GUIDANCE NOTE
PACKAGING OF COMMODOITIES (NFI)
JULY 2022
GUIDANCE ON PACKAGING OF COMMODITIES (NFI)

INTRODUCTION
The following guidance note is intended for manufacturers & suppliers of standard specification non-food items; inspection agencies and HSOT procurement staff.
In recent years a number of new measures in relation to the packaging of goods have been embedded in HSOT/Palladium/FCDO procurement practices product specifications and purchase orders as well as in UK law. This brief overview is intended to draw attention to these measures and avoid the supply of products that are contrary to the goal of reducing the damaging environmental effects associated with humanitarian response activities.

Packaging & Single-Use Plastic
Suppliers are asked to actively share ideas and information in relation to methods that can be used to further reduce plastic in FCDO catalogue NFIs. In particular the following items retain an ongoing element of single-use plastic in packaging:

- Shelter Kit
- Plastic sheeting
- Blanket
- Sleeping Mat
- Hygiene Kit
- Water Purification Cube

Reduction & Replacement
As per product packaging specifications the following items should be supplied free from single use plastic packaging.

- Solar Light
- Solar Lantern
- Kitchen Set
- Family Tent
- Fixing Kit
- Bucket

Suppliers of these items must pay particular attention to ensure that the packaging for these products is consistent with the claim of being “free from single use plastic packaging.”
As these items are supplied and proven to be free of single use plastic packaging while retaining product quality, HSOT will require that standardised wording or symbology is applied to products which meet the Zero Plastic Packing (ZPP) requirement.
This means that the following should not form part of the packaging for these items

- Plastic Bags
- Laminated cardboard
- Bubble wrap
- Degradable/compostable Plastics
- Plastic cable ties
- Non ecological inks
- Acrylic Packing Tape
- Any single use plastic packaging

The following items have been identified as potential replacements for these items

- Cloth or other non-polymer bio-degradable bags (i.e., fabric)
- Paper bubble wrap
- Solid board edge protection
- Paper tape
- String or metal/paper ties
- Paper void fill

Suppliers are expected to make efforts to reduce the amount of plastic used in securing and wrapping pallets however it is understood that no suitable ecological alternatives have been identified to replace plastic in the securing of stocks on pallets.
Sustainably sourced wooden pallets should continue to be used and not replaced with a plastic or other material alternative.
Identification of Residual Plastics for Recycling

As of April 1st 2022, HSOT will require suppliers to notify them of the volume and types of plastic packaging contained in standard specification NFIs. This is due to a change to UK legislation however the approach should be applied universally, regardless of delivery location, so as to ensure consistency of available data.

In line with legislative requirements HSOT will use both of the following methods in order to prove compliance.

- Sample component method
- The Verified Specification Method

Further information on these methods is available at the end of this document.

In order to facilitate downstream recycling measures and forward planning, all plastic packaging should be clearly marked and identified by type of plastic using the internationally recognised Resin Identification Code (RIC) symbols in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET or PETE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>High Density Polyethylene (HDPE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Polypropylene (PP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Polystyrene (PS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where packaging elements contain a mix of plastic types the supplier should make every effort to correctly apply the relevant composite code (Recycling codes #80 – 99) and make HSOT aware of these items. Alternatives can be considered and downstream partners can be made aware of these mixed and difficult to recycle elements. Advance notice of the amount of plastic packing will make it possible for HSOT, their client and partners to share information and, where possible, devise a recycling and waste disposal strategy that will minimise the detrimental environmental effects of NFIs. Clear marking of the different types of plastic packaging will allow the straightforward implementation of the strategy for the partner responsible for distribution of these items in the field.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

**UK government guidance:** Working out the weight of packaging for Plastic Packaging Tax

**The sample component method**

You can weigh a sample component for a product line. When using this method, you should check that the weight of the sample component is identical to other components of the same type by weighing a random selection of components. You must keep records to demonstrate your weighing of samples. This sample weight can be used for all production runs for that product, as long as the specification and materials used do not change.

**The verified specification method**

You can use the weights given on the product specification. You must weigh a random selection of components to make sure that they meet the product specification. You must keep records to demonstrate your weighing of samples. Where the component is manufactured overseas, this can be carried out by the manufacturer. If you use this method, you must carry out due diligence to make sure the specification is (and remains) accurate. This includes making sure that overseas manufacturers are checking that the weight matches the specification.

**RIC Standards**

Following a review in 2013 the RIC symbols were adjusted in order to mitigate end user confusion in relation to the meaning of the symbols. The previous symbols (see example on the right) were found to incorrectly imply that a product is recyclable in the end user setting. As there is no legislative mandate on the use of these codes many manufacturers have continued to use the old symbols. HSOT do not mandate which code must be used however strongly suggest that it would be in suppliers interest to use the solid triangle symbols as current best practice.