INC-2 Recommendations for negotiators from the Circular Economy for Flexible Packaging initiative

The UN plastics treaty offers **a significant opportunity** to **support and accelerate a circular economy** for necessary plastic **flexible packaging at a global scale**

Flexible packaging is necessary, recyclable and increasingly recycled

- Flexible packaging is used to protect essential products such as food, medicines and personal care products – and helps to make them available in a safe and affordable way
- Recyclable with mechanical infrastructure used commonly and at scale around the world

Legislation is needed to keep materials circulating in the economy and to…

- Set a level playing field so that companies investing in design-for-circularity are not put at a competitive disadvantage
- Ensure that the basic steps to achieve a circular economy (which will not be driven by market forces alone) are taken and sustainably funded

Recommendations for INC-2 negotiators and stakeholders

CEFLEX—The Circular Economy for Flexible Packaging initiative—is calling for the following elements from the UNEP Secretariat's 'options paper' to be taken forward for inclusion in the Treaty:

1. **Fostering design for circularity:** paragraphs **15(a), 15(b), 15(c)**

The Treaty should set harmonised, mandatory design-for-circularity criteria for flexible packaging and the Parties to the Treaty should be obliged to implement and enforce them. Packaging that is designed for circularity reduces the cost of recycling and provides secondary materials that can be used in new applications, thus incentivising collection, sorting and recycling. Therefore, we recommend that the Treaty should oblige Parties to adopt national legislation requiring economic operators to meet design-for-circularity criteria harmonised at the international level. Mandatory design-for-circularity criteria can set a level playing field and enable companies to invest in design for circularity.

2. **EPR and waste management:** paragraphs **14(b)(iv), 14(c)(i), 14(d)(i), 14(d)(iii), 14(d)(iii)(b), 24(e)(ii)**

The Treaty should oblige Parties to ensure that sustainably funded systems are set up for collection, sorting and recycling and require flexible packaging to be included in those systems from the outset. Only legally endorsed, well-funded systems for collection, sorting and recycling can coordinate a mechanism where all materials are captured, recycled, and used in a wide range of sustainable end markets independent of their full net cost and recycling targets – and each step in the value chain needs to collaboratively work with them to deliver the circular economy for all plastic packaging materials.

The **Circular Economy for Flexible Packaging (CEFLEX) initiative** is a collaboration of around 200 companies, associations and organisations representing the entire flexible packaging value chain. Together we are working to make consumer flexible packaging circular.

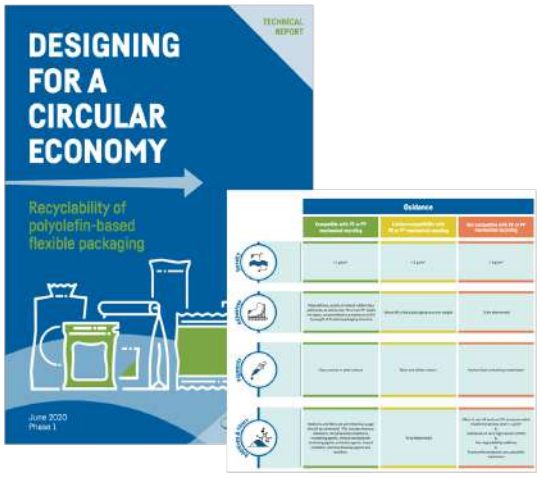
The cornerstone of the CEFLEX initiative is based on giving **all flexible packaging waste items a positive economic value that enables their collection and return to the economy**. This is key to preventing them leaking into the natural environment. We are committed to doing this by redesigning consumer flexible packaging and ensuring an effective but appropriate collection and recycling infrastructure. Our work shows that this low cost and material efficient packaging format can and is increasingly being cost-effectively collected and recycled to supply valuable new markets where it is used in place of virgin plastics again and again.

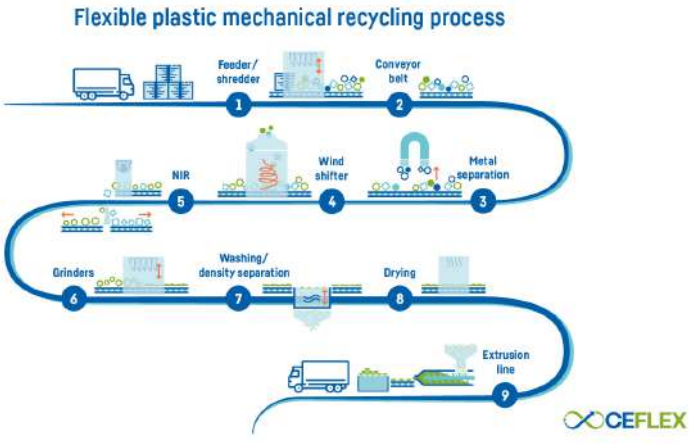
CEFLEX is a UNEP-accredited organisation able to attend the INC negotiations. We have endorsed the vision statement of the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty, convened by WWF and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and support The Consumer Goods Forum's recommendations for a Global Plastics Treaty.

Resources

CEFLEX has published Designing for a Circular Economy guidelines[1] for the mechanical recycling of polyolefin-based flexible packaging. These evidence-based guidelines could serve as a basis for globally harmonized flexible packaging design criteria set in a technical annex to the Treaty. They are currently being used as a reference document in the drafting of European design-for-recycling standards and are the result of a value chain consensus.

Flexible packaging is recyclable and recycled using mechanical infrastructure used commonly and at scale around the world.





[1] https://guidelines.ceflex.eu/