KEEPING PET BOTTLES IN THE LOOP

Recycling & reuse are complimentary ways that PET bottles can be reused over and over again in a circular loop.

RECYCLING:
Reuses the Material

The material is collected, recycled, remade and then sent back to the consumer.

REUSE:
Reuses the Bottle

The bottles are returned, washed, refilled and then sent back to the consumer.

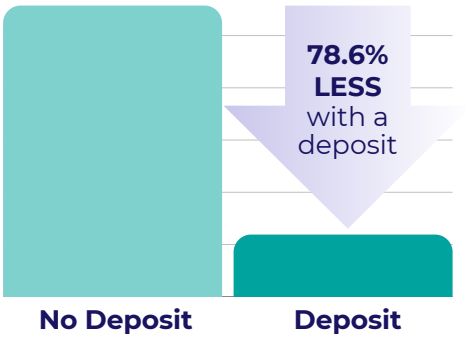
A VALUABLE MATERIAL

Would you leave a $20 bill lying on the ground?

Waste is a valuable resource. It is critical that packaging, reusable or single-serve, is recovered and not lost. **Attaching a value** increases the likelihood that an item or material is recovered and not mismanaged.

A **Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)** is one way to attach value, where consumers who return their bottles for reuse or recycling get a deposit back. Many countries have implemented DRS for single-serve beverage containers, and several have achieved PET bottle collection rates of 90% and above![1]

Amount of Mismanaged Beverage Containers[2]



Attaching value to the material is proven to improve collection and reduce mismanaged waste.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SYSTEM: ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, & SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

To evaluate the right solution for the right situation, there are many essential environmental, economic, and social factors to first consider. Be sure to ask critical questions such as:

- Is the infrastructure in place to support the chosen system?
- How far must the bottle travel and how does this impact emissions?
- How many times is the bottle used, and is it recycled at the end of its life?
- How affordable, accessible, and scalable is the solution, particularly in remote communities?

AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM SHOULD BE FUNCTIONAL, ACCESSIBLE, & SUSTAINABLE

Access and engagement are key to gaining the environmental and economic benefits from functional recycling and reuse programs.

It is essential that goods like food and medicine are accessible and affordable for all.

The packaging and the recovery model should be circular and designed to have the lowest impact on the environment.

1. "PET Collection Rates," *Unesda*, 2020 https://www.unesda.eu/pet-collection-rates/; "Detailed overview and results of the current deposit return scheme implementations in Europe," *Sensoneo*, 2024 https://sensoneo.com/waste-library/deposit-return-schemes-overview-europe/.
2. "What We Waste," *Reloop*, 2023, https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/What-We-Waste-Reloop-Report-April-2021-1.pdf.

*PET, or "polyethylene terephthalate," belongs to the polyester family of polymers. PET plastic is a food and medical grade polymer, and 100% recycled PET is used today in many food and beverage applications.