by 2050. (OECD, Sept 2018). In the UK, public reaction to Sir David Attenborough's *Blue Planet II* series about plastic waste in the ocean has changed consumer attitudes towards profligate use of plastics, notably single use plastic, and increased calls for urgent action.

Nevertheless, plastics are remarkable materials and essential for many products, including in the games, video and music home entertainment industries.

A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The imperative for industries using plastics (including home entertainment), is to minimise use whenever possible, use recycled materials in production and ensure products can be recycled at the end of their life. This 'circular economy', sometimes called a 'closed loop economy' will be central in making industries sustainable.

REGULATION

The UK guidelines and regulations which are aligned to international standards aim to:

- ▶ reduce plastic consumption
- ▶ achieve better use of recycled plastics in manufacturing
- ▶ achieve smarter product design

The UK Government aims to achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. For plastics its Resources and Waste Strategy (HMG, Dec 2018) adopts the 'polluter pays' principle, making businesses responsible for the costs of recycling. From April 2022 businesses using plastic packaging will be taxed unless the plastic contains at least 30% recycled content. This tax will partly fund improvements, including greater consistency, in kerbside and business recycling collections across the UK.

BEST PRACTICE

The leading agency behind the adoption of a circular economy, WRAP – the Waste and Resources Action Programme – has a partnership with plastics producers, users and recyclers. The UK Plastics Pact is defining best practice and has national milestones for a circular economy transformation.

PLASTIC POLLUTION

- ▶ Plastic comes from hydrocarbons. Making new plastics requires a lot of energy compared to using recycled sources.
- ▶ Too few plastics are recycled – and wasteful disposal harms the environment.
- ▶ Plastic decomposes slowly – ultimately plastic microbeads get into the food chain with damaging impacts.

The UK produces 5 million tonnes of plastic waste a year (House of Commons briefing paper 08515, May 2019).

- ▶ 70% of plastic is recovered in Britain. 31% of all plastics are recycled in the UK.

(Plastics Europe, 2019 *Plastics the Facts 2019*: www.plasticseurope.org/application/files/9715/7129/9584/FINAL_web_version_Plastics_the_facts2019_14102019.pdf).

High Consumer Expectations

94% of people in Britain:

- ▶ Want products to be redesigned to make recycling easier.
- ▶ Expect industry and retailers to reduce plastic packaging.

(*Changing the way we use plastics*, ISBN 978-92-79-77508-6).

KEY DATES:

2025

- ▶ Single Use Plastic will be banned.
- ▶ All plastic packaging should be recyclable, reusable or compostable.

2042

- ▶ All avoidable plastic eliminated.

2050

- ▶ Zero avoidable waste.
- ▶ Zero greenhouse gas emissions.

UK PLASTIC TARGETS FOR 2025 (WRAP)

Problematic and unnecessary Single Use Plastic to be eliminated

All plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable

70% of plastic packaging to be recycled, recovered or composted

30% of all plastic packaging to be from recycled sources

ISSUES FOR THE HOME ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

The home entertainment industry has been working collaboratively to understand its sustainability and environmental impacts, determine what improvements can be made and how they can be implemented. It is prioritising product packaging and the components used in consumer products.

Packaging:

From January 2020 a new binary recycling label is being introduced for packaging by the UK Plastics Pact to make it easy and clear to consumers what can be recycled. This can be used on all packaging materials. These logos are in line with ISO 14021 for self-declared environmental claims and match the UK's On Package Recycling Label (PREP UK) tool.



O-Ring

O-Rings or Slip Sleeves are commonly used in home entertainment products, especially to package special editions and box sets. They are single use packaging; however, they are frequently viewed by consumers as part of the disc presentation pack and are a collectable part of the product.

Sourcing: Cardboard used for O-Rings can be sourced from recycled or sustainable sources.

Recyclable: Cardboard is easily recycled, except for some some plasticised/composite materials, foils, plastic coatings, glosses or certain inks.

Labelling: The FSC (Forestry Stewardship Certification) logo can be displayed if your O-Rings come from an approved producer. Your designs must be approved by the FSC and you must include the supplier's unique number with the FSC logo. Using a UK Recycling logo will provide clear guidance to a consumer.



Shrink wrap

Shrink wrap is a single use material, used to prolong a product's lifecycle, reducing wastage considerably. Depending on distribution and how sales are fulfilled, cellophane or shrink wrap packaging may not be necessary (e.g. online sales may not need shrink wrapping). However, in certain cases, shrink wrap may be desirable and support other sustainable goals e.g. in protecting card-based packaging which is more environmentally sustainable.

Sourcing: Shrink wrap made partly from recycled plastic is available.

Recyclable: Both shrink wrap types can be easily recycled, but kerbside collection varies across the UK.

Labelling: The Mobius Symbol can be used on LDPE (shrink wrap) and Polypropylene (PP) Cello film.

Sleeves

Paper sleeves are easily produced using eco printing and paper stock. Paper is extensively recycled unless the design includes composite materials, foils or high gloss finishes.



Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE)



Polypropylene (PP)

Cases

Cases are essential to product design and are frequently valued as collectables. They are used throughout consumer ownership and are not considered to be packaging.

Sourcing: For games and visuals, cases are made from PP. This is a lightweight material which requires less CO₂ to manufacture than the alternative Polystyrene. Recycled PP is also available to manufacturers.

The Jewel Cases used by the music category for CDs are almost all made from Polystyrene (PS). However fully recyclable cardboard has been adopted for some products. In looking for alternatives mixed polymers should be avoided as they cannot be recycled.

Recyclable: PP cases can be easily recycled and re-used.

Labelling: UK Mobius recycling symbols can be used to identify the recyclability of cases. This also shows the amount of recycled content in the plastic used.

Discs

CD, DVD and Blu-ray discs are 100% recyclable. However, few kerbside collections accept them, making closed loop recycling very difficult. However, specialist facilities can recover aluminium and grind the plastic to reuse in polymers for injection moulding or in pothole-filling products.

Re-thinking packaging

Two recent releases demonstrate how rethinking packaging can achieve 100% recyclability.

In the video category BBC's *Seven Worlds One Planet* uses cases made up of 40% recycled plastic.

In the games category SEGA's *Football Manager 2020* removed plastic from their packaging in favour of a recycled cardboard case.

Both titles source their card and paper parts from sustainable sources and are printed with water and vegetable-based inks, far exceeding government targets.

GOALS

As an industry, home entertainment can meet and exceed government regulations and guidelines without impacting the consumer appeal of its categories. We aim to establish minimum standards for home entertainment but BASE also encourages members to optimise their sustainability whenever possible. Our recommendations represent best practise in retail and manufacture and are consistent with guidelines issued by WRAP and the UK Plastics Pact. These aspirations represent UK and EU circular economy targets.

KEY GOALS:

- **Design out obsolescence and wastage.** Members should adopt a 'circular economy' approach to their products. From design and manufacture to sales; consumer use and end-of-life disposal, members will minimise or eliminate the use of materials which cannot be recycled. Specifying recycled materials whenever possible in manufacturing, being smart with product design and making sure as many component parts as possible can be recycled at the end of their life. By adopting this 'closed loop economy' approach, members will be accounting for products' sustainability throughout their life cycle and minimising obsolescence and waste.
- **Single box colours.** It is recommended that the industry adopts a single colour for each visual format case. Committing to this universal approach will eliminate the need for stockpiling multiple case types.
- **Labelling.** It is recommended that the industry adheres to consistent and comprehensive labelling to provide

clear guidance for consumers about the sustainability and recyclability of product components. Use of the UK recycling info-labels and FSC labels will demonstrate the industry's participation in reducing waste. This can be achieved for O-Rings, shrink wrap, paper inserts and cases.

VISUAL GOALS:

- **Make all packaging recyclable.** All packaging for home entertainment products can be 100% recyclable. From O-Rings to inserts, shrink wrap and cases. Design can also reduce the amount of energy and materials used. It is recommended that product cases are made using a minimum of 40% recycled plastic and, in some products, cardboard. This recommendation is achievable and exceeds the UK Plastics Pact objective to have 30% of all plastics from recycled sources by 2025.
- **Single size boxes.** A reduction to the size of boxes for all visual formats to the current size of Blu-ray discs will deliver a reduction in use of materials, energy and logistics costs.