Valpak
by Reconomy

Packaging Analysis

Using data to mitigate EPR costs and inspire sustainable change

An introduction.

Changes to the UK Packaging Waste Regulations are coming in the form of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which will bring additional administrative reporting and financial burdens for packaging producers. This means having access to accurate, robust data has never been more important!



Why accurate data is so important

Packaging EPR will place greater responsibility on packaging producers to cover the costs of dealing with packaging they have placed on the UK market at the end of its life.

It is hoped that packaging EPR will encourage producers to rethink the design of their packaging and consider the sustainability of it throughout its entire life cycle - from design stage to recyclability at end of life.

Producers impacted by EPR need accurate packaging data, otherwise they will struggle to identify how to reduce compliance costs. Robust data enables the effective redesign of packaging to lower weight, increase recycled materials, or to enhance recyclability, and allows producers to assess how expensive the packaging is to recycle.

Recyclability reduces EPR costs

From 2026, the amount of money producers will need to pay towards EPR will vary based upon the recyclability of their packaging within the UK - a concept known as 'eco-modulation'. Eco-modulation will mean that packaging items placed on the market in 2025, that are more difficult or more costly to recycle will incur higher EPR fees than packaging that can be easily recycled, financially benefitting producers that have considered the sustainability of their packaging and made positive changes. Eco-modulation will therefore act as an incentive to support the desired aims of the packaging waste legislation reforms, towards a more circular economy for packaging, where reduction, reusability and recyclability are championed.

Although the new EPR fee structure is yet to be confirmed, it will certainly act as a catalyst, encouraging sustainable packaging design by rewarding those that make sound environmental decisions.

We encourage businesses to prepare for these changes now by analysing existing packaging formats to reduce their future EPR costs and, more importantly, their impact on the environment.

Ensure data is fit for purpose.

To ensure the correct fees are paid, obligated businesses will need to obtain granular data to meet the complex reporting requirements EPR will bring.



Obligated businesses currently report packaging data in simpler broad terms; therefore, knowing where they stand regarding future EPR compliance costs and gaining an understanding of what packaging will have the greatest financial impact is important. To stay ahead, businesses should begin to assess and review the packaging data they hold.

Some steps to consider are outlined as follows:

- Review existing packaging data sources to identify older weights and then implement a robust process to capture new data
- Packaging format, colour, composition, and polymer type will likely need to be reported in future, so consider the granularity that may be required and how best to capture this
- Forecast future EPR costs against the current packaging portfolio to identify packaging that will have significant financial implications

Once businesses understand their current position, from a cost and environmental perspective, the next step should be to determine priority areas to focus packaging analysis on.

Data quality assessment.

Valpak encourages businesses affected by EPR for packaging regulations to undertake Data Quality Assessments.

These are health checks on current packaging weights to assess granularity and ensure that data sets are accurate and robust enough to meet EPR requirements and ensure compliance.

Valpak can carry out third party assessments for affected businesses to identify:

- The products that have packaging weights assigned to them
- Plastic packaging components where polymer type is unknown
- Any packaging components that are missing recyclability information
- Packaging components where recycled content is unknown
- Age of current weights

This process highlights where improvements need to be made. Valpak will then purchase the products identified, weigh the associated packaging in-house and / or scan the polymers with our Polymer Reader to identify plastic type.

For businesses wishing to carry out further packaging analysis, accurate data will mean that Valpak can successfully benchmark products to determine where they sit in the market.

Packaging analysis.

Packaging legislation reforms will provide businesses with an opportunity to gain in-depth insights from their data, which they can use to make positive changes to packaging.



If action is taken now to ensure packaging data is up to date and accurate, affected businesses will have a clear understanding of their overall packaging contributions and will therefore pay the correct EPR fees from the start.

For businesses looking for support, Valpak can provide packaging data insights. Our Packaging Analysis service, which is supported by our online Insight Platform, enables businesses to compare their current packaging data against the rest of industry to find industry average and best in class comparisons.

This insight cuts across various metrics. For example, we can:

- Benchmark a business's packaging based on forecast EPR costs
- Explore alternative packaging materials to minimise packaging weights
- Compare the recycled content and recyclability of packaging against anonymised industry averages

These comparisons pinpoint where quick wins can be made and can inform the implementation of more fundamental changes, which would allow businesses to move towards 'best in class'. They can also help to highlight a business's progression towards more sustainable packaging.

An understanding of how a business's packaging performs compared to the rest of industry can set a president and pace for other businesses to follow suit and make positive changes.

What If Modelling.

To further support businesses with making packaging changes in line with EPR, Valpak has developed a new product - What If Modelling.



The process enables businesses to create before and after comparisons of their data sets, by applying a set of hypothetical modifications to their packaging data then comparing the new EPR liability cost and tonnage breakdowns with existing ones.

It enables business to see what impact making certain changes would have on their packaging obligation and total liability cost.

The results of hypothetical packaging modifications are presented in an interactive Excel dashboard that displays before and after total liability cost and tonnage breakdowns side by side.

The dashboard offers a range of functionalities that enable the user to view their results in different ways, by:

- Switching between tonnage and total liability costs
- Filtering data based on packaging level, base material, recyclability, category, branding, and import status
- Breaking the data down by packaging level, base material, recyclability, category, branding, and import status
- Creating multiple different sets of changes to investigate the most effective strategy for reducing tonnage and costs

Data insight.

Valpak has also developed a live, online tool (the Insight Platform) that provides businesses with a clear picture of packaging, and supplier data, enabling them to report on and manage performance and environmental compliance, make informed packaging and supplier decisions, and demonstrate due diligence.

This platform is underpinned by the UK's largest product and packaging weights database, which holds over 44 million SKUs, and counting!

Insight Platform users can:

- View their business's packaging and product data at a granular level
- Generate detailed reports to inform and assist internal decision making
- Track packaging usage across the globe
- Filter by metrics such as material type, sales location, and recyclability
- Track progress on packaging targets
- Forecast and analyse environmental compliance costs
- Understand the carbon footprint of the packaging they are placing on the market
- Generate packaging data to ensure compliance



Nando's

"The level of detail in the Packaging Comparison report is world class! Valpak are industry leaders in this area and have all the data and connections to help us with our sustainability journey. We will always recommend Valpak's services to other businesses looking to improve and manage their packaging footprint.

Nandos Grocery International Ltd.



Packaging strategy.

Once a business gains insight into how its packaging compares to the rest of the market, it can use the information to inform and drive decisions to implement change.

The information will enable a business to:

- Identify top products or packaging to focus on to reduce environmental or EPR cost impacts, or use of undesirable materials
- Identify gaps and ensure that data is robust enough to substantiate environmental claims regarding their packaging
- Explore and model potential changes to packaging as part of future scenario planning to identify potential EPR cost savings, or environmental or commercial benefits
- Review the materials that make up their packaging and implement a strategy and targets to drive future changes based on priorities, as well as set a packaging baseline to track progress against
- Move forward with more in-depth analysis, utilising techniques such as life cycle assessments, that measure the environmental impacts of packaging over its entire life cycle, from cradle-to-grave
- Continue to monitor and assess packaging usage, recurrently select the next top products to focus on and review aims, and set a process for new product lines to ensure the SKUs are captured

Valpak support.

Valpak can support businesses through this time of change, allowing them to focus on core activities whilst ensuring they are prepared for Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging.



Our Data Insights and Consultancy services have unrivalled experience to support strategic packaging goals. **Please do not hesitate to get in touch.**

For a help and advice please contact us

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