Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Global Harmonization Through Risk-Based Science: "The Use of Recycled PET (rPET) in Food Packaging"

Languages: English

21 October 2026
12:30-13:30 PM

Format: In-person reception and technical dialogue

Target Audience: CCCF delegates, food safety regulators, Codex observers, policymakers involved in plastics and packaging regulation, representatives of international organizations, industry experts, and technical specialists in recycled plastics and food contact materials.

Proposal Overview

The increasing global emphasis on sustainable packaging solutions has accelerated the adoption of recycled polyethylene terephthalate (rPET) in food-contact applications. At the same time, regulators and international standard-setting bodies continue to emphasize the importance of science-based frameworks to ensure that sustainability objectives are achieved without compromising consumer health and food safety.

This reception seeks to foster constructive dialogue on the role of risk-based science in supporting the safe use of rPET in food packaging and advancing greater international regulatory alignment. The session will provide an opportunity for delegates and experts to examine current scientific approaches, regulatory practices, and technological developments related to rPET, while exploring pathways toward harmonized standards that facilitate both public health protection and sustainable trade.

Food packaging plays a critical role in ensuring food safety, supporting fair trade, and advancing sustainability. Aligned with Codex principles on science-based decision-making and risk analysis, transparent and evidence-driven regulatory systems can enable innovation in packaging materials while maintaining consumer trust. The discussion will also highlight the role of plastic recycling and the 2024 UN Environment Assembly commitments to reduce pollution and promote a more sustainable future for food packaging.
Documents for this Virtual Working Group

Session Objectives

The reception aims to:

- Promote understanding of risk-based approaches used to evaluate the safety of rPET in food-contact applications.
- Share international experiences and emerging practices related to the authorization, monitoring, and quality assurance of rPET materials.
- Encourage dialogue on opportunities for greater global harmonization of regulatory frameworks governing recycled plastics used in food packaging.
- Highlight the contribution of safe and effective recycling systems to sustainability objectives, circular economy initiatives, and resource efficiency.

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Proposed Format and Agenda

12:30–12:35 PM | Welcome Remarks and Introduction Opening remarks by the moderator, including the objectives and relevance of the session within the broader context of Codex work on food safety and consumer protection.

12:35–12:45 PM | Keynote Presentation: "Risk-Based Approaches for Food Contact Materials and Consumer Safety"

This keynote presentation will explore an introduction to Agenda Item 14 and a high-level overview of the risk-based approach to reviewing recycled plastics.

Proposed Speaker: Dr. Lauren Posnick Robin– U.S. Delegate to the Codex Committee for Contaminants in Food.

12:45–13:05 PM | Technical Presentation: "Advances in rPET Technology and International Regulatory Approaches"

This presentation will provide an overview of current rPET production technologies, decontamination and quality assurance processes, and the scientific principles supporting food-grade applications. It will also examine existing regulatory approaches and authorization systems, including examples from the United States FDA and the European Union framework for recycled plastics intended for food contact use.

Proposed Speaker: Jim Huang, expert in recycled plastics and food packaging.

13:05–13:25 PM | Panel Discussion: "Toward Global Harmonization of rPET Standards and Safety Frameworks"

Moderated discussion addressing:

- Key regulatory considerations for the safe use of rPET.
- Scientific and technical challenges facing regulators and industry.
- Opportunities for international collaboration and alignment.
- The role of harmonized approaches in supporting trade, sustainability, and consumer confidence.

Moderator: Eng. Elshahaat Selim

13:25–13:30 PM | Closing Remarks

Participants will be invited to continue informal discussions and networking during lunch.

Expected Outcomes

The proposed reception is expected to contribute to:

- Improved understanding among participants of the scientific and regulatory considerations associated with the use of rPET in food packaging.
- Increased awareness of international approaches and best practices related to food-grade recycled plastics.
- Constructive dialogue toward greater regulatory coherence and harmonization based on science and risk analysis principles.
- Enhanced engagement among regulators, international organizations, industry representatives, and technical experts on sustainable packaging solutions that protect public health and support environmental objectives.