

Dear Stakeholder,

Imminent Basel Convention amendments mean most plastic waste streams will need prior notification before shipment on or after 1 January 2021.

On 1 January 2021 amendments to the international Basel Convention governing the movement of certain wastes come into force. The amendments apply stricter controls to the international trade in waste plastics in light of the global focus on their environmental impact. The UK is applying the amendments in full via the International Waste Shipments (Amendment of Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006) Regulations 2020. The International Waste Shipments (Amendment of Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006) Regulations 2020 (legislation.gov.uk)

One of the amendments covers clean, separated single stream plastics or clean mixtures of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), Polypropylene (PP) and Polyethylene (PE), known as B3011 Plastics. The Basel Convention states that these exports do not need prior informed consent and can move under lighter touch 'Green List' controls. However, UK Green List legislation means that this approach must be agreed with all non-OECD countries directly. These agreements have not yet been made and therefore from 1 January 2021 B3011 wastes from the UK to non-OECD countries must only move where prior informed consent is in place. These rules apply across the EU and the UK.

B3011 wastes may still be moved to OECD destinations under the lighter Green List waste controls.

Defra will undertake a consultation process in early 2021 with competent authorities of non-OECD countries to identify what controls each wishes to apply to B3011 from the UK. This will then need to be reflected in new legislation and may result in B3011 plastics remaining as requiring prior informed consent, being prohibited or falling into the lighter Green List waste controls. We are working with Defra to ensure countries that receive most UK waste are prioritised.

We will keep industry updated as things progress.

In the interim, businesses exporting B3011 classified plastics from England to non-OECD countries must apply for a notification from the Environment Agency.

This can be done online via IWS online <https://international-waste-shipments.service.gov.uk/>. If companies believe this change will cause problems that may cause them to breach the terms of their permit, we urge them to contact us via WasteRegExecSupport@environment-agency.gov.uk

Failure to comply with the requirement may result in wastes being returned at the exporter's own cost, being stopped during transit and / or formal action being taken by the Environment Agency or overseas competent authorities.

We estimate that around 210,000 tonnes of plastic wastes are exported each year from England to non OECD countries particularly Hong Kong (36%), Malaysia (23%), Indonesia (13%), India (7%), Taiwan (7%), China (5%) and Pakistan (4%). List of OECD Member countries - Ratification of the Convention on the OECD

Further information and advice is available from askshipments@environment-agency.gov.uk

Regards

Waste Regulation

Environment Agency