



# Plastics and packaging

Plastics and packaging waste can have significant adverse impacts on wildlife, people and ecosystems if not treated correctly. At RB, we are committed to minimising packaging waste through reduction at source, reuse and recycling to support a circular economy and a more sustainable future.

## Making progress

Aim	Status in 2018	Aim	Status in 2018
<b>25%</b> use of post-consumer recycled content in our plastic packaging by 2025	New commitment	<b>100%</b> of our plastic packaging will be reusable or recyclable by 2025	New commitment

## 1. Plastics and packaging

There are growing concerns relating to the build-up of plastic, particularly in oceans and lakes, and the potential for them to adversely impact ecosystems and human health.

## 2. Microplastics

There are concerns over the presence of microplastics in the environment due to their potential to harm marine organisms and to enter the food chain.

## 1. Plastics and packaging

In 2018, we have seen an unprecedented public focus on plastics in recognition of the damage to our natural world and public health. RB has long been committed to using materials such as plastics, paper and board wisely, reducing their use, eliminating and minimising waste where possible, and reusing and recycling where it is practical to do so. While plastic has proved itself one of the most versatile and useful products ever invented, its widespread use and particularly the countless pieces of plastic that end up in the ocean are causing enormous environmental damage. As a company, we reduce our packaging as much as possible, eliminating waste wherever we can through innovation. Our policies and programmes improve our performance and look beyond the activities under our direct control to the impacts of our products, including packaging, across the whole life cycle.

### Our plastics pledge

We are committed to creating a circular economy for plastics by collaborating across the entire plastics value chain to tackle plastic waste and partnering with other stakeholders to make progress. While we are stepping up our efforts to play our part in the responsible use of plastics, many of these initiatives are already well established at RB; what is new is our commitment to transparency.

In 2018, we reinforced our plastics commitments by publishing our approach and pledge for the responsible use of plastic. We have organised our efforts using the '4 R' approach – reduce, replace, reuse and recycle.

- We are committed to removing or reducing plastic packaging wherever possible and investing in research into alternative materials that can replace its use.
- Where we will continue to use plastic in packaging we will ensure that at least 25% of its content is recycled plastic by 2025, where possible or allowed by regulators.
- By 2025, 100% of our plastic packaging will also be recyclable or reusable, with best-in-class labelling to help consumers recycle effectively.



### CASE STUDY

## New trigger spray design wins UK Packaging Award

Since 2003, we have been working to make our trigger sprays more environmentally friendly, including the removal of all metal. This year, we rolled out a new platform for triggers which reduced the number of components, lightweighted the design and by making all components out of the same polymer, achieved a big win on recyclability. This will cut plastic use by 570 tonnes a year and by mid-2020, 90% of our triggers will be 100% recyclable where infrastructure exists. This design was recognised for its step-change in trigger designs with an award for best Rigid Plastic Pack at the UK Packaging Awards.

- We will work with peers and governments to enable products in our health portfolio to meet these targets without compromising their safety and efficacy for patients and consumers.

Responsible plastic use is not just about keeping it to a minimum and replacing its use where possible – it's about ensuring that we reuse and recycle as much as possible too. Plastic provides the best solution in terms of safety, cost and carbon footprint for many products but its post-sale life must be thoughtfully addressed. Where it can be replaced effectively, it should be.



[Click here to read our plastic position statement.](#)

# Plastics and packaging continued

## Finding solutions by working together


Alone, RB will never solve the global plastics challenge. The solution demands global coordination, with multi-lateral collaboration and joint ventures. This means working with third parties – be they not-for-profit organisations, governments, local authorities and communities, industry associations, waste management specialists, suppliers, retailers, consumers or our peers – and we will seek to forge effective relationships across all these groups.

We have therefore joined forces with a number of initiatives and organisations to help us develop new ways of reducing, replacing, reusing and recycling plastics.

At a global level, we have joined the New Plastics Economy initiative, led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a charity connecting business, government and academia to accelerate the transition to a circular economy. As part of this commitment, we are also a signatory to the initiative's Global Commitments, reaffirming our shared vision to:

- Take action to eliminate problematic and unnecessary plastic packaging by 2025, where possible and allowed by regulation.
- Take action to move from single use towards reuse models where relevant by 2025.
- 100% of packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025.
- Use 25% recycled content on average (by weight) across all plastic packaging by 2025.

We have also forged local partnerships, for example by joining WRAP's UK Plastics Pact, and are partnering with TerraCycle on a UK programme to recycle our flexible packaging. In the US we are also working with TerraCycle to collect, reprocess and repurpose plastic packaging that we will use in other ways. We are also participating in the Loop pilot, a 'first-of-its-kind' initiative designed to allow consumers to use products in refillable packaging which is collected, cleaned and reused.

 [Click here to read more about the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.](#)

 [Click here to read more about the UK Plastics Pact.](#)

 [Click here to read more about TerraCycle.](#)

## Implementing solutions

Where we use plastic, we strive to use it responsibly and encourage consumers to dispose of it with care. Putting this into practice means that in 2018 we developed action plans for our key brands and across our business to accelerate delivery of all our plastic commitments; these include:

- **Reduce:** Our action plans identify how we can reduce plastic in our packaging through re-design, making components smaller, replacing materials etc. Reducing the amount of plastic used in packaging, whilst maintaining technical performance, helps us deliver against a number of sustainability considerations in addition to plastics: it often goes hand-in-hand with a carbon reduction as well, reducing our products' impact on climate change. See one of our highlights below, on Scholl.

- **Replace:** We will continue to find replacement materials where suitable, investing in research into new innovative packaging formats and technologies such as plastic replacement foaming technology, working closely with our supply chain.
- **Reuse:** We are exploring further reuse models for our products. Many of our brands already sell products that can be reused through buying refills, e.g. Air Wick plug-ins, Mortein Instant Repellent and Dettol no-touch handwash devices. We are also actively involved in TerraCycle's Loop programme (see above) to explore what the future could look like in a closed-loop economy.
- **Recycled content:** We recognise that the market for post-consumer recycled content exists in the USA and Europe and are looking for opportunities to further increase our use of PCR in our packaging in 2019 and 2020. We are also working with suppliers in other geographies such as India and Latin America to improve supply of PCR.
- **Recyclability:** We are developing globally relevant systematic recyclability guidelines to inform marketing and R&D teams to ensure we design for recyclability. These take into account both what is needed to make individual components (e.g. the bottle, cap or trigger) recyclable, as well as considering the fully assembled product on shelf. We are also implementing labelling schemes, where they are available, to make sure we communicate how to best dispose of and recycle our products (more on this below).

For our medicines, self-care medical devices and food supplements, there are strict regulations on the use of plastics in packaging and manufacturing. We are collaborating closely with industry associations as well as our retail partners to address the required changes in regulatory and approval frameworks that will help us address plastics in this portion of our portfolio.





# Plastics and packaging continued

We recognise that it is not enough to design our packaging to be recyclable, we also need to communicate to everyone using our products how to safely and effectively dispose of the packaging once they have finished using our product. We are already working with leading labelling organisations in the US and UK, two of our biggest markets, to ensure we provide clear instructions and guidelines. In the US, Lysol was the first RB brand to put the How2Recycle on pack in 2018, with other RB brands following suit. In the UK, Air Wick is the first RB brand to display the OPRL label. We are reviewing additional labelling schemes as more become available in other countries.



## Developing product packaging

Our packaging policy helps us deliver on our commitments and action plans. We bring this to life by considering sustainability as part of our product development process: packaging quantities and types are assessed through RB's Sustainable Innovation App to help us make informed decisions.

For a product to be considered more sustainable in relation to packaging and count towards our percentage sustainable Net Revenue target it must use less packaging overall or use less virgin packaging material, resulting in significant savings (>10%) in the weight of packaging per dose (after subtracting any post-consumer recycled content). Other opportunities arise from making the packaging recyclable, reusable/returnable or including biodegradable or bio-based content.

Our main packaging materials are:

- Paper and board
- Plastics (mainly PP, HDPE and LDPE)
- Tin plate

For our paper and board, we ensure that this is either recycled paper and board or obtained from a sustainable and certified source; this is managed through our natural raw materials programme.

To support our new plastics commitments, we are updating the metrics captured in the App to allow us to evaluate packaging changes against these commitments. This allows us to quantify PCR content, recyclability and total plastic weight while being able to aggregate multiple packaging components. We have already incorporated these considerations into the review and sign-off process for new product development.

[Click here to read more about our approach to sustainable innovation.](#)

[Click here to read more about our natural raw materials programme.](#)



## CASE STUDY

### Packaging redesign for Velvet Smooth foot file

Scholl's foot files used to be sold in robust plastic clamshells which protected the product and provided good consumer visibility of the product. However, with RB's drive to reduce plastics in its packaging globally, we were looking for ways to reduce the amount of plastic used whilst still maintaining high levels of product protection and consumer appeal. RB's packaging team rose to the challenge. Velvet Smooth's redesigned blister pack achieves a 25% reduction in plastic (PET), delivering an impressive annual reduction of over 70 tonnes of plastic a year (based on previous sales volumes). RB's sustainability assessment tool shows that the new packaging achieves a carbon reduction of 24% compared to the original, whilst water usage remains comparable. This means the redesigned pack not only reduces plastics but also RB's contribution to climate change.

# Plastics and packaging continued

## 2. Microplastics

The presence of microplastics in the environment is a cause of increasing concern due to their potential for harm to marine organisms, and presence in the food chain, both because of possible human consumption and the potential for transport of persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

The definition of microplastics has been subject to ongoing discussion by regulators and within industry, but they are generally regarded as being water-insoluble, solid plastic particles below 5mm, where plastic is a synthetic polymeric substance that can be moulded, extruded or physically manipulated into various solid forms and that retains its final manufactured shape during use in its intended applications (i.e. use and disposal).

Microplastic particles in the environment arise from a range of sources, including primary microplastics that were historically used in cosmetics (e.g. microplastic beads for their abrasive properties), and secondary microplastics that are released from clothing or from the degradation of larger plastic materials (e.g. tyres, plastic bags and bottles) in the environment.

Recognising the potential negative impact that microplastics could have on the environment, RB has taken the following actions:

- We have been taking steps to stop using microplastic beads since 2016. An entire phase-out of polyethylene and polyurethane microbeads from our global portfolio was completed in the first half of 2018, removing these from our Clearasil range and Vitroclen oven cleaning products. In both instances, silica-based alternatives were selected, maintaining equal product performance.
- A number of microplastics that meet the EU ECHA definition have also been added to our Restricted Substances List (RSL) and a decision analysis tool developed to help guide our product developers on the selection of safe and effective alternatives. RB is collaborating with industry partners to minimise the release of microplastic particles into the environment, including the release of fibres from clothes washing, as well as supporting research initiatives on detection, risk-assessment and degradation of microplastic particles in the environment.
- RB actively participates in various industry associations to ensure action on key issues, and supports proportional use of regulatory measures, where required to safeguard human health and the environment.

 [Click here for more information on ingredients as part of our Product Stewardship programme.](#)