



The Nordic Swan Ecolabel promotes recyclability of plastic packaging



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2.7 Kg CO₂**

can be saved every time 1 kg plastic is being recycled instead of incinerated.

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel criteria for detergent and stain removers enables increased recyclability of packaging and can thereby achieve a positive impact on the greenhouse gas emissions.

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel sets requirements that rigid plastic packaging must contain at least 50% post-consumer recycled material – and to increase the recyclability both through promoting correct sorting (yield) and limiting contaminations (quality).

An external evaluation of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel criteria influence on recyclability of packaging for detergent and stain removers has been carried out. The study based on results of a review of relevant literature and design guidelines and 4 semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders.

The study concludes that Nordic Swan Ecolabel criteria are largely aligned with design guidelines for improved recycling. Design for recycling can help to ensure that packaging will be sorted correctly and that the quality is high enough for the material to be used in new products without too much downcycling.

By enabling a higher percentage of recycling, the Nordic Ecolabel promotes circular economy and can also help reduce climate impact as 1.5 to 2.7 kg CO₂ can be saved every time 1 kg plastic is being recycled instead of incinerated.

Huge potential for more recyclable plastic

Packaging design alone cannot ensure high circularity for packaging. Collection systems and sorting are also key aspects that influence the availability of recycled plastic. Therefore, the study cannot conclude on direct effects.

However, the study concludes that Nordic Swan Ecolabel requirements are in line with design guidelines for improved recycling and shows a huge potential: The average of collected plastic waste that is recyclable is only 44% based on the three Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark) where data was found. And under 20% of the collected plastic waste ends up being recycled into new products.

Some of the main conclusions from evaluation of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel requirements:

- Keeping to the three main polymer types PE, PP and PET, is important to ensure the best possible recycling.
- Keeping the plastic transparent, colorless or in light colors, by not allowing use of any color in PET and by restrictions on the use of carbon black in PE and PP, is important for the value of the recycle.
- Limiting the use of metals and silicone lowers the risk of contaminating the recycled plastic.

The study is carried out by Viegand and Maagøe and is based on the Nordic Swan Ecolabel criteria for detergents and stain removers, generation 8.

[Download the full study here.](#)