

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: June 15, 2023

Report Number: HK2023-0020

Report Name: Update on Hong Kong Producer Responsibility Scheme for Glass Beverage Containers

Country: Hong Kong

Post: Hong Kong

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Agriculture in the News, Agriculture in the Economy, Beverages, Climate Change/Global Warming/Food Security

Prepared By: Adeline Ho

Approved By: Jennifer Clever

Report Highlights:

The Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department (EPD) implemented the Producer Responsibility Scheme on Glass Beverage Containers (GPRS) on May 1, 2023. Upholding the “polluter pays” principle, the GPRS requires stakeholders to share the responsibility for the collection, recycling, treatment, and disposal of glass beverage container products. The Hong Kong government and consumer concerns with waste management have grown in recent years. Preference towards simple and environmentally friendly packaging will continue to be the growing trend. This scheme does not apply to foreign manufacturers, but it does impact local distributors (including manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers) handling glass beverage containers. In 2022, U.S. imports of juices, wine, and spirits (GATS) amounted for \$70 million and decreased for 25 percent since 2021.

What items are included?

The GPRS covers beverages that are carried in sealed glass containers, including ready-to-serve drinks (e.g. alcoholic drink, water, soft drink, juice, coffee, tea, soybean and dairy-based drink) and concentrated instant drinks (e.g. concentrated juice, fruit vinegar and grapefruit honey).

Who does it apply to?

Suppliers under the GPRS means the local manufacturers and importers of the glass-bottled beverages, but do not include (i) retailers or wholesalers with no business involvement in manufacturing or importing the beverages; (ii) exporters or re-exporters who do not distribute the beverages in Hong Kong; and (iii) persons who only provide logistics services.

As a result, the scheme applies to suppliers involved in the manufacturing or distribution of the glass-containing beverages in Hong Kong from supply to consumption. Obligations under this scheme, including registration requirements, do not apply to foreign manufacturers handling glass beverage containers.

Details on GPRS

In 2022, 84,000 tons of waste glass containers were reportedly collected in Hong Kong. Glass containers recovered and treated locally are used for producing eco-pavers and cement (44 percent), while some are exported to other places for recycling (12 percent).

In line with the “polluter pays” principle (for more details see previous [GAIN report](#)), starting from 1 May 2023, beverage supplier (including manufacturer and importer) who distributes glass-bottled beverages in Hong Kong are required to register with the EPD as a registered supplier and fulfil the below obligations, including:

- Submit periodical returns on the glass-bottled beverages that they distributed or consumed in Hong Kong;
- Pay relevant container recycling levy at \$0.13 per liter-volume;
- Submit annual audit report to ensure accuracy of the information in the returns by a certified accountant; and
- Keep records relating to the returns for up to five years.

Beverage manufacturers may apply to the EPD for exemption from some of the above obligations including the payment of container recycling levy if they can provide their own arrangement for recovery and reuse of their own glass beverage containers in place and if they meet certain criteria.

In addition, any person who stores, treats, reprocesses, or recycles glass container waste must obtain a waste disposal license, and any person who imports into or exports from Hong Kong such waste must obtain the relevant import/export permit.

Table 1. Container Material In Relation To Beverage Types Sold in Hong Kong Market (2017)

Material Type <i>Million units (mkt share %)</i>	Bottled Water <i>Million units</i>	RTD Teas <i>Million units</i>	Carbonates <i>Million units</i>	Juices <i>Million units</i>	Other <i>Million uni</i>
PET bottles 1,394 (65%)	766	284	125	173	46
Liquid cartons 374 (17%)	0	250	0	118	6
Metal cans 340 (16%)	2	3	198	26	111
Glass bottles 47 (2%)	17	0	12	9	9
TOTAL 2,155 (100%)	785	537	335	326	172

Source: Euromonitor

According to Euromonitor’s data, about 65 percent of beverages in Hong Kong are in PET packaging and the remaining 35 percent are in liquid cartons, metal cans and glass bottles. In 2022, U.S. exports to Hong Kong included \$7 million worth of fruit and vegetable juices, \$60 million in wine, and \$3 million in distilled spirits. The Agricultural Trade Office has confirmed with local authorities that foreign manufacturers of glass-containing beverages are not subject to obligations under the scheme. However, as the Hong Kong Government is tightening its control on beverage packaging, exporters should note that sustainable and “eco-responsible” packaging will be a growing trend for the Hong Kong market.

Attachments:

No Attachments.