

Government insights 2023

ABOUT THESE GOVERNMENT INSIGHTS:

This document presents insights and data on the progress made by the government signatories listed below to achieve their commitments on plastics. This document is part of the 2023 Global Commitment Progress Report.

GLOBAL COMMITMENT GOVERNMENTS SIGNATORIES:

The City of Copenhagen, Denmark

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Netherlands

The City of Buenos Aires (Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires), Argentina

The City of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Government of the United Kingdom

Ministry of Environment and Climate Action, Portugal

Government of Rwanda

Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy

City of Toluca, Mexico

Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand

Basque Government, Kingdom of Spain

Scottish Government, United Kingdom

Ministry of the Environment, Peru

City of Austin, Texas, US

Government of Chile

The Australian Government

The Government of France

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OVERALL TRENDS

Between 2022 and 2023, nine national, sub-national, and local governments across different continents officially joined the Global Commitment, including Greece, Australia, Uganda, Norway, Basque Government (Spain), Mexico City Government (Mexico), State of Quintana Roo (Mexico), San Miguel de Allende (Mexico), and Paris (France). Together with existing signatories, the Global Commitment now includes 55 governments, representing one billion people.

More government signatories are introducing mandatory quantitative targets. The majority (88%) of reporting governments this year have set quantitative targets to increase the volumes of plastic collected, sorted, and recycled. More than half (59%) of reporting governments have now set quantitative targets to stimulate the demand for recycled plastics. In addition, 53% of reporting government signatories have now set quantitative targets to accelerate progress on reusability, and to promote systems redesign to favour more recyclable and where relevant compostable alternatives.

Governments have taken a variety of actions to eliminate problematic and unnecessary plastic packaging/products. This includes bans and restrictions, economic incentives, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes, procurement policy, awareness raising and education campaigns. Piloting or scaling up of reuse solutions has been increasingly reported by governments for the fourth consecutive year.

Governments are meeting their targets on stimulating the demand for recycled plastics by establishing or revising minimum thresholds for post-consumer recycled (PCR) content, leveraging public procurement and revising EPR schemes.

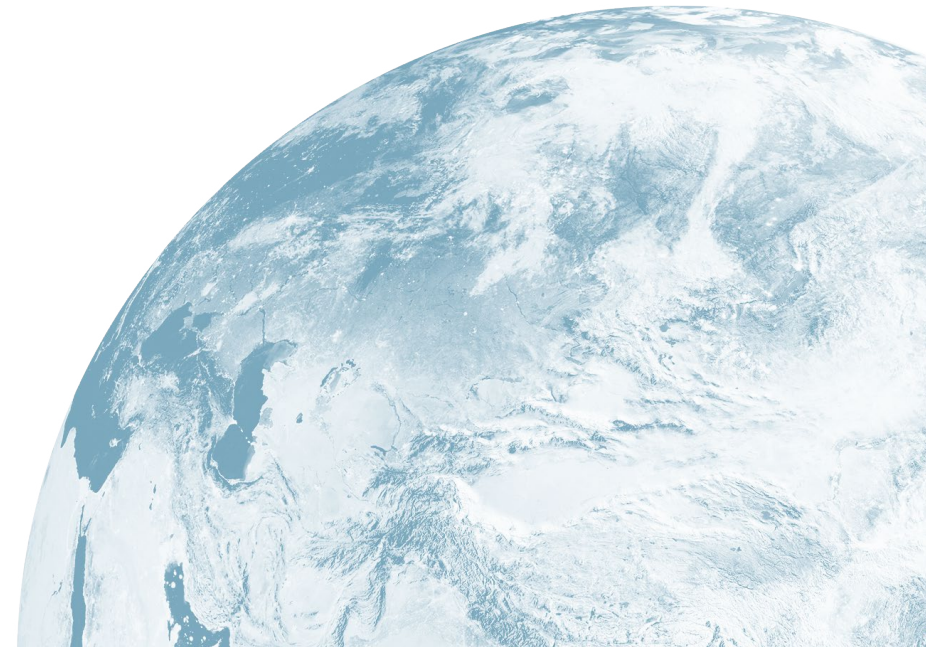
The progress on reusability, recyclability, and compostability by design has been accelerated by governments through regulations, standards, guidelines, and awareness campaigns. **In parallel, governments are continuing to promote recyclability in practice**, by investing in collection and recycling infrastructure and promoting collection, sorting, reuse and/or recycling schemes (e.g. Deposit Return Schemes). More than a third of governments reporting in 2023 have established or revised EPR schemes.

ACTIONS TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS

The negotiation for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution presents a historic opportunity for negotiators to agree on the rules, measures, and incentives needed to end plastic pollution. Policymakers and negotiators can accelerate the shift by creating a higher-level playing field. For example, by scaling up and mandating solutions that industry leaders have already compellingly demonstrated are technically and economically feasible.

Governments are also expected to ramp up the implementation of effective regulations in their own jurisdictions to ensure the actions will not be slowed down while the negotiation is ongoing.

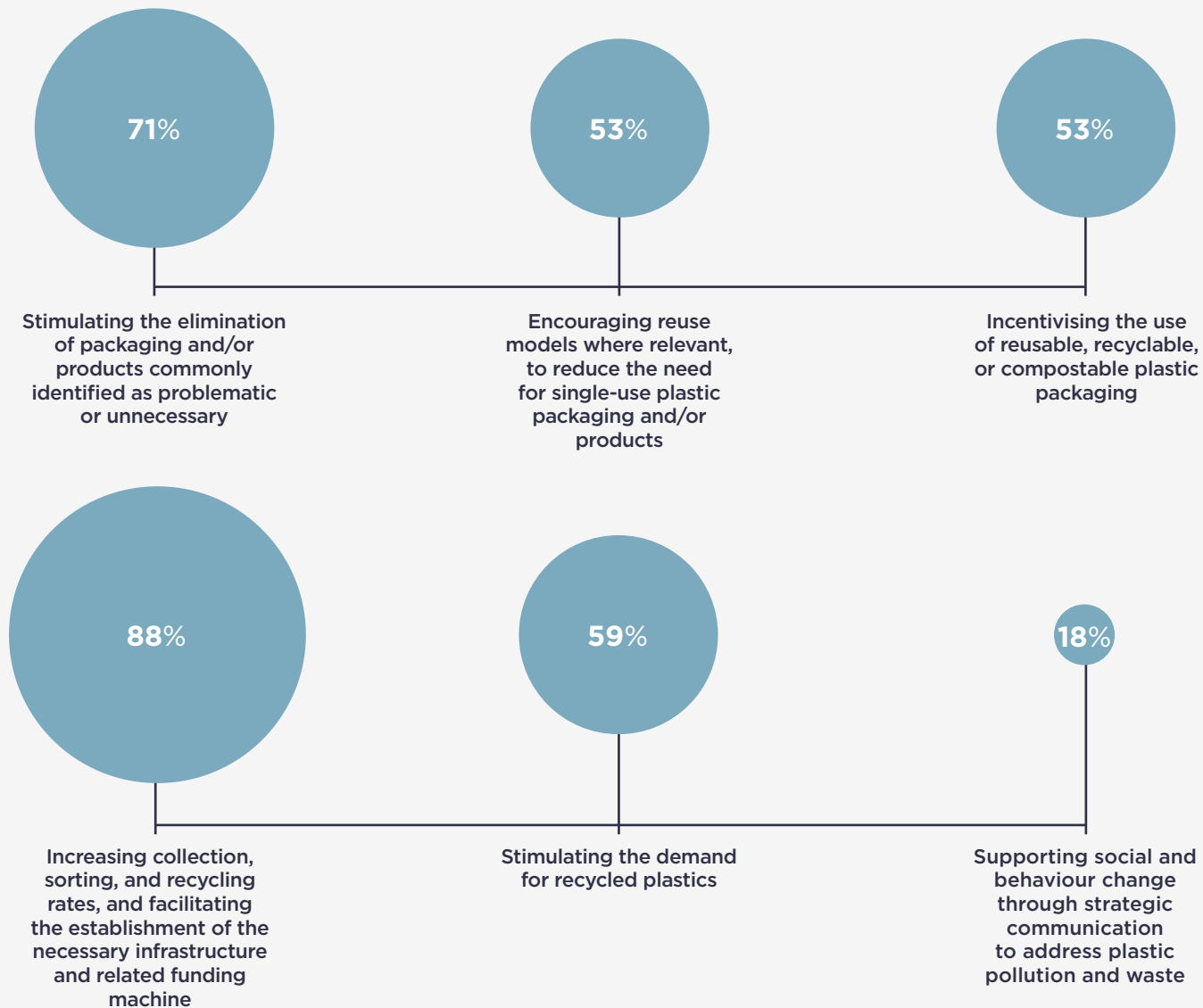
To address the pivotal hurdles preventing progress, governments are encouraged to collaborate with businesses to invest in shared and industry-wide reuse systems; support the innovation towards alternatives for flexible plastic packaging including funding relevant R&D and providing financial incentives for alternatives (e.g. reuse models) or financial disincentives for flexible packaging; as well as roll out EPR policy for recyclability in practice and at scale.



AMBITION AND MEASUREMENT

Governments with quantitative baseline(s) and target(s) for each commitment area

As a % of governments signatories reporting (17)



Since 2022, government signatories have been required to set quantitative targets and reporting, notably on collection, sorting, and recycling rates of plastic packaging. To drive progress further, faster, government signatories have also been requested to set quantitative baselines and targets on at least two additional areas by 2023.

~ TRENDS

- Of the 17 reporting government signatories, 88% have now set at least one quantitative target linked to their overarching commitments — this represents an increase from the previous year’s reporting in which 59% had set targets.
- In 2022, 53% of reporting government signatories have quantitative targets in place to accelerate progress on reusability, recyclability, and compostability.
- 59% of reporting governments this year have set quantitative targets to stimulate the demand for recycled plastics.
- In 2022, 88% of reporting governments have set quantitative targets to increase the volumes of plastic waste collected, sorted, and recycled.
- Challenges faced by governments in setting and tracking quantitative targets remain, including a lack of available data, human capacity, and resources for data collection and analysis, as well as the lack of consistency and accuracy in available data. Obtaining specific data for individual plastic types is much more difficult. Governments are continuing to explore solutions to overcome these challenges, including laying legislation requiring producers to report on data.

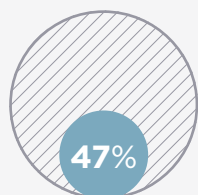
The Global Commitment will continue to serve as a driving force for high-ambition actions and inform the negotiation of the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution through its progress and challenges.

ELIMINATION OF PROBLEMATIC OR UNNECESSARY PLASTIC PACKAGING/PRODUCTS

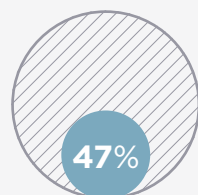
Top five plastic packaging categories for which government signatories have dedicated elimination measures in place

As a % of governments signatories reporting (17)

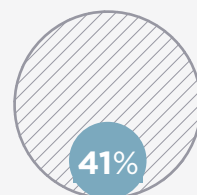
- All government signatories reporting (17)
- Government signatories with dedicated measures in place for each category



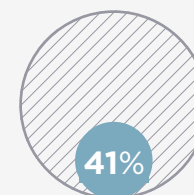
Single-use plastic bags



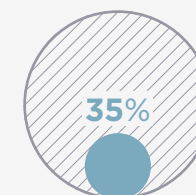
Single-use plastic cutlery/tableware



Single-use plastic straws



Single-use plastic cup



Single-use plastic bottle

TRENDS

- In 2022, 65% of the policy actions taken by government signatories to eliminate plastic packaging most commonly identified as problematic or unnecessary and/or products involved establishing or revising legal measures. Similar to the previous year, most of these efforts focused on specific categories, including single-use plastic straws, cutlery or tableware, bottles, and cotton buds.
- In 2022, 47% of government signatories also reported actions to establish or revise economic incentives (e.g. subsidies or funding schemes to encourage innovation and research into alternative materials or designs) or disincentives (e.g. taxes, charges).
- In addition, government signatories reported that EPR schemes, changes to procurement, and delivery of awareness-raising and education campaigns constituted a significant part of their strategies to eliminate plastic waste and pollution.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Chile** enforced Law 21.368 in February 2022, banning single-use plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery, and chopsticks in food establishments.
- In **Australia**, environment ministers agreed to national phase-outs of the following eight problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic items by the end of 2025: lightweight plastic bags; plastic products misleadingly termed as 'degradable'; plastic straws; plastic utensils and stirrers; EPS consumer food containers (e.g. cups and clamshells); EPS consumer goods packaging (loose fill and moulded); and microbeads in personal health care products.
- The **Basque Country of Spain** passed a law on waste and contaminated soil for a circular economy, which bans certain plastic products (cotton buds, cutlery, plates, straws, drink stirrers, sticks to hold balloons, and EPS food and beverage containers, including their caps and plugs).
- **Greece** introduced market restrictions on several single-use plastic products (cotton buds, cutlery, plates, straws, beverage stirrers, sticks for balloons, EPS food containers, and EPS beverage containers) in line with the provisions of Directive 2019/904/EU (SUP Directive).
- Following consultation, the supply of single-use plastic plates, bowls, trays, cutlery, and balloon sticks, and EPS and XPS food and beverage containers are being banned in **England** from 1 October 2023. The Welsh Government is currently developing legislation to ban or restrict the supply of several commonly littered single-use plastics, and items made of oxo-degradable plastics and is also exploring potential options to introduce charges on certain single-use

plastic items, for example, food containers and single-use disposable cups. **Northern Ireland** continues to keep levies for beverage and takeaway containers under review.

- As announced in last year's report, **New Zealand** — through the Waste Minimisation (Plastic and Related Products) Amendment Regulations 2022 — banned single-use plastic straws, tableware, and produce bags, and aims to phase out non-home compostable produce labels. Implementation guidance for the first and second tranches of plastic phase-outs were released in October 2022 and July 2023. This guidance is designed to help businesses and the public understand what type of products are being banned, and find suitable alternatives.
- In **Scotland**, a Circular Economy Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 13 June 2023 and includes provisions to introduce charges for single-use plastic items.
- In the **Basque Country of Spain**, a special tax on the use of non-reusable containers that contain plastic has been applied.
- In **Greece**, economic disincentives in the form of a fee have been imposed on:
 - Single-use plastic beverage cups and food containers, which may previously have been provided free of charge at the point of sale
 - Plastic carrier bags, regardless of their wall thickness, except for biodegradable and compostable bags, at the point of sale to the final consumer
 - Product packaging which contains PVC (usually in the form of a printed label).

ENCOURAGE REUSE MODELS WHERE RELEVANT, TO REDUCE THE NEED FOR SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PACKAGING/PRODUCTS

~ TRENDS

- In 2022, for the fourth consecutive year, an increasing number of governments reported the piloting or scaling up of reuse solutions to be a key measure in driving progress in overall reduction strategies: 53% in 2022, compared to 44% in 2021, 38% in 2020, and 6% in 2019.
- Looking ahead, more than half of government signatories reported plans to promote collaboration with the private sector and civil society organisations, and to encourage voluntary actions in regard to reuse schemes.

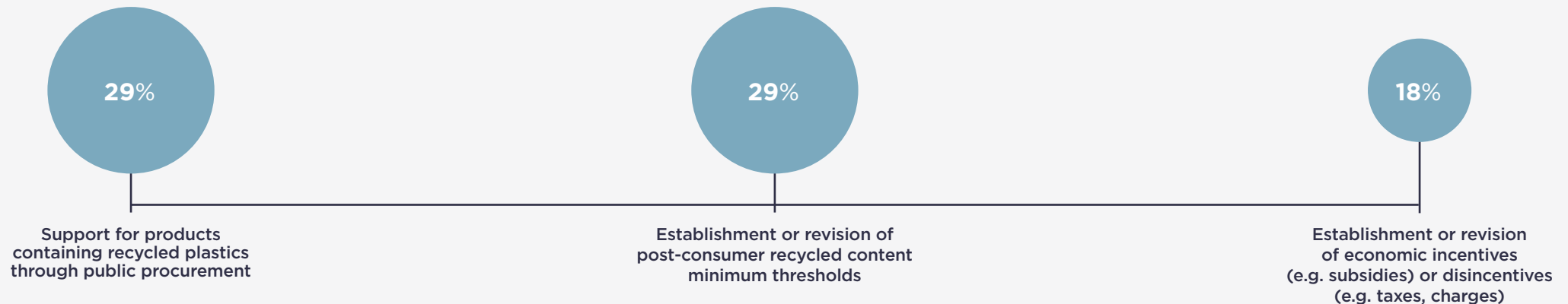
💡 HIGHLIGHTS

- Through Zero Waste **Scotland**, the Scottish Government has funded pilots to investigate how reusable cup schemes can be successful in Scotland, such as the Ditching Disposables project underway in Stirling. The government also supported the establishment of The Share & Repair Network — a project run by Circular Communities Scotland.
- **New Zealand** is supporting a reusable milk bottle scheme with Kaipaki Dairies and the Again Again reusable packaging system loan app.
- In the **Netherlands**, the working group 'Reduce & Reuse' of Plastics Pact Netherlands has created a [reuse roadmap](#), continued work on pilots, and identified opportunities for scaling up reuse solutions.
- In **France**, packaging EPR organisations will have to devote annually at least 5% of the contributions they receive to the development of solutions for packaging reuse (2023). The "3R" decree sets a reuse target to ensure that 10% (based on 2018 tonnage) of all single-use plastic packaging is replaced by reusable alternatives by 31 December 2025.
- From January 2024, eat-in restaurants in **Portugal** will have to use only reusable utensils to serve and/or assist in the consumption of food or beverages sold for consumption on-site.
- **Chile** is collaborating with international partners to gather reusable packaging and reuse model expertise and is engaged in developing technical standards for containers and reuse systems. Since 2022, Chile has been working with organisations like the Chilean Plastics Pact, Algramo, Chamber of Cosmetics, and OCEANA Chile to overcome the regulatory hurdles hindering reuse model adoption. From 2024, food establishments will be mandated to use reusable products for on-site consumption (such as plates, cups, and glasses). For plastic bottles, beverage retailers are required to offer returnable bottle formats, and accept these containers back from consumers.
- In **Australia**, The Plastic Free Beaches initiative supports small businesses to eliminate single-use plastic items, and voluntarily transition to compostable and reusable alternatives where possible.
- **Rwanda** aims to enhance collaboration with private sector actors involved in plastic management, based on the existing Memorandum of Understanding between the Rwanda Environment Management Authority and the Private Sector Federation.

STIMULATING THE DEMAND FOR RECYCLED PLASTICS

Top three measures taken by government signatories to stimulate the demand for recycled plastics

As a % of government signatories reporting (17)



~ TRENDS

- More than half (59%) of reporting governments in 2022 set quantitative targets to stimulate the demand for recycled plastics.
- To meet these targets, governments are establishing or revising minimum thresholds for PCR content, and leveraging public procurement.
- Looking ahead, about a third of reporting governments intend to establish or revise EPR schemes in order to encourage the uptake of recycled content.

💡 HIGHLIGHTS

- In **Greece**, by 2025, all PET bottles should contain at least 25% recycled plastic.
- The **Basque Country of Spain** has set an objective for 2025 that all plastic packaging should contain at least 20% recycled plastic.
- In the **Basque Country of Spain**, from 1 January 2025, only PET bottles containing at least 25% recycled plastic can be placed on the market.
- In April 2022, the **United Kingdom** introduced the Plastic Packaging Tax, a tax of GBP 200 per metric tonne on plastic packaging manufactured in, or imported into, the UK that does not contain at least 30% recycled plastic. From April 2023, this increased in line with inflation to GBP 210.82 per metric tonne. This should stimulate increased levels of recycling and collection of plastic waste, diverting it away from landfill or incineration. It is estimated that the tax will lead to around 40% more recycled plastic being used in packaging in 2022/23.
- In **Chile**, the single-use plastics law¹ obliges manufacturers to incorporate 15% of recycled material (collected and recycled in Chile) in single-use plastic bottles in 2025, 25% by 2030, 50% by 2040, 60% by 2050, and 70% in 2060. The certification system for the incorporation of recycled material in bottles is under development.
- In **Greece**, central governmental bodies are prohibited from procuring plastic bags that do not contain at least 30% recycled plastic, with the exception of very thin plastic carrier bags and biodegradable or biodegradable/compostable plastic carrier bags. This provision applies for public procurement processes initiated after 1 January 2023.
- In **Australia**, The Commonwealth Government's Sustainable Procurement Guide provides examples of how plastics commonly identified as problematic or unnecessary can be addressed through sustainable procurement.
- The **Scottish Government** has continued to work with the other UK administrations on reforming the UK EPR system for packaging in order to stimulate demand for recycled content by 2025. The proposals will also fund local authority packaging waste collection.
- In **France**, the financial contributions paid by producers to Producer Responsibility Organisations will be modulated according to environmental performance criteria, including the incorporation of recycled material.

INCENTIVISE THE USE OF REUSABLE, RECYCLABLE, OR COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC PACKAGING

~ TRENDS

- More than half (53%) of reporting government signatories have quantitative targets in place to accelerate progress on reusability, recyclability, and compostability.
- In 2022, nine governments have set quantitative targets linked to their overarching commitment, for example **Australia** and the **United Kingdom** are aiming to ensure that 100% of plastic packaging will be recyclable, reusable, or compostable by 2025.
- Over the last reporting period (2022), governments have continued their efforts to accelerate progress on the 100% reusability, recyclability, and compostability target through regulations, standards, guidelines, and awareness-raising and education campaigns.
- Looking ahead, almost half (41%) of governments reporting in 2023 also have plans to develop or revise regulations, standards, or guidelines (e.g. standards for on-pack recyclability claims).

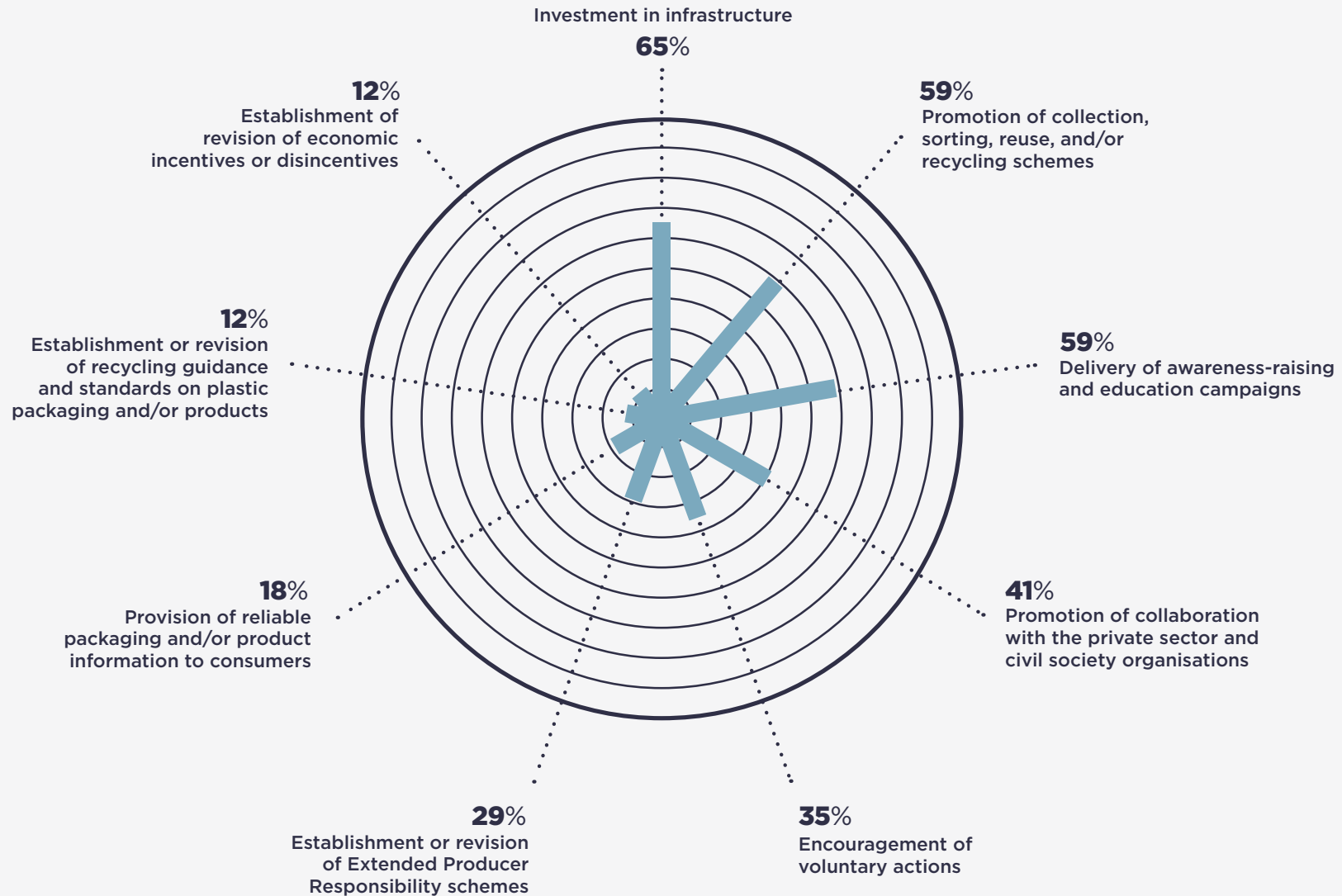
💡 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Chile** and **Greece** are revising their EPR schemes in order to increase eco-modulation (using fees to incentivise recyclable packaging, while penalising options most commonly identified as problematic or unnecessary).
- In **Peru**, the Technical Regulation for Biodegradable Plastic Bags was approved. Four proposals for Technical Regulations for reusable plastic bags, and reusable, recyclable, and biodegradable cutlery/tableware were prepared. During 2023, work has continued on a proposal for a Peruvian technical (voluntary) standard to measure the recyclability potential of containers and packaging.
- The majority of government signatories have also implemented initiatives to foster public awareness and education. Several governments have launched communication campaigns to aid citizens with better recycling. In **New Zealand**, The Ministry is developing a national communications campaign to support the recently announced changes to New Zealand's kerbside recycling system, which include standardising the materials collected in kerbside recycling and food scrap collections.
- Government signatories are also introducing labelling schemes to aid citizens with better recycling. In **New Zealand**, The Ministry supports industry adoption of the Australian Recycling Label, which is an on-pack label that helps consumers in **Australia** and **New Zealand** to correctly recycle their household packaging. **Chile** has launched the #ElijoReciclar Seal, which supports citizens in identifying highly recyclable containers.
- **New Zealand** plans to draft a third set of regulations to phase out certain plastic packaging by 2025. This targets all other PS and PVC food and beverage packaging not already covered by earlier bans. This will incentivise the use of recyclable and reusable packaging.
- In **Australia**, environment ministers agreed to reform the regulation of packaging by 2025 to ensure all packaging available in **Australia** is designed to be recovered, reused, recycled, and reprocessed safely, in line with circular economy principles.
- In the **United Kingdom**, planned reforms to EPR for packaging will see material quality incentivised across the packaging value chain. Modulated fees based on recyclability will be introduced to incentivise producers to use packaging and packaging materials that can be recycled. This will lead to improved material quality, and will help meet the demand for recycled content.

INCREASE COLLECTION, SORTING, AND RECYCLING RATES, AND FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND RELATED FUNDING MECHANISMS

Measures taken by governments to increase collection, sorting, and recycling rates

As a % of government signatories reporting (17)



TRENDS

- The majority (88%) of reporting governments this year have set quantitative targets to increase the volumes of plastic collected, sorted, and recycled.
- Government signatories continue to invest in collection and recycling infrastructure, and are promoting collection, sorting, and reuse and/or recycling schemes (e.g. deposit return schemes).
- About a third (29%) of government signatories reporting in 2022 have established or revised EPR schemes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Rwanda** established 18 PET collection centres in collaboration with the Private Sector Federation.
- In **Northern Ireland**, the Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Programme provides GBP 23 million to councils to help them make improvements to their recycling services. To date, a total of GBP 4.9 million in funding has been allocated to six councils, for nine projects. All nine projects have recently been completed, and the projected tonnages diverted from landfill for the nine completed projects is around 11,000 metric tonnes.
- The **Basque Country of Spain** has introduced the 'SEPARA Project', which uses digitalisation to improve the management and treatment of plastic, can, and brick packaging waste at sorting plants.
- The **Scottish Government** has allocated more than GBP 56 million of its GBP 70 million Recycling Improvement Fund. This provides capital funding to local authorities to invest in recycling infrastructure and services to accelerate progress towards 2025 waste and recycling targets, and Scotland's net-zero carbon commitment. By strengthening and improving local authority recycling infrastructure, there will be increased consistency of collection, and improvements to the quality and quantity of material collected.
- The **City of Ljubljana** implemented collective public procurement for the purchase of hygienic paper from recycled Tetra Pak; 39 organisations from City administration departments and institutions were included. Separate public procurement was carried out for City public companies (five in total). As a result of this policy, a cumulative 303 metric tonnes of Tetra Pak was recycled in the period August 2022 to May 2023.
- In the **City of Austin**, The Zero Waste Advisory Commission approved recommended amendments to the Universal Recycling Ordinance that will require composting access at multifamily properties (apartment blocks) in Austin. These proposed amendments are scheduled to be considered by the City Council on 21 September 2023, for an implementation date starting 1 October 2024.
- In **Chile**, The Ministry of the Environment developed the Recycling Fund contest 2022, which was created as a support mechanism for Extended Producer Responsibility. It seeks to finance projects carried out by local governments to prevent waste generation, and promote reuse, recycling, and other types of recovery. Projects may include the acquisition and installation of equipment for the pretreatment of packaging waste.
- **Peru** expects to establish EPR at the national level for packaging, including plastics. Goals and targets will be set for producers to take responsibility for these goods at the post-consumer stage. This regulation will encourage companies to increase collection, sorting, and recycling rates, as well as promote reuse.
- Since January 2023, in the **Netherlands**, the scope of the existing EPR scheme for plastic packaging has been extended to align with the EU Single-Use Plastics (SUP) guidelines. Producers of certain single-use plastic packaging and products will now contribute to the collection of waste, and the cleaning up of litter. Targeted products include single-serve food packaging, disposable cups, and bags and wrappers.

CURRENT AND FUTURE GLOBAL COMMITMENT GOVERNMENT SIGNATORIES



The nine States of the Consórcio Nordeste: Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, and Sergipe

ENDNOTES

1 LEY 21.368 | Chilean Regulation on the use of single-use plastics.

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