

**The SA  
Plastics  
Pact**



**PLASTICS  
PACT**



**ROADMAP**

**TO 2025**

# 2025 Vision

---

We need to move away from a 'take-make-waste' linear plastics economy to a circular system where we capture the value of plastic materials – keeping plastics in the economy and out of our environment. The South African Plastics Pact brings together national government, businesses, municipalities, Product Responsibility Organisations (PROs), the informal and formal waste sectors, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and key organisations in the plastics value chain behind a common vision of a circular economy for plastics and 2025 targets to address plastic waste and pollution at its source.

The SA Plastics Pact was launched in January 2020, as part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's global Plastics Pact network. The Roadmap sets the broad agenda for how the SA Plastics Pact actions contribute towards our 2025 targets, in line with the vision for a circular economy for plastics.



# What is the SA Plastics Pact Roadmap?

The SA Plastics Pact Roadmap shows what the members and supporters of the Pact will do to deliver the SA Plastics Pact targets, with key outcomes in two interim milestones (mid 2021 and end 2023), and finally end 2025.



It aims to inspire and mobilise members and supporters to act, and to galvanise wider action by national government departments, city authorities, NGOs, funders, packaging/product designers, brand owners, retailers and others who are not members of the SA Plastics Pact but have a crucial role to play.



The Roadmap also includes activity that is beyond the scope of the members' influence, which requires changes at a sectoral level, but which members can support.



The SA Plastics Pact is a collaborative initiative with input from across the wider plastics packaging value chain. The activities and outcomes outlined in this Roadmap aim to build upon the work and programmes already being undertaken in South Africa to maximise the benefits of plastic packaging and design out negative impacts, so as not to duplicate efforts.



Achieving the targets will bring huge benefits for SA, however it will require hard decisions to be made, significant investment and some compromises. The Roadmap is a living document and will evolve in future versions.

## COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Roadmap was drawn up in the midst of the pandemic lockdown, with severe impacts on South African society, the economy and specifically on the South African plastics waste and recycling sector. The longer-term effects of the pandemic are yet to be seen and these may impact on the Roadmap and the rate of progress that can be made. Future updated versions will reflect these impacts and changes. Regardless, the members and organisations involved in the South Africa Plastics Pact remain committed to a circular economy for plastics and the SA Plastics Pact targets.



# 2025 Vision for the SA Plastics Pact by Sector

## → Businesses have embedded circular economy strategies into their policies and procedures



- Businesses value their plastics. They are aware of the impacts of their plastic-use and have changed the way they design, use and reuse plastic packaging to keep these plastics in the economy and out of the environment.
- All the agreed problematic and unnecessary plastic items under the control of the SA Plastics Pact members have been eliminated.
- All plastic packaging under the SA Plastics Pact members' control is designed to be reusable, recyclable or compostable in the South African context.
- SA Plastics Pact members have rationalised plastic types and formats to facilitate improved recycling efficiency and economics, maximising the value and lifetime of plastics in the economy.
- Reuse models are applied where relevant, reducing the need for single-use packaging.
- Businesses require recycled content in plastic products as far as possible to decouple from finite feedstocks and to stimulate demand for collection and recycling.

## → Business growth in a circular economy for plastics in South Africa



- The contribution of the recycling sector to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/market value of the sector has increased.
- The quantity and quality of jobs in the recyclables-collection, sorting and recycling sector has increased.
- New reuse and refill systems and businesses have entered the market, and are growing, thereby reducing the amount of single-use plastic packaging.



## Recycling value chain outcomes



- The recycling value chain has been optimised through key interventions to maximise the flow and value of plastics.
- The formal and informal recyclables collection and sorting sectors are well-integrated, with informal livelihoods protected and valued.
- All SA Plastics Pact members' plastic packaging is designed, and clearly labelled for the consumer, to be recycled, reused or composted.
- Recyclables collectors and sorters are able to access source-separated material, and produce well-streamed high-quality material.
- Material Identification Codes (MIC; e.g. 1= PET) have been updated to include new entrants in plastic and compostable packaging.
- Recyclables collectors and sorters are familiar with the Material Identification Codes (MIC) and sort accordingly
- There is sustained, increased demand for recycled plastic in South Africa due to growth in existing markets and the unlocking of new markets and applications for recycled plastic.
- The increased demand for recycled plastics is driven by South Africa's mandatory EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) system, various economic instruments and the SA Plastics Pact's Target 4 to ensure recycled plastic is economically competitive to virgin plastic.
- Plastic recyclers are able to produce high quality recycle due to the improved quality of inputs.



## → The evolution of the SA Plastics Pact

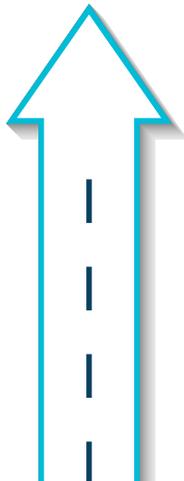


- The SA Plastics Pact has a positive profile with government, business, NGOs and the media.
- Targets are being met and progress reported with robust, accurate data reporting.
- The SA Plastics Pact is sharing insights with other Plastics Pacts and benefiting from international collaborations.
- The SA Plastics Pact has analysed the gap between 2025 targets and a circular economy for plastics in SA, which has defined our next set of ambitious targets. Finalised innovative plans and a growing committed collaborative to achieve our 2030 targets.

## → Citizens are engaged and active in developing a circular economy for plastics in South Africa



- South African consumers are educated on plastic packaging, value circular plastics and are active in keeping plastics out of the environment.
- South African citizens have an improved understanding of what is recyclable and what is not. Participation in recycling programmes nationally has increased, and citizens are more active in seeking out recycling options (For example: SMMEs to collect their recycling, finding local recycling drop-off points, or separate their waste on kerbside for informal collectors).
- Citizens are increasingly aware of reuse options and request reusable options at point-of-sale and actively engage programmes with reuse where available.



# South African Plastics Pact

Vision



4 Targets



Milestones



Key outcomes



Key activities

Collaboration with others

END  
2025

START  
2020



[info@saplasticspact.org.za](mailto:info@saplasticspact.org.za)  
[www.saplasticspact.org.za](http://www.saplasticspact.org.za)

 **The SA  
Plastics Pact**

# Collective action

**The Roadmap illustrates the vision, outcomes, activities for the SA Plastics Pact. The Roadmap will require collective action by all those involved with the Pact – these have been categorised as follows for the tables that follow:**

- GreenCape as the Secretariat for the SA Plastics Pact
- Action Groups of the SA Plastics Pact
- PROs
- SA Plastics Pact business members and supporting members
- SA Government ministries (DEFF)
- Other e.g. WRAP, WWF-SA, waste sector, Plastics SA

## Key national initiatives

→ [Department of Environment, Forestry, Fisheries and the \(DEFF\): Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\) draft regulations and schemes under the National Environmental Management: Waste Act \(Act No. 59 of 2008\)](#)

South Africa's approach to extended producer responsibility is evolving from a voluntary, industry-led system to a mandatory, industry-led system under the guidance of DEFF.

These changes will result in increased investment on collection, sorting, and recycling infrastructure and projects, as well as the development of end markets through targets for post-consumer recycled content in packaging in South Africa. The effective implementation of such a system is key to the achievement of SA Plastics Pact target, in particular Target 3.

As an SA Plastics Pact we commit to being part of the evolution of our EPR system, to align with new developments and assist in the achievement of national targets stipulated by EPR regulations and schemes.



## → Packaging Guideline: Recyclability by design for packaging and paper in South Africa

Through DEFF's Operation Phakisa: Chemicals and Waste Economy, design for recycling guidelines for packaging and paper in South Africa are being updated. The SA Plastics Pact has

been involved in the development of these guidelines, and will continue to be involved in the process to align SA Plastics Pact work with the guidelines.

## → Plastics SA's Initiative to End Plastic Waste in the Environment

The SA Plastics Pact has committed to working closely with the Initiative, which has 6 working groups:

1. technology, innovation and design
2. infrastructure;
3. bioplastics and alternatives;
4. education and awareness in combatting litter;
5. standards and compliance; and
6. integrating waste pickers into the circular economy.

For more information, please see <https://www.plasticsinfo.co.za/s-a-alliance-to-end-plastic-waste-in-the-environment/>.

### Clarification Notes:

- *Targets 1, 2 and 4 have the scope of the items or packaging under the control of the SA Plastics Pact members and are collective targets. Target 3 has the scope of all plastic packaging in South Africa including household, commercial and industrial plastic packaging.*
- *The 3 milestones for each Activity are to be completed either by mid-2021 (1 year following Roadmap publication), end of 2023, or end of 2025.*
- *The Roadmap is a live, dynamic document which will be updated periodically to reflect developments in policy etc.*
- *The tables on pages 4-8 indicate for each of the 4 SA Plastics Pact targets, the desired Key Outcomes of the target and the Key Activities needed to achieve the Key Outcomes.*
- *For each Activity, it has been indicated which organisation or group would Lead (L) or Support (S) its delivery.*
- *The SA Plastics Pact is adopting the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy definitions for key terms such as 'recyclable', 'problematic or unnecessary', 'recycled content' etc.*
- *The Roadmap is intended to include Key Activities that might be required by other parties as well as by SA Plastics Pact members e.g. Government.*
- *Suggested Activity is dependent on sufficient resourcing and funding being available.*





# TARGET 1

---

Taking action on problematic or unnecessary plastic packaging through redesign, innovation or alternative (re-use) delivery models



[info@saplasticspact.org.za](mailto:info@saplasticspact.org.za)  
[www.saplasticspact.org.za](http://www.saplasticspact.org.za)



**The SA  
Plastics Pact**



# TARGET 1

GreenCape  
Action Group

Members  
DEFF

PROs  
Other

Lead  
Support



KEY OUTCOMES:	KEY ACTIVITIES:	TARGET BY		
		Mid 2021	End 2023	End 2025
<p>"Elimination of agreed Phase 1 list of prioritised problematic and unnecessary items by Pact members (end 2021).</p> <p>Elimination of agreed Phase 2 list of prioritised problematic and unnecessary items by Pact members (end 2025)."</p>	L S Establish an Action Group for Target 1 and agreed criteria for 'problematic' and 'unnecessary' plastic items.			
	L S S Finalisation of agreed Phase 1 & 2 list of problematic and unnecessary items / materials to be tackled.			
	L Integrate the agreed list into the SA Plastics Pact reporting template to allow the target to be monitored.	Phase 1	Phase 2	
	L S Agree on actions from SA Plastics Pact members needed to eliminate items on the Phase 1 and 2 lists.			
	L S Support members to rethink products and services at the design stage to eliminate packaging or packaging components while user experience is maintained or enhanced'			
	L S SA Plastics Pact members and supporters implement - eliminating the agreed Phase 1 items in their businesses / supply chains (target by end 2021)			
	S S L SA Plastics Pact members and supporters implement - eliminating the agreed Phase 2 items in their businesses / supply chains.			
	L S Review of list of problematic and unnecessary items lists to ensure maintain relevant to SA.			
<p>Non-members are encouraged to eliminate agreed problematic and unnecessary items (via supporters etc).</p>	L S Align SA Plastics Pact recommendations with the On Pack Recycling Labels (OPRLs).			
	L S S Develop external guidance for members and non-members to take action.			
	L Advise/feed into government policy/strategy on 'problematic' plastic items.			
	L S Develop a citizen engagement strategy/campaign to help eliminate Target 1 items (e.g. 'myth bust' on plastics).			
<p>Improved understanding of environmental impact of material choices (across industry and citizens), including the role of plastic packaging in preventing food waste and the opportunity to innovate.</p>	L S Initiate a citizen engagement campaign on the value of plastics and the impact of plastics - how to maximise the first and eliminate the negative impact			
	L S Organise workshops on assessing environmental impacts of packaging at a systems level, including providing information on life cycle (system) analysis (LCA and LCSA) as methodologies.			
<p>Clarity on strategy for problematic materials that cannot be eliminated or replaced in the current market e.g. some PVC formats/ flexible multi-layers in packaging.</p>	L S Develop a sub-group to address films and flexibles, with actions including identifying technology for localisation to South Africa and stimulating local research			
	L S For problematic items not on the Phase 1 or 2 lists, identify international technology for localisation to South Africa.			
	L S For problematic items not on the Phase 1 or 2 lists, scan for international research and stimulate local research to address the items.			
<p>Reduction in plastic packaging where possible e.g. through sale of more loose fresh produce/reusable packaging systems.</p>	L S Supply information on packaging reuse models to SA Plastics Pact members and hold discussions regarding business benefits and challenges to be overcome.			
	L S Run a Reuse Innovation Challenge to stimulate uptake of packaging reuse models by SA Plastics Pact members.			
	L S Support the development of reuse packaging models through consumer and business-to-business messaging.			



# TARGET 2

100% of plastic packaging  
to be reusable, recyclable  
or compostable



[info@saplasticspact.org.za](mailto:info@saplasticspact.org.za)  
[www.saplasticspact.org.za](http://www.saplasticspact.org.za)

 **The SA  
Plastics Pact**



# TARGET 2

GreenCape  
Action Group

Members  
DEFF

PROs  
Other

Lead  
Support

KEY OUTCOMES:	KEY ACTIVITIES:	TARGET BY		
		Mid 2021	End 2023	End 2025
Brands, retailers, food service and packaging manufacturers are adhering to best practice guidance on plastics design (members and non-members) for primary, secondary and tertiary packaging. Guidance aligns with On Pack Recycling Labels (OPRL) for primary packaging.	L S S S S S Develop 'design for recycling' and polymer choices guidance for retailers, brands, food service members – aligning with/ adopting existing SA guidance where possible. Update and review periodically. <b>Design for recycling guidance includes:</b> *designing for multiple lives - design that produces high quality recycle (progress towards Target 4) *lightweighting guidelines *the impact of fillers and additives on recyclability *alternatives for multilayer non-recyclable packaging			
	L S S S Working with retailers, brands and food service members to adopt OPRLs for packaging including OPRL guidance for reuse (once developed).			
	L S SA Plastics Pact members and supporters implement the Design Guidance in their businesses and supply chains.			
	L S S S Disseminate design guidance to non-members through supporters and other routes.			
OPRL system refined and adopted by all SA Plastics Pact members, and available for adoption by non-members.	L S S S S Develop OPRL guidance that aligns with SA Plastics Pact Guidance and National Packaging Guidelines			
	L S S Launch a consumer campaign on OPRLs and appropriate recycling behaviour.			
SA Plastics Pact has provided clear position on compostable packaging helping reduce confusion in the sector, building on or adopting other industry guidelines where possible.	L S Disseminate and refer members to the SA Initiative to End Plastic Waste's Biodegradable and Compostable Packaging: A review of the South African landscape.			
	L S Build relationship with local industry bodies for compostable packaging, and include such industry bodies in OPRL discussions and to give insights to members where appropriate.			
Improved understanding within retailers / brands of issues of recycling by format and plastic type.	L S Establish an Action Group for Target 2.			
	L S S S S Agree definitions of 'recyclable', 'reusable' and 'compostable' in the SA context in line with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy definitions (and incorporated into Packaging Guidelines).			
	L S Integrate the criteria associated with the definitions into the SA Plastics Pact reporting template to allow the target to be tracked.			
	L S Run workshops where recycling experts give feedback to other SA Plastics Pact members on aspects of packaging that can hinder the recyclability or make a pack unrecyclable.			
Technological developments are incorporated where applicable and current guidance and delivery of SA Plastics Pact targets is adapted.	L S Monitoring of new materials and technologies and evaluation of how they could contribute to SA Plastics Pact targets.			
	L S Update Design for Recycling Guidance for members (and feed into updating of national guidelines)			
	L S Update OPRLs as necessary and disseminate to members, non-members and update the consumer messaging campaign.			
SA Plastics Pact member retailer or brands have implemented or extended refill or reuse activity (including B2B).	L S Disseminate best practice in reuse/refill business models to members.			
	L S S Reuse/refill: initiate a reuse/refill project or innovation challenge.			
	L S Reuse/refill: develop a report of reuse/refill activities already in place in SA (incl. informal sector).			
	L Reuse/refill: SA Plastics Pact members have implemented reuse/refill systems where appropriate.			



# TARGET 3

70% of plastic packaging  
effectively recycled



[info@saplasticspact.org.za](mailto:info@saplasticspact.org.za)  
[www.saplasticspact.org.za](http://www.saplasticspact.org.za)

 **The SA  
Plastics Pact**



# TARGET 3

GreenCape  
Action Group

Members  
DEFF

PROs  
Other

Lead  
Support



KEY OUTCOMES:	KEY ACTIVITIES:	TARGET BY		
		Mid 2021	End 2023	End 2025
Unified reporting on South African recycling rates	L S S S S Develop methodology and approach for reporting Target 3.			
	L S S S S Refine methodology with any updated guidance from DEFF aligned to the EPR regulations.			
Strategy developed (mid-2021) and adopted for delivery of the target, including end market development.	L L S S S Develop strategy paper, including analysis and modelling of the Target 3. Identify end market gaps/ opportunities.			
	L S S Clarity on current /required recycling capacity in SA to meet the targets.			
	L S Stimulate investment in infrastructure and systems to drive progress towards Target 3			
Mandatory EPR scheme developed and formalised by Government including ambitious targets for recycling rates and recycled content in packaging.	L S S S Feed into EPR developments to ensure support for recycling of all formats/polymers is included and national targets are ideally aligned with those of the SA Plastics Pact.			
Mandatory EPR scheme implemented and funding flowing to infrastructure /communications.	L S S S EPR system introduced, managed by industry (PROs) and effectively monitored by government.			
Programmes and initiatives that support the informal waste sector lead to increased jobs, improved gender diversity and dignity.	L S S Initiate project with informal waste sector e.g. around registration, training for organisation.			
	L S S S Support implementation of existing guidelines to integrate the informal waste pickers into the municipal waste management system			
Increased participation in plastics recycling by citizens and businesses (at home and out of home ).	L S S S Develop proposals for external funding to support citizen engagement activity.			
	L Marketing and PR agency appointed to develop and deliver citizen engagement activity.			
	L S S High profile citizen engagement campaign developed to promote plastics recycling.			
	L S S Collaborate with others on citizen engagement campaigns and messages (e.g. Plastics SA ).			
Increased availability of plastic recycling opportunities in SA (Metros focus) by formal/informal waste sector.	L S S Amplify and support (where possible) work done by PROs to increase the recycling capacity in South Africa.			



# TARGET 4

30% average recycled content  
across all plastic packaging



[info@saplasticspact.org.za](mailto:info@saplasticspact.org.za)  
[www.saplasticspact.org.za](http://www.saplasticspact.org.za)



**The SA  
Plastics Pact**



# TARGET 4

GreenCape  
Action Group

Members  
DEFF

PROs  
Other

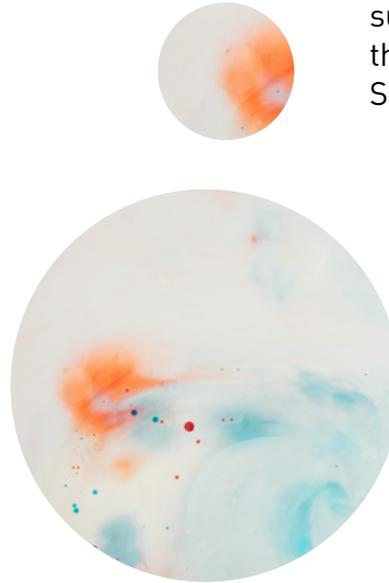
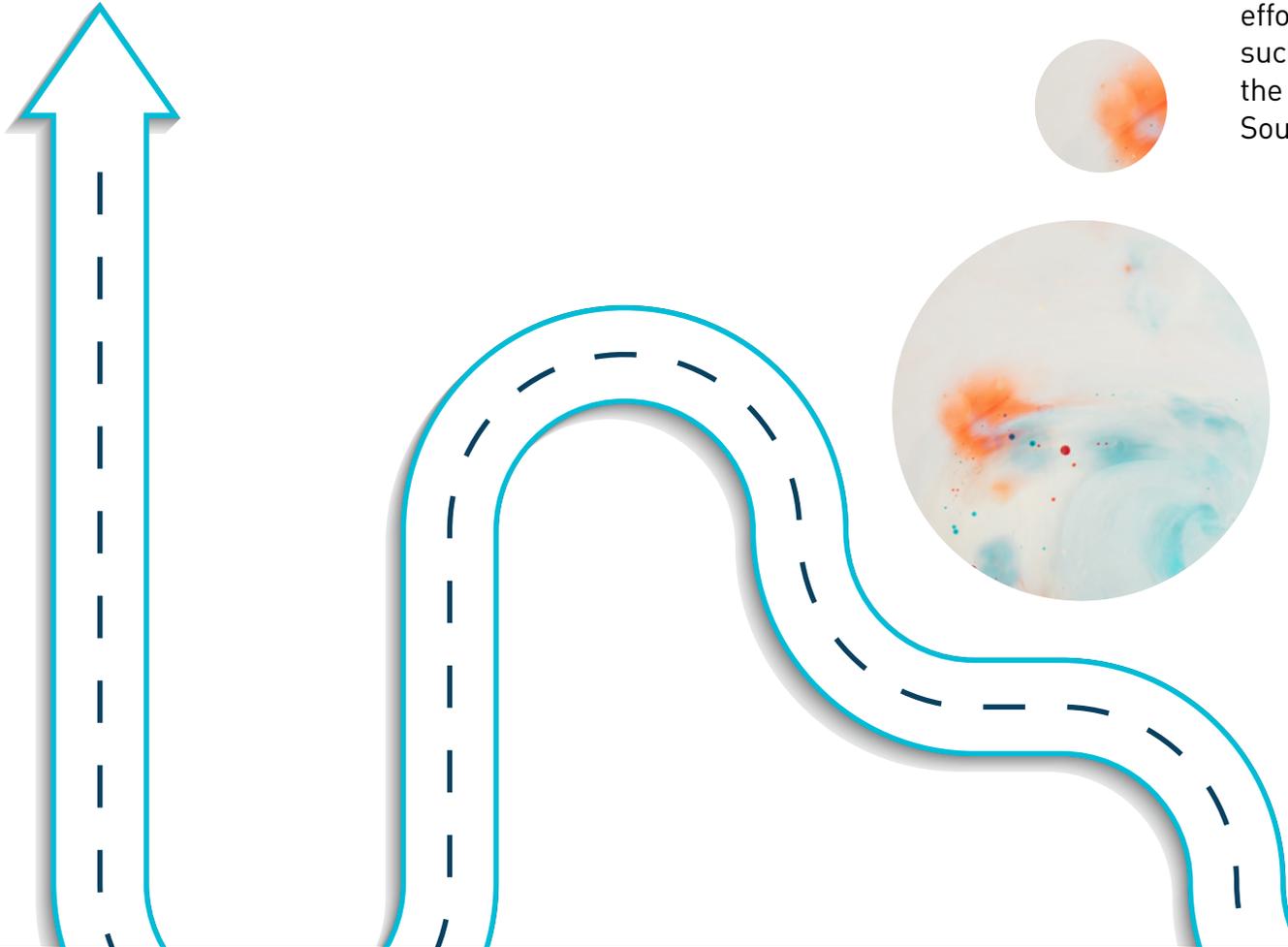
Lead  
Support

KEY OUTCOMES:	KEY ACTIVITIES:	TARGET BY		
		Mid 2021	End 2023	End 2025
Greater use of recycled plastics in packaging (primary, secondary and tertiary) aided by improved specifications, quality and grades.	L S S Retailers/brands specify recycled content in new products where possible.	█		
	L S S Engage with Government on setting annual recycled content targets in plastic packaging in the proposed EPR regulations.	█		
	L S S Recycled content usage by members is reported annually.		█	
	L S S S All SA Plastics Pact members have recycled material in their products and packaging to help meet the targets.			█
Increased demand for recycled plastic in existing and new packaging (and non-packaging) applications and sectors.	L S S Establish an action group on Target 4	█		
	L S S S S Develop a Recycled Content Strategy on how the 30% target could be met in SA (target % recycled content by polymer/format) - linking with PROs strategy.	█		
	L S S Identify quick wins and provide guidance to members for implementation of quick wins.	█		
	L S S S Develop and disseminate clear guidance and worked examples of what does and does not constitute PCR.	█		
	L L S S Work with government stakeholders to provide insights to inform policy regarding South Africa's 'waste' economy, economic development and science and innovation related to a circular economy for plastics		█	
	L S S Develop Public Procurement guidelines to include recycled content (help increase demand).			█
	L S S S S Develop compelling case studies to showcase best practice (e.g. increased use of clear aPET).	█		
	L S S Waste and recycling sector secure investment in additional capacity to meet the target.		█	
Improved capacity of plastics recycling in SA to generate sufficient recycled material to meet the target.	L S S Waste and recycling sector secure investment in additional capacity to meet the target.		█	
	L S Inclusive (informal-formal integration) separation at source programmes are developed countrywide.		█	█
Improved quantity and verified quality of recycled material - link with EPR/PROs.	L S More funding is made available to recyclers to improve the quality of recyclate produced.		█	█
	L S S Citizen research on attitudes and behaviour relating to recycled content in packaging, and products.		█	
Consumers understand benefits of products and packaging made with recycled material (link with OPRL label).	L S S Citizen research on attitudes and behaviour relating to recycled content in packaging, and products.		█	
	L S Collaboration with OPRL action group on labelling to promote recycled content.		█	

# Actions for all targets



- Confirm reporting and progress monitoring process and develop baseline data for each target (by mid-2021).
- Collaboration with academia to support the connection of academic research and challenges faced by the SA Plastics Pact.
- Stakeholder engagement: working collaboratively with key stakeholders to align objectives, optimise activities and outcomes and ensure non-duplication of effort, including key partners such as PROs, Plastics SA, and the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA).



# The SA Plastics Pact



**PLASTICS  
PACT**



The SA Plastics Pact is led by GreenCape with the support of WRAP Global and is part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's global Plastics Pact network. The development of this roadmap was led by WRAP and funded by the United Nation Environmental Programme's (UNEP) Sustainable Lifestyles and Education (SLE) programme.

The opinions expressed, and materials made available, by GreenCape or The SA Plastics Pact signatories do not necessarily reflect the views of the other parties (including the Ellen MacArthur Foundation) who are not responsible for the same. The SA Plastics Pact: A Roadmap to 2025



[info@saplasticspact.org.za](mailto:info@saplasticspact.org.za)  
[www.saplasticspact.org.za](http://www.saplasticspact.org.za)