

WHY REUSE?

Reuse systems are gaining momentum in Canada. Their appeal rests on the many benefits they potentially offer. Reuse **reduces waste** sent for disposal; can offer **cost savings**; and **drives down energy and resource use** by displacing the need to manufacture new items from raw materials. Reuse includes both refill and return systems. Return involves a business-run system where containers are returned, washed and reused for the same purpose. Refill refers to consumer-owned and managed containers, such as bring-your-own programs.

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Refill Coalition – FOOD, BEVERAGE, AND CLEANING PRODUCTS



PARTNERS

UK manufacturers, retailers and tech companies



PILOT LOCATIONS

In-store at Aldi UK's Solihull and Leamington Spa branches. Upcoming home delivery service by Ocado Retail.



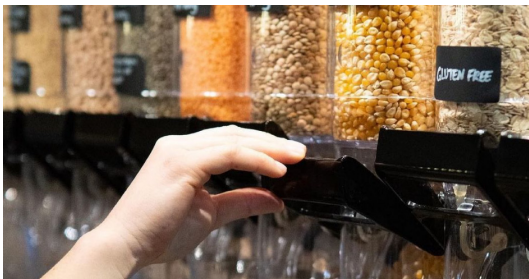
SECTOR

In-store and online retail



PRODUCT CATEGORY

Food, Beverage, and Cleaning Products

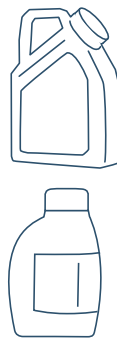


THE COMPANY

The Refill Coalition is a collaborative initiative uniting manufacturers, retailers, and technology providers. It focuses on developing and implementing open-source standardized refill systems for a global supply chain, starting with a UK trial for both in-store and online.

Over 56.5 billion units of single-use plastic is sold annually by UK, as estimated by **Greenpeace**

In-store solution: Each reusable vessel replaces twenty-four 500g single-use plastic packs



Online solution: Each consumer-sized vessel replaces five 500g single-use plastic packs

Between 67% – 85% of UK adults are interested in trying refill options in mainstream supermarkets —Opinium.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Standardized reusable bulk vessels help cut out single-use plastic and increase efficiencies throughout the supply chain. For certain SKUs and categories, this creates savings throughout the supply chain and enables retailers to offer products at reduced prices compared to pre-packaged alternatives.
- Both of the Refill Coalition's solutions have been designed using open-source principles to enable fast adoption by retailers and manufacturers across a global supply chain.
- Refill Coalition's in-store refill has been trialled by Aldi UK in two stores since November 2023 and is already showing positive results across commercial, operational and environmental metrics.
- Refill Coalition's online returnable solution will be trialled by Ocado, the UK's largest online retailer, in 2024 and is also expected to be trialled in-store by other retailers, where consumers will have to bring the empties back to the store.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS: FOOD, BEVERAGE, AND CLEANING PRODUCTS



FROM SOLUTION TO PRACTICE

Uniting a range of partners and technology innovators has been key to navigating the Refill Coalition’s logistical and supply chain challenges.

Since 2020, the Refill Coalition has worked together to develop two solutions:

- **In-store refill:** a modular in-store refill station where customers can bring their own containers to refill both dry goods and liquids. The solution uses a supply chain pool of 14.4-litre standardized reusable vessels, which are washed and reused.
- **Online returnables:** the second solution is a standardized 3.3L consumer-sized container “mini-bulk,” which is pre-filled with products and delivered to consumers’ homes for use before being returned empty to the driver at the next delivery. The “mini-bulk” container can be used for both dry goods and liquids and is optimized for efficiency using online supermarket delivery totes.



POLICY CONTEXT

- This initiative is supported by the UK Research and Innovation’s (UKRI) *Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging Challenge* through Innovate UK. UKRI is a non-departmental government body sponsored by the government’s Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.
- Extended producer responsibility (EPR) makes producers pay for 100% of the cost of disposal of products starting October 2025. The government announced it will set specific targets for reuse and refill systems.
- The UK Plastics Pact has committed to 100% of plastics packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025.

OTHER COLLABORATIONS TO CHECK OUT

A **Canadian example of a collaboration between grocers** was launched in January 2024. Major grocers (Metro, Sobeys, Walmart), Reusables, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the City of Ottawa, supported by the Circular Innovation Council, are working together to make reusable food containers available for certain products at no cost. Participating locations will share a pool of reusable containers while each is required to provide a container return bin. Return options will also be provided at other convenient drop-off locations within the defined catchment area.

See **Reuse Policy Tracker** hosted by Upstream for more policy examples from Canada/US.