

Nestlé applauds Australian breakthrough

After three years in development an Australian online software application is set to revolutionise the impact of packaging on the environment.

Nestlé is the first multi-national to be validating and exploring the use of the Packaging Impact Quick Evaluation Tool (PIQET) for worldwide application.

PIQET was developed for the Sustainable Packaging Alliance (SPA) to provide a means for food and beverage packaging designers and manufacturers to identify, review and prioritise actions to reduce the environmental impact of their products.

“Companies using the tool are able to assess the environmental impact of their proposed packaging over its lifespan within a matter of minutes. A task which previously would have taken many weeks, thousands of dollars to complete and could only be performed by a small number of life cycle assessment specialists,” said Ian Coles, Chair of SPA.

“It offers comparable rankings of the proposed packaging across solid waste, water, energy and climate change criteria. Importantly, PIQET allows users to explore variations to their packaging designs to minimise the effect it has on the key criteria.”

“PIQET allows environmental considerations to be taken into account alongside financial and marketing elements - something that could not be done before,” he said.

PIQET considers all levels of packaging and different product categories and allows for assessments of incoming raw materials packaging systems and outgoing packaging systems of an organisation.

PIQET is available by subscription and has already been used by a number of leading food and beverage companies, many who were involved in its development.

These included **Nestlé Australia, Cadbury Schweppes, Lion Nathan, MasterFoods Australia and Simplot Australia.**

Sustainability Victoria and the Commonwealth Department's of Environment and Water Resources and, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts provided funding for the project.

Dr Lars Lundquist, Packaging Research Scientist at the Nestlé Research Centre in Lausanne said today that PIQET offered great promise to Nestlé to meet its environmental policy requirements on packaging in a more efficient manner.



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“We have evaluated PIQET and alternative approaches against conventional packaging life cycle assessment (LCA). PIQET was found to be the most relevant tool with respect to our requirements related to reliability of results and ease of use. Therefore we are now considering integrating PIQET into our global packaging development process. PIQET will be a valuable complement to our use of LCA,” said Dr Lundquist.

“Our Australian case study confirmed that PIQET delivers fast feedback in our packaging considerations and is thus compatible with our packaging innovation process as a fast moving consumer goods company.

“Versus conventional clean-slate LCA approaches PIQET shortens the evaluation time considerably. It thus permits us to address environmental performance of packaging in a systematic way already at the concept stage, giving us a maximized degree of freedom for change at minimum cost.

"Between 1991 and 2007, Nestlé saved 326,000 tonnes of packaging through its source reduction projects. PIQET will enable Nestlé to further accelerate its progress towards more environmentally sustainable packaging," he said.

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