SINGAPORE PACKAGING AGREEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Solid waste is collected daily and disposed of at four waste-to-energy incineration plants and Semakau Landfill. For the 46-year period from 1970 to 2016, the amount of waste disposed of in Singapore had increased by about 7-fold from 1,200 tonnes/day in 1970 to 8,559 tonnes/day in 2016. If waste disposal continues to grow at this rate, we would need to build one new waste-to-energy incineration plant every 7 – 10 years and a landfill the size of the present Semakau Landfill (350 ha) every 30 – 35 years. This is not sustainable given our limited land. We have, therefore, adopted the 3R strategy, i.e., Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

1.2 The National Environment Agency (NEA) has worked with our 3P (Public, Private and People) partners and introduced various programmes such as the National Recycling Programme for households, recycling programmes for shopping malls, industries, schools, etc. As a result, the amount of waste disposed of increased by only 12% from 2000 to 2016 even though the population and the country’s GDP grew by 39% and 119% respectively. During this period, the overall recycling rate went up from 40% to 61%.

1.3 Recycling programmes alone may not be sufficient to sustain waste reduction as increase in waste generation could offset the reduction in waste from recycling programmes. We therefore need to move upstream to reduce waste at source.

1.4 Packaging is one of the most visible types of waste arising from our homes today. Packaging waste is mainly paper, plastic, glass and metal. In Singapore, packaging waste constitutes about one-third of domestic waste. There is, therefore, potential to reduce packaging waste in the domestic waste stream.

1.5 This Packaging Agreement is a means whereby NEA can work in partnership with the industry to reduce packaging waste through better design and production processes and facilitating source reduction, reuse or recycling of used packaging materials. This is the second Packaging Agreement, and builds on the momentum gained in the first Packaging Agreement (which was valid from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2012) in encouraging the industry to reduce packaging waste.

OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of this Packaging Agreement are to:
   i. reduce packaging waste arising from consumer products;
   ii. raise community awareness on packaging waste minimisation; and
   iii. introduce supply chain initiatives that foster the sustainable use of resources in packaging.

2.2 The stakeholders will seek to achieve these objectives through:
   • a framework based on the principle of product stewardship for the lifecycle management of packaging for consumer goods.
   • a collaborative approach to ensure that the management of consumer packaging throughout its lifecycle and the implementation of collection systems produce sustainable environmental benefits in a cost effective manner.
• (for manufacturers / brand owners / importers) ensuring that packaging / packaged goods are
designed and made in such a manner so as to minimise adverse environmental impacts.
Wherever possible, it would be preferred if a lifecycle assessment could be conducted, in
considering various packaging solutions,
• regular consultation and discussion of issues and problems affecting the recovery, utilisation
and disposal of consumer packaging,
• an effective public education and communication programme.

2.3 The Packaging Agreement will apply to the lifecycle management of consumer packaging,
including distribution packaging.

3 FOUNDATIONS OF THE PACKAGING AGREEMENT

3.1 The part packaging plays in our lives

3.1.1 Packaged goods contribute significantly to the Singapore economy. In addition, packaging is vital to
ensure the quality, health and safety of goods, in delaying spoilage of perishables, and in branding
and marketing.

3.1.2 Packaging is also highly visible in the domestic waste stream and in spite of its many consumer
benefits, the public strongly supports reducing wasteful use of packaging resources. In a survey
conducted among members of the public in 2013 by the National Environment Agency, 93% of
respondents indicated that they consciously choose products with less packaging material so as to
minimise waste. The packaged goods industry will therefore step up efforts to minimise or make
more efficient use of packaging resources.

3.2 Towards a sustainable economy

3.2.1 The drive for sustainability has implications for the environmental and social / cultural sectors as well
as the economy.

3.2.2 Industry, government, consumers and community organisations share responsibility for creating
sustainable communities.

3.3 Product stewardship

3.3.1 This Packaging Agreement is based on the principle of product stewardship. Based on this principle,
parties who make, sell and use products should be responsible for the environmental impact of
those products throughout the life cycle, from raw material selection and production to recovery
or disposal. Consequent upon this principle, all participants in the packaging supply chain (i.e., brand
owners, product manufacturers, packaging manufacturers, fillers, importers / distributors, retailers
and consumers) share responsibility with the government for the environmental impacts of the
packaging.
3.3.2 The packaged goods industry is responsible for designing products and ways of making them so as to minimise adverse environmental and social effects.

3.4 Policy and regulations

3.4.1 The Government is responsible for policies and regulations that support sustainable development. This framework must align with existing policy, such as the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint 2015.

3.4.2 An essential part of the framework for sustainable development is a market that brings the true financial, social, and environmental costs of resource use and disposal to bear on producers, consumers, and waste system users. The Government has policy and regulatory opportunities to encourage market signals that will more accurately reflect environmental and social impacts.

3.4.3 In the event that a voluntary approach does not provide sufficient improvements in reducing packaging waste or encouraging product stewardship during the course of the Agreement, the Government may resort to industry-wide regulatory measures to achieve the objective of reducing waste.

4 COMMITMENTS (OR UNDERTAKINGS)

4.1 Packaging waste reduction target

4.1.1 All sectors will work together towards a total annual reduction of 10,000 tonnes of packaging waste in 2020, with 2007 as the base year, and aim to bring on board a total of 400 signatories to this Agreement by 2020.

4.2 Annual reports

4.2.1 Each sector will submit a report annually to an appointed Packaging Agreement secretariat on the following:
a) Progress in implementing sector action plans; and
b) Actions taken to meet the agreed targets and improve the sustainability of packaging.
4.3 Data collection and reporting

4.3.1 Signatories will contribute to the collection and reporting of domestic and imported packaging consumption data and packaging recovery / recycling data.

4.4 Application of Packaging Code of Practice

4.4.1 Signatories undertake to apply the Singapore Environmental Code of Practice for the Packaging of Consumer Goods before manufacturing packaging and importing goods that are already packaged.

4.4.2 Signatories shall cooperate to develop better industry practices in sustainable packaging procurement and design.

4.5 Attending regular meetings to discuss Packaging Agreement related matters

4.5.1 Signatories agree to meet regularly to discuss Packaging Agreement related issues / concerns and to track progress.

4.6 Development of education and communication programmes

4.6.1 Signatories will develop a communication strategy to inform consumers on packaging issues, sustainable packaging design and packaging recycling programmes. Included in the communication strategy will be the development of labels and other forms of communication to inform consumers of details such as the recyclability of the packaging materials used, the renewability of the materials used, the recycled content in packaging materials, reduction in material used (e.g. if new packaging uses less material compared to the previous packaging) and / or the disposal options for the discarded packaging.

4.6.2 The aim of the communication strategy is to raise consumers’ awareness so that they can be more aware of how they can play their part to reduce packaging waste (e.g. purchasing products with less packaging and recycling used packaging).

4.7 Promoting the Packaging Agreement and its objectives

4.7.1 Signatories will ensure that the staff, members and customers of their companies / organisations understand the commitments embodied in the Packaging Agreement and the sector action plans. All signatories agree to promote the Packaging Agreement within their companies / organisations.

4.7.2 Signatories will also promote and encourage participation in environmental awards programmes to recognise excellence in environmentally improved packaging.
4.8  Development of sustainable markets for reused and recycled packaging materials

4.8.1  Signatories will work together to examine how they can close the loop on packaging waste through development and fostering of sustainable markets for reused and recycled packaging materials.

4.9  Management of disputes

4.9.1  Any dispute between the parties will be dealt with at a regular meeting.

5  DESIRED OUTCOMES AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

5.1  The desired outcomes of this Packaging Agreement and key performance indicators (KPIs) that will be used to report on progress and gauge the effectiveness of the Packaging Agreement are set out in Annex 11.

6  AGREEMENT COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION

This Packaging Agreement will take effect from 1 July 2012 until 30 June 20202, with an option for renewal, subject to the agreement of the parties and satisfactory progress being reported in mid-term review(s).

7  EFFECT OF PACKAGING AGREEMENT

7.1  This Agreement establishes a way for signatories to work together to achieve its objectives. It is not intended to create any legal or binding relationships between the parties or to be a legally enforceable document. In no way does it restrict any power or discretion under any statute.

7.2  This Packaging Agreement does not apply to the goods contained in the packaging.

8  SECTOR ACTION PLANS

8.1  The following are sector action plans under the Singapore Packaging Agreement:  
1. MANUFACTURING SECTOR ACTION PLAN  
2. SERVICES SECTOR ACTION PLAN  
3. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AGENCY ACTION PLAN  
4. SUPPORTING PARTIES SECTOR ACTION PLAN

8.2  This Packaging Agreement will be implemented through the above listed sector action plans. Details of the sector action plans are in Annex 23. Annual sector action plan reporting will include progress against specific targets, generic measures and commitments.

1(Please refer to www.nea.gov.sg/SPA for Annex 1 – Desired Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators)  
2(This Packaging Agreement, originally due to expire after three years, has been extended another five years till 30 June 2020.)  
3(Please refer to www.nea.gov.sg/SPA for Annex 2 – Sector Action Plans)
9 LIST OF PARTIES TO AGREEMENT

9.1 The parties to the Singapore Packaging Agreement are listed at www.nea.gov.sg/SPA.

10 GLOSSARY

“brand owner / manufacturer” includes:
- Manufacturer, producer and brand owner of packaged products for sale in Singapore
- Packaging manufacturer
- Filler of packaging

“consumer packaging” means all packaging products made of any material, or combination of materials, for the containment, protection, marketing or handling of retail consumer products. This also includes distribution packaging (see below).

“distribution packaging” means packaging that contains multiples of products (the same or mixed) intended for direct consumer purchase.

“importer / distributor (of packaged goods)” includes:
- Importer, distributor; supplier; wholesaler of packaged goods for sale in Singapore

“key performance indicators” are the agreed, quantifiable measurements that reflect the critical success factors of the Packaging Agreement.

“lifecycle assessment” refers to a technique for assessing the environmental aspects and potential impacts throughout a product’s lifecycle from raw material acquisition through production, use and disposal.

“lifecycle management” means management of the potential environmental impacts of a product in all stages of production, distribution, use, collection, reuse, recycling, reprocessing and disposal of that product.

“packaging supply chain” means each of the organisations that participate in the creation, distribution and sale of consumer packaging and / or products. These include but are not limited to:
- suppliers of raw materials for consumer packaging
- manufacturers of consumer packaging
- suppliers / distributors of consumer packaging
- manufacturers of consumer products
- fillers of consumer packaging (e.g. contract packers)
- brand owners of consumer products
- wholesalers / distributors / importers of consumer products
- retailers of consumer products
“product stewardship”, also known as extended product responsibility, is the principle that the parties who make, sell and use products should be responsible for the environmental impact of those products throughout the life cycle, from raw material selection and production to recovery or disposal.

“recovery”, with respect to packaging materials, refers to the collection of used packaging materials that have been separated from the waste stream for reprocessing and use in the manufacture of consumer packaging or other products. It does not include incineration with energy recovery.

“recycling”, for a product, refers to the process of transforming the recovered waste product into reusable form which may or may not be similar to the original product.

“reuse”, for a product, refers to the use of the product again, either for its original or similar purpose, without significantly altering the physical form of the product.

“signatory” means any individual, group, company, or level of government who signs the Packaging Agreement.

“stakeholder” means any individual, group, company or public agency that is involved in the lifecycle management of packaging materials, across its manufacture, use, disposal and recovery.