

Requirements for a Quality Assurance System implementing Article 6 of Regulation (EU) N° 2022/1616 for collection, sorting operations and final pre-processing producing plastic input



1. Background of this document

Commission Regulation (EU) No 2022/1616 on recycled plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with foods intends to set the basis to produce safe recycled plastics for food contact applications. A key element set out in this Regulation to reach a high level of safety is to ensure that input plastic waste for technologies (suitable or novel) meets requirements of Chapter III, Article 6.

EuPC, EXPRA/EPRO, NMWE, PETCORE EUROPE and UNESDA, gathering their plastics packaging value chain knowledge, have jointly created this document. It is intended to help collection and sorting operators, as well as their customers and certification bodies, understand what is required to comply with Article 6 of Regulation (EU) No 2022/1616.

It is important to note that the material in scope - and whether this is classified as waste, or a product - will determine the competent authority responsible for controlling compliance with Article 6. Therefore, end-of-waste (EoW) criteria should eventually be addressed to define the jurisdictional boundaries.

2. Scope of the document

This document covers pre-processing activities, including collection and sorting centres. Activities consisting of pre-treatment (washing, grinding...) to produce the plastic input for the decontamination unit do not constitute the focus of the document as they are already covered by existing third-party certification.

In this document there is a review of the requirements described in Article 6 of [Regulation \(EU\) N° 2022/1616](#) and a description of the procedures to be implemented in all collection and pre-processing of plastic packaging waste to be recycled into food contact plastics in view of developing a certification scheme.

Regulation (EU) N° 2022/1616 includes a requirement for an independent third-party certification of the quality assurance systems (Article 6(3(c))). The quality assurance system shall ensure that the conditions and requirements set out in Article 6(1) and (2) are met. The Regulation specifies a transition period for the development and implementation of a Certification Scheme, which ended on 9 October 2024 (cf. Article 33). Therefore, as of 10 October 2024, waste management operators in principle must be able to demonstrate the existence of a third-party certified quality assurance system for the recycled post-consumer plastic waste they recycle for food contact.

At the time of the guidance development, the certification process is not yet in place and this guidance aims at providing the needed elements for its establishment.

In terms of structure, the document first provides an overview of the legal requirements set out in Article 6 followed by an interpretation of these legal requirements in practice. Based on the two latter points, the documentary checks are described which collectors and sorters must have in place and which should be verified by the auditors during the third-party on-site audits.

This Guidance is non-legal in its nature and should not be interpreted as legal advice.

3. Definitions

Distinction of legal requirements and requirements for a certification system

Throughout the document, the following terms are used:

Must or shall: refers to a legal requirement.

Should refers to the guidance authors' interpretation of elements to be included in a certification scheme. It is to be noted, however, that, in standardisation processes, the word "shall" is generally used for requirements set by a standard/certification and must refer to a legal requirement (in other words when this guidance will be translated into a certification scheme, all requirements listed has "should" in this guidance will be translated into requirements using the word "shall").

For the purposes of this document, the definitions used in Regulation (EU) No 2022/1616 apply (Figure 1). However, in view of facilitating the understanding of this guidance, additional terms have been introduced (see scheme in Figure 2 and definitions below):

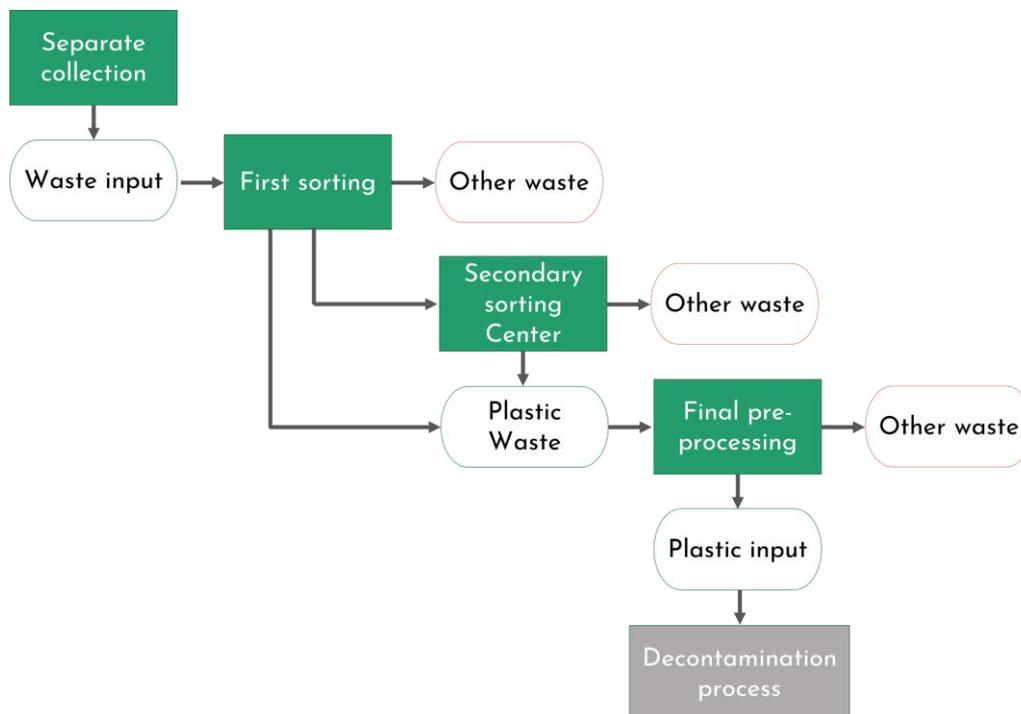


Figure 1: Definitions from Regulation (EU) No 2022/1616

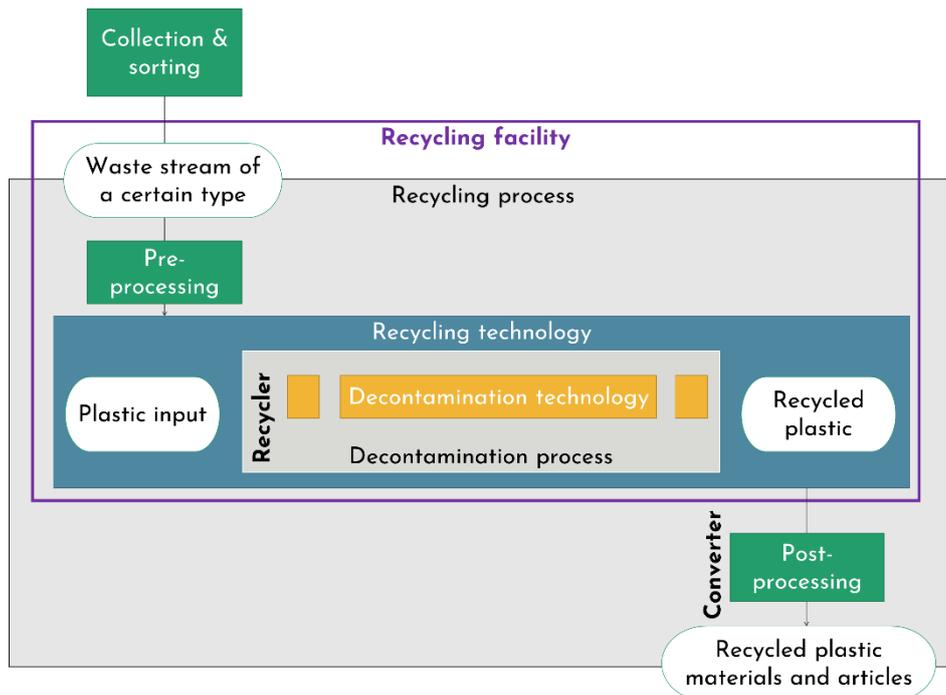


Figure 2: Definitions set for the purpose of this guidance document.

Collection - means the gathering of waste, including the preliminary sorting and preliminary storage of waste for the purposes of transport to a waste treatment facility. The separately collected material is the 'Waste Input'.

Collector – means the organization coordinating the waste collection.

Sorting – includes both First Sorting Centres and Secondary Sorting Centres. The output of the sorting is the Plastic Waste.

First Sorting Centre – typically the packaging sorting centre where plastic packaging is removed from other separately collected materials.

Secondary Sorting Centre – where plastic packaging undergoes additional sorting to increase the granularity of the sorting, typically by polymer and/or format. All facilities carrying out sorting that are not the First Sorting Centre or the Final Pre-Processing Operation fall into this category.

Sorter – means the actor performing the first and / or secondary sorting.

Final Pre-Processing Operation – the facility that carries out the final sorting and / or treatment of the plastic prior to the decontamination process. The output of the final pre-processing operation is the 'Plastic Input'.

The Decision Tree depicted in Figure 3, should be used by collection, sorting or any preprocessing operators, auditors, and customers to assess whether the plastic and plastic waste collected can be considered fit for purpose for recycling for food contact applications as per Regulation EU 2022/1616, when such a requirement applies to the intended decontamination technology.

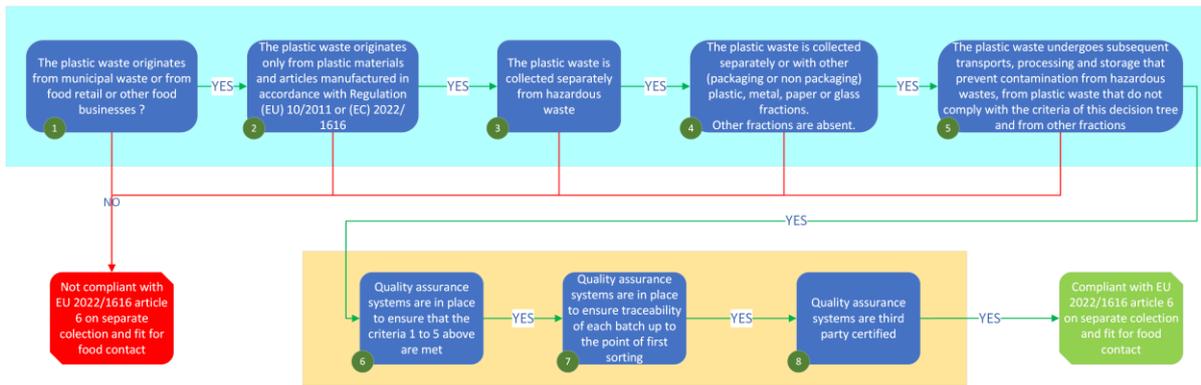


Figure 3: Decision tree to assess compliance vs EU 2022/1616 provisions for food contact applications.

Decision tree (figure 3) clarifies the need for evidence (documentation, on-site inspections, etc.) supporting the documents of compliance throughout the chain of custody, up to the input of the recycling (decontamination) process. The evidence to check the criteria described in the decision tree boxes is detailed in the following chapters of this document.

4. Requirements for Collectors and Sorters

When using plastic waste in food contact applications those involved in collection, sorting and final pre-processing must implement the following criteria internally to operate in accordance with Article 6 of Reg. (EU) N° 2022/1616.

A. Origin of the collected waste

To demonstrate compliance with Article 6.1a) of Regulation (EU) 2022/1616, collectors shall ensure that the waste originates only from one of the following sources:

- Post-consumer municipal waste,
- food retail,
- another food business if it was only intended to be used in contact with food, or
- a “recycling scheme” (i.e. waste from the recycling in closed and controlled product loops)

. Traceability from the first point of sorting to plastic waste input must be maintained (Art. 6.3.b).

Legal reference
Reg. EU N° 2022/1616. Article 6.1, a <i>the plastic waste originates only from municipal waste, or from food retail or other food businesses if it was only intended and used for contact with food, including waste discarded from a recycling scheme in accordance with Article 9(6);</i>

Explanation of the legal reference in practice:

The collector must ensure that the waste input is identifiable and accompanied by appropriate documentation detailing its origin from post-consumer municipal waste, food retail, another food business (if it was only intended to be used in contact with food) or a recycling scheme deeming it suitable for recycling, decontamination and use in food contact applications. The storage and processing of the input waste suitable for food contact recycling should be kept separately from other sources to ensure the traceability of the material to the waste output and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Regulation.

Sorters should characterise plastic waste according to EN 15347:2007, including information regarding the origin of the waste. Specifically, information about the material being post-consumer and originating from municipal sources or from food retail or other food businesses should be included.

Documentary check:

Collector:

- Verification that recycled post-consumer plastic waste originates only from municipal waste, food retail or another food business or a ‘recycling scheme’ and therefore meets the requirements of Article 6(1a)) Regulation (EU) 2022/1616.
- The collector should make available the public information about separate collection requirements that is communicated to consumers.

Sorters:

- Where material is sorted to allow its use in food contact applications this must follow the requirement that the material has been separately collected, and is either municipal, from food retail, or another food business or a ‘recycling scheme’.
- The country of origin of the input waste must be recorded if the source country is not in the EU.

- Input waste control should be performed to ensure compliance with the above.
- Any waste inputs not meeting the above requirements should be stored and processed separately at all sorting operations. Where this is applicable, production records should document this and be available on request. Output batches of plastic waste should be characterised, according to EN 15347:2007. The origin of the waste (pre-consumer or post-consumer) as well as the source (municipal waste or equivalent) must be specified.

Final pre-processor:

- Verification must be in the form of a quality assurance system certified by an independent third party that recycled post-consumer plastic waste originates only from municipal waste, food retail or another food business or a 'recycling scheme' and is therefore aligned with the requirements of Article 6(1a)) Regulation (EU) 2022/1616.

Legal reference
Reg. EU N° 2022/1616. Article 6.1, b <i>the plastic waste originates only from plastic materials and articles manufactured in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 or recycled plastic materials and articles manufactured in accordance with this Regulation;</i>

Explanation of the legal reference in practice:

The auditor should verify the origin of the waste. For non-EU waste see section 5: Certification of Importers.

When the plastic waste is collected in the EU, the authors of this document assume the legal requirements are met as a plastic article placed on the EU market in a food contact application should comply with Regulation (EU) 10/2011 and, where applicable, with Regulation (EU) 2022/1616.

Documentary check for A. Origin of the collected waste:

[see above]

B. Accepted separate collection systems

Input waste must be collected via a separate collection system.

Legal reference
<p>Reg. EU N° 2022/1616. Article 6.1, c <i>the plastic waste is subject to separate collection;</i></p> <p>Reg. EU N° 2022/1616. Article 6.2 <i>the plastic waste shall be considered as collected separately when one of the following conditions is fulfilled:</i> <i>(a) it consists only of plastic materials and articles meeting the requirements of paragraph 1, points (a) and (b), and which have been collected separately for recycling from any other waste;</i> <i>(b) it is collected together with other packaging waste fractions of municipal waste or with other non-packaging plastic, metal, paper or glass fractions of municipal waste collected separately from residual waste for recycling, and the following requirements are met:</i></p> <p><i>(i) the collection system collects only non-hazardous waste;</i> <i>(ii) the collection of waste and the subsequent sorting are designed and carried out to minimize contamination of collected plastic waste from any plastic waste not meeting the requirements of paragraph 1, points (a) and (b), or other waste;</i></p>

Explanation of the legal reference in practice:

Collectors must have waste collection schemes in place which collect plastic waste separately from the mixed residual waste. Separate plastic waste collection can be done together with other plastic, metal, paper or glass packaging. Separate collection systems must exclude hazardous waste such as pesticides, solvents, paint, etc. that depict the following symbols or equivalent if non-EU country is not using global harmonized system for labelling:



Collection systems should be designed to avoid the collection of hazardous items as described above.

Table 1 indicates what collection systems can be considered 'collected separately' according to Article 6.1. This matrix should be used for the identification of compatible collection schemes.

Collection Scheme	Compliant	Non-compliant
Deposit Return System.	√	
Separately collected plastic packaging with or without metal, and/or paper, and/or glass and / or other types of packaging. Non packaging plastic can be included.	√	
Mixed collection.		X
Waste plastic sorted from non-separately collected residual waste.		X
Hand picking <i>after non separate collection</i> .		X
Ocean plastic.		X

Table 1: Most common collection systems compliance with Article 6 (non-exhaustive).

Documentary Check

Collectors

- Collectors must operate a system where the plastic waste is collected separately from hazardous waste, as defined in the EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC or equivalent third country regulation (equivalence with EU hazardous waste classification) as well as keeping documents on the details of communication activities to consumers.

Sorters

- Sorters must only produce plastic waste for food contact applications from waste input declared as separately collected.
- Sorters should keep documents demonstrating that waste inputs to the facility are from collection systems that are designed to exclude hazardous items defined in the EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC or equivalent third country regulation (equivalence with EU hazardous waste classification).
-

Sorters should keep records of waste types allowed in separate collection systems from each collector to demonstrate compliance with Article 6.

C. Plastic input specification

Collectors and sorters must maintain a quality procedure in place to verify that the plastic waste matches its specification to eventually ensure that the plastic input to the decontamination is not compromised as described in Article 6.1(d).

Legal reference
<p>Reg. EU N° 2022/1616. Article 6.1, d <i>the presence of plastic materials and articles that are different from the plastic for which the decontamination process is intended, including caps, labels and adhesives, other materials and substances, and remaining food is reduced to a level specified in the requirements for the plastic input provided by the recycler and which shall not compromise the achieved level of decontamination.</i></p>

Explanation of the legal reference in practice:

A waste specification should be in place between the different operators involved in the pre-processing from the waste input to the plastic input. Where the material is plastic waste, it should follow the required characteristics of plastic waste set out in European standard EN 15347:2007. The waste specification should be checked prior to despatch by the sorter producing it and by the receiving party.

The information set out in Annex 1, Table 1, Column 5 of Regulation (EU) 2022/1616 should be established prior to treatment of plastic waste at the Final Pre-Processing Operation. This will be determined by sampling and testing and be carried out either by the sorter supplying the waste plastic to the Final Pre-Processing Operation or by the Final Pre-Processing Operation themselves. This should be agreed between the two parties. Where the sorter carries out the analysis, the data should be supplied to the Final Pre-Processing Operation, and they should also carry out periodic sampling and testing to verify the analysis.

Sorters and final pre-processors should check that the input waste matches their waste specification as agreed with their supplier. The output of the Final Pre-Processing Operation should match the plastic input specification defined by the operator of the Decontamination Process. This specification should include content of caps, labels and other materials so that it does not compromise the achieved level of decontamination.

Documentary check:

Sorters

- Waste Plastic Specifications (secondary sorting EN 15347:2007) & collection specifications, where applicable.
- Records of checks on compliance with Specifications (input and output)
- Quality control results against Annex I, Table 1, Column 5 of Regulation (EU) 2022/1616, where this is done by the sorter.

Final Pre-Processing Operations:

- Records of checks on compliance with input specifications.
- Specifications for recycled plastic ready for decontamination, in line with EN 1534X series.
- Records of test results on compliance with specifications for recycled plastic ready for decontamination.
- Testing results against Annex I, Table 1, Column 5 of Regulation (EU) 2022/1616 provided by the sorter or carried out by the Final Pre-Processing Operation.
- Verification testing results against Annex I, Table 1, Column 5 of Regulation (EU) 2022/1616 where carried out by the sorter.

D. Quality assurance systems

A quality assurance procedure to ensure the origin of the waste and the type of collection is described in Article 6(3).

Legal reference
<p>Reg. EU N° 2022/1616. Article 6.3 <i>The plastic waste shall be controlled throughout collection and pre-processing by means of quality assurance systems.</i></p> <p>Reg. EU N° 2022/1616. Article 6.3, a <i>The quality assurance systems shall ensure the conditions and requirements set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 are met;</i></p>

Explanation of the requirement in practice:

Sorters should have a documented procedure in place to check the origin of the waste and ensure separate collection has been used for the incoming plastic waste.

Furthermore, collectors and sorters should define and document all the operations within their process and list all quality controls done at each step. An internal procedure should document the quality assessment performed at each of the operation steps, including a quality control of the critical parameters of each operation. The procedure should determine the frequency and size of sampling, and all deviations should be documented and justified.

Additionally, for the final pre-processing, the quality assurance process should identify the use of chemicals throughout the operations, stating where food contact compliant chemicals are used, and include how to treat non-conforming batches of material.

Documentary check:

Sorters:

- Input Waste / Waste Plastic Specification.
- Sorted Plastic Waste Output Specification.
- Records to demonstrate checks carried out against the above.
- Testing results against Annex I, Table 1, Column 5 of Regulation (EU) 2022/1616, where applicable.

Legal reference
<p>Reg. EU N° 2022/1616. Article 6.3, b <i>The quality assurance systems shall ensure traceability of each batch up to the point of the first sorting of collected plastic waste; and,</i></p>

Explanation of the requirement in practice:

Sorters should ensure that a documented quality assurance system is in place that aligns with the requirements set out in this document. In particular, all collectors supplying the facility should be documented. The input

waste sources generating the waste plastic destined for food contact applications should be known and documented. Batch traceability is not, however, required in the first sorter. There should be traceability of each batch once waste plastic is first baled which is typically done at the stage of the first sorter.

Documentary check:

Records to be kept by First Sorter:

- Supplier of waste. For food retail or other food businesses this should include the company (or companies where waste from multiple sites is collected on one vehicle) generating the waste.
- Name of municipality where the waste was separately collected (where material from multiple municipalities may be present, all should be recorded).
- Details of hazardous items excluded from the collection systems for each supplier. Information to be included as to how inclusion of these items is minimised, for example communication and educational activities and checks during collection.
- Where the waste is from food retail or other food businesses, details of the nature of the businesses from where the waste was collected should be recorded. Where waste is not from the EU this should be recorded.
- There is an internal procedure in place at the site to ensure there is at least a yearly check where plastic waste is proven to comply with the aforementioned points.

Records to be kept by the Secondary Sorter:

- Document of compliance from the First Sorter stating that the material complies with the requirements of Art 6 in terms of it being separately collected, post-consumer municipal waste or waste from food retail or other food businesses. Also, it should be stated that it comes from collection systems where the placing of hazardous waste is not permitted. It should state the waste plastic is from the EU, or, if not, the country (or countries) of origin.

The following references are related to Regulation (EU) 2023/2006 on good manufacturing practice for materials and articles intended to come into contact with foods.

<i>Legal reference</i>
<i>Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 4, a</i> <i>The business operator shall ensure that manufacturing operations are carried out in accordance with the general rules on GMP as provided for in Article 5, 6, and 7.</i>

Explanation of the requirement in practice:

Sorters and final pre-processors must have in place both a quality assurance system and quality controls that covers the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2023/2006. These procedures must be documented and maintained up to date.

Documentary check:

Confirm that the documentary requirements set out below for Articles 5, 6, and 7 of (EU) 2023/2006 forms part of a controlled quality assurance system that has systems in place for review.

Legal reference

Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 4, b

The business operator shall ensure that manufacturing operations are carried out in accordance with the detailed rules on GMP as set out in the Annex.

Explanation of the requirement in practice:

Regulation (EU) 2023/2006, Article 4(b) refers to requirements stated in its Annex relating to printing inks. These are not applicable to sorting operations of plastic waste.

Legal reference

Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 5.1

The business operator shall establish, implement and ensure adherence to an effective and documented quality assurance system. That system shall:

- (a) take account of the adequacy of personnel, their knowledge and skills, and the organization of the premises and equipment such as is necessary to ensure that finished materials and articles comply with the rules applicable to them;*
- (b) be applied considering the size of the business run by the operator, so as not to be an excessive burden on the business.*

Explanation of the requirement in practice

Sorters and final pre-processing operators must include in their quality assurance systems an overview of their personnel and responsibilities, ensuring adequate training for the tasks they perform.

Documentary check:

In addition to requirements mentioned above, sorters and final pre-processing -operators should have in place:

- Documented internal procedures for key operational activities related to the quality assurance system.
- A review process for internal procedures that can be implemented where required, for example if Output Specifications are not achieved on a regular basis.
- Description of the staff structure and responsibilities and training for relevant staff related to the quality assurance process, and associated training records.
- Documented systems for non-compliance in relation to incoming waste plastic and outgoing sorted plastic / recycled plastic.
- Quality check of the incoming waste, documentation stating gross weight, net weight, weighted date, and date of delivery. The details of the supplier are also to be recorded.
- Description of the storage area and traceability according to EN 15343, including physical inspections of stock on a regular basis.
- Quality control of the output against the output specification.

- Presence of a register of complaints received and actions taken.

Legal reference

Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 5.2

Starting materials shall be selected and comply with pre-established specifications that shall ensure compliance of the material or article with the rules applicable to it.

Explanation of the requirement in practice:

See requirements on input plastic waste type of collection.

Legal reference

Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 5.3

The different operations shall be carried out in accordance with pre-established instructions and procedures.

Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 6.1

The business operator shall establish and maintain an effective quality control system.

Explanation of the requirement in practice:

There are internal documented procedures in place to ensure a quality control of operations.

Operation parameters are described within an internal quality control procedure. Any deviations are recorded. There is a procedure in place to address deviations.

There is a quality control system in place to ensure the quality of the output (ensuring it matches the Output Specifications). The frequency of the sampling is justified via an internal procedure depending on the quality of the input plastic waste and the sorting operation parameters.

Documentary check:

- Check of documented quality assurance system.
- Check on records confirming quality of outputs meet the Output Specifications. These records should, as a minimum, detail when a test sample was taken as well as set out the results. The quality assurance process should detail the methodology and frequency of testing, as well as the sample size to be taken.

E. Quality control

Sorters and final pre-processing operator must have a documented procedure describing the quality control parameters performed at their facilities.

Legal reference

Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 6.2

The quality control system shall include monitoring of the implementation and achievement of GMP and identify measures to correct any failure to achieve GMP. Such corrective measures shall be implemented without delay and made available to the competent authorities for inspections.

Explanation of the requirement in practice:

The quality control system should have a documented review process. This shall include a mechanism to address any failures to achieve the GMP and take corrective action.

Documentary checks:

Sorters:

- Documented production records.
- Documented quality control system.

Legal reference

Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 7.1

The business operator shall establish and maintain appropriate documentation in paper or electronic format with respect to specifications, manufacturing formulae and processing which are relevant to compliance and safety of the finished material or article.

Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 7.2

The business operator shall establish and maintain appropriate documentation in paper or electronic format with respect to records covering the various manufacturing operations performed which are relevant to compliance and safety of the finished material or article and with respect to the results of the quality control system.

Explanation of the requirement in practice:

Sorters and final pre-processing operators must maintain documented evidence about their procedures and their implementation, input and output material and processes.

Documentary check:

The organisation must have appropriate documentation in place to record information regarding the Pre-Processing Process at a site including:

- Input Specifications
- Output Specifications
- Any production techniques employed related to achieving compliance with Article 6.

Legal reference

Reg. EU N° 2023/2006. Article 7.3

The documentation shall be made available by the business operator to the competent authorities at their request.

Explanation of the requirement in practice:

The documentation should be made available to competent authorities and accredited auditors under the quality assurance certification scheme.

5. Guidance on obligations for non-EU operators

Waste/material that is imported into the EU must originate from a collection, sorting and pre-processing chain that fulfils the same requirements as for operators located in the EU (origin of the collected waste (Section A), Approved separate collection systems (Section B), Plastic Input Specification (Section C), Quality Assurance (Section D) and Quality Control (Section E)).

Waste collected should exclude hazardous waste. Criteria for the definition of hazardous waste should be equivalent to those laid down by regulation 2008/98/EC.

Legal reference
Reg. EU N° 2022/1616. Article 6.1, b <i>the plastic waste originates only from plastic materials and articles manufactured in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 or recycled plastic materials and articles manufactured in accordance with this Regulation;</i>

In addition, for non-EU plastic waste, the auditor shall check that the applicant has a report demonstrating equivalence to EU 10/2011 including the positive list. The report shall be established by the local competent authority of the exporting country or by a firm with tracking records in the field of food contact materials and articles ('FCM&A'). The file shall be shared with a competent authority in the exporting country and in one of the EU Member states importing countries¹.

The points below can be used to guide the drafting of the above-mentioned report. However, they do not constitute an exhaustive list of elements to be compiled by the non-EU operator and/or importer and do not constitute a presumption of compliance which should be established by the competent authorities in the EU.

1. Food safety regulations in the country of origin include reference to food contact materials and articles (FCM&A). In case the country of origin does not have FCM&A regulations, compliance with EU FCM&A shall be officially required by the country of origin.
2. The origin country's legislation shall state that FCM&As do not transfer their constituents to food in quantities that could endanger human health or bring about an unacceptable change in the composition or organoleptic characteristics of the food.
3. The specific requirements for FCM&As in the country of origin shall be based on a positive list of monomers and additives. Specific restrictions, such as limits for specific migration or residual content, shall be equal to or stricter than relevant EU regulations and regulations of EU Member States
4. Rules for using recycled plastic material in FCM&A in the origin country shall be equal to or stricter than relevant EU regulations²
5. The country of origin shall have rules governing the FCM&A used in imported food to be equal to or stricter than the regulation of the country of origin, or EU regulations.

6. Certification

¹ List of competent authorities in EU and outside EU can be retrieved here:

https://food.ec.europa.eu/food-safety/chemical-safety/food-contact-materials/plastic-recycling_en

² In case recycled plastic usage for food contact application is not authorized in the country of origin then this is considered as a stricter rule,

Sorters and pre-processing operators shall have a certification in place that covers the requirements stated in Regulation (EU) 2022/1616, particularly those mentioned in Article 6.

Certification should be developed in accordance with EN 15343:2007 standard and it should specifically include detailed requirements relating to the requirements described of this guidance.

Certification should be issued by an independent third-party certification body with technical competence in the plastic sector, able to demonstrate it through an accreditation issued by a member of European Accreditation (EA) for product certification activities in accordance with ISO/IEC 17021 or ISO/IEC 17065. The industry will work within a transition period to implement certification under the above-mentioned accreditation. However, such certification is not yet possible due to a lack of appropriate bodies, as the European Commission last confirmed on 17 October 2024. It is unclear when such certification will be possible.

7. Monitoring and revision

This guidance has been built to support the PET value chain and specifically the operators of collection, sorting and pre-processing steps.

The signatories of this guidance will monitor the deployment of the certification schemes and their outcome. The certifiers should report to the signatories on the implementation of the certification schemes and share their experience. A first revision of the guidance is foreseen for 2026/2027, after the first audits have been performed. A synthesis will be established, and this guidance may be revised. The outcome shall be shared with the European Commission.

Disclaimer

Whilst a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) ensures waste management and support quality throughout the value chain, the waste management plan is defined by the competent authorities of the Member State. As the item has been discarded as waste, the EU Waste Framework Directive (WFD) applies.

Whilst the industry guidance provides elements on how to ensure compliance, it is the responsibility of Member States' Competent Authorities to review and adapt its Management Plan in such a way that the compliance to this Article can be met by the industry, along the value chain.

The same Waste Authorities should define appropriate end of waste criteria, and the European Commission should intervene to harmonize if necessary to ensure the circulation of recycled plastic products.

These clauses strengthen the link between EU 2022/1616 and the WFD by respecting the division of responsibility between the industry (Industry Quality System) and the Member State, which is responsible for defining waste management plans.

This guidance aims at enabling the certifiers to build schemes providing elements and evidence to the competent authorities, but these elements and evidence must not be regarded as a presumption of compliance.