

23 July 2021

New standard to help prevent plastic pellet loss

BSI, in its role as the UK National Standards Body, has today published a new standard to help organizations achieve and maintain zero plastic pellet loss across their pellet handling operations.

The new standard, named PAS 510: *Plastic pellets, flakes and powders – Handling and management throughout the supply chain to prevent their leakage to the environment – Specification*, sets out requirements for the handling and management of plastic pellets, flakes and powders throughout the supply chain to prevent spills, leaks and loss to the environment. It covers topics such as organizational responsibilities, leadership and commitment, competence and training, risk assessment and operational controls.

Plastic pellets, flakes and powders are the raw materials used to make plastic products, including mouldings, pipes and packaging. As a result of handling and management practices, pellets can be lost to the environment at every stage of the plastic supply chain from production and manufacturing to transport and storage¹. Once in the environment, pellets and other types of microplastics, are known to be eaten by a range of animals and are known to be harmful².

David Fatscher, Head of Environment, Social and Governance Standards at BSI, said: "Every part of the supply chain has a responsibility to contain any pellets they handle or manage to ensure that they do not contribute to the global plastic pollution problem. With PAS 510, for the first-time organizations have the means to put a disciplined and systematic process in place for the handling and management of plastic pellets. The new standard is an excellent example of BSI's commitment as the UK National Standards Body to support industry, government and society in our common ambition to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030."

Scottish Government Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform, Màiri McAllan said: "This is an important step in tackling marine plastic. I am proud that the Scottish Government has been able to support the creation of the first standard to help prevent plastic pellet pollution. This collaborative work with the plastics industry will help businesses across the world take practical steps to protect our environment."

Adela Putinelu, BPF Senior Sustainability Executive said: "PAS 510 is a powerful tool to prevent plastic pellet pollution. The BPF is pleased to build on the success of Operation Clean Sweep® with a standardised approach for the entire supply chain. The loss of these raw materials can have serious environmental and economic consequences, and the new standard developed via this collaborative project will play a vital role in minimising this risk."

Victoria Sant, Senior Adviser at the Investor Forum said: “The Investor Forum was delighted to have been able to bring together the investor group to help address this aspect of plastic pollution. We believe this is the first time investors have collaborated with other stakeholders to sponsor a standard and catalyse change in this way. Investors can now use PAS510 to engage with portfolio companies, and to inform their assessment of environmental risk management processes.”

Tanya Cox, Technical Specialist, Marine Plastics at Fauna & Flora International (FFI) said: “Plastic pellets are estimated to be the second largest source of direct microplastic pollution entering the ocean, where they can have severe impacts on a wide range of species, including fish (which provide critical protein to billions of people) and seabirds, such as puffins. We are pleased to be part of this crucial initiative bringing together experts from industry, government and the non-profit sector to develop a globally applicable standard that can be used by all stages of the plastic supply chain to address this preventable source of plastic pollution in our oceans.”

The standard has been developed by a steering group³ including representatives from plastics, environmental, recycling and retail organizations. It is intended for organizations across the globe of any size in any part of the supply chain that handles or manages pellets, including raw material manufacturers, distributors, storage facilities, recyclers, transporters, and plastics processors.

The standard is sponsored by Marine Scotland, the British Plastic Federation and an investor co-sponsor group, convened by the Investor Forum, which comprised: Allianz Global Investors, Brewin Dolphin, Environment Agency Pension Fund, Generation Investment Management, LGPS Central, McInroy & Wood, Man Group, Ownership Capital, and Troy Asset Management. Fauna and Flora International represented the Investor co-sponsor group on the steering group.

Download the standard here: <https://shop.bsigroup.com/>

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Notes to the editor:

Quotes from Investor Co-sponsors:

Commenting, Matt Christensen, Global Head of Sustainable and Impact Investing at AllianzGI, said:

“To create a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable future, the global community agreed on the 17 UN Sustainability Goals (SDGs) in 2015 to achieve by the target year of 2030, of which several relate to the Ocean. As an active, engaged investor, AllianzGI is committed to helping bridge the massive gap in financing the attainment of these SDGs by offering investment opportunities that also develop solutions to environmental and societal problems. At the same time, we also need to ensure that better standards are adopted to prevent further damage to

the environment which is why we are delighted to sponsor the PAS. With the PAS510, we will be able to engage with issuers along the supply-chain and ensure that they follow good practice in preventing plastic pellet loss.”

Tom Blathwayt, Head of Sustainability at wealth manager Brewin Dolphin said:

“We sponsored this initiative because we believe that it is part of our role, as responsible investors, to enable companies to better manage their environmental impact. We expect PAS 510 to enable companies to demonstrate good practice in preventing plastic pellet loss throughout their supply chain. This standard will help us assess environmental risk management when evaluating companies. Ultimately this will benefit our investee companies, our clients, and the environment.”

Guy Foster, Chief Strategist at wealth manager Brewin Dolphin said:

“For Brewin Dolphin, stewardship means that we are taking care of our clients’ assets, whilst creating long-term value for them and for wider society. We act as responsible stewards in a number of ways – engaging with companies and funds on material issues, voting, and collaborative partnerships. Supporting new standards to address market failures is an example of how we can partner with like-minded organisations. Micro-plastics pollution is one such a market failure, and as a result we recognise the need to collaborate with other investors and investee companies to bring about positive change. We see plastic pollution as an important external cost in the global economy, and we anticipate continued engagement with companies funds and policy makers in this area.”

Martin Parsons, Environment Agency Pension Fund, said:

“We want to reduce plastic pollution and this initiative will result in an independent, auditable and accredited standard that will help to achieve that. It is the first time that investors have combined with other stakeholders in the UK to create a new standard and we are proud to be part of that. We have already written to our asset managers to make them aware of this new standard and to encourage them to engage with companies on this important issue.”

Edward Mason, Director of Engagement at Generation Investment Management, said:

“As awareness of the toll of plastic pollution has grown, so has the urgency for solutions. We need to drastically reduce our use of new plastic, especially single-use plastic, and plastic in all its forms must be kept out of our natural environment. Sponsoring the development of this important new BSI standard is aligned with our vision for an economy that has sustainability at its heart. We look forward to encouraging uptake of the standard in our engagement with companies.”

Valborg Lie, Stewardship Manager at LGPS Central Limited, said:

“Plastic pollution is a global problem that is continually growing due to both an increase in consumerism and an increase in the number of plastics used to manufacture the things we use on a daily basis. As one of LGPS Central’s core stewardship themes, we engage across our value chain to support progress for companies in a ‘Plastics transition’ - to reduce, re-use and replace fossil-fuel based plastics. The Plastic Pellet Prevention Project, which specifically

aims to stop billions of plastic pellets from entering the natural environment, gives us an opportunity to influence corporate practices on this specific theme across industries. We view this as a powerful engagement tool because it raises awareness, establishes best practice and provides a benchmark against which corporate practice can be measured. LGPS Central Limited is pleased with the work of the expert group that has assessed and proposed content for the Publicly Available Specification (PAS) on plastic pellet prevention – PAS 510. We will be able to use PAS 510 as a direct reference in engagement with relevant industries.”

Ines Cunha Pereira, Stewardship Manager with MAN Group, said:

“The plastic pollution problem is a key environmental issue on the ESG agenda. Man Group’s sponsorship of PAS 510 by the British Standards Institution reflects the firm’s overarching commitment to stewardship and ambition in driving positive change. By offering a consistent approach to risk management and containment of pellets, we believe the PAS can provide clear guidance and help companies to implement effective pellet loss prevention measures. Man Group supports the PAS by engaging with its investee companies and encouraging companies across the plastic supply chain to adopt the specification on plastic pellets, flakes and powder, follow good practice and report on outcomes.”

Tim Wood, CEO of McInroy & Wood, said:

“McInroy & Wood are delighted to see publication of this Publicly Available Specification. The power of active investment management in collaboration with NGOs, industry and other bodies is demonstrable in addressing important issues such as marine plastic pollution. We hope that this standard will be adopted and adhered to across the plastics supply chain on a regional and ultimately international basis. We are very grateful for the support given to this initiative by Fauna & Flora International, the Investor Forum and its members and look forward to the contribution the standard can make in reducing marine plastic pollution by encouraging better pellet management practices.”

Omar Cordes, CEO of Ownership Capital, said:

“At a time when more people recognise the need to stop all forms of ocean plastic pollution, we were pleased to be part of this Investor Forum initiative to draw attention to one of the main sources and provide a pragmatic solution. At Ownership Capital, we will do our utmost to ensure our global portfolio companies and investor clients support this important work and spread the message.”

Hugo Ure, portfolio manager of Troy Asset Management said:

“Troy is delighted to have been able to play a part in this important collaborative effort to stem the flow of micro-plastics into the natural environment. We look forward building on this success and will continue to work with our investee companies to address the environmental impact of the plastics they use.”

About BSI

BSI is the business improvement company that enables organizations to turn standards of best practice into habits of excellence. For over a century BSI has championed what good looks like and driven best practice in organizations around the world. Working with 84,000 clients across 195 countries, it is a truly international business with skills and experience across a number of sectors including aerospace, automotive, built environment, food, and healthcare. Through its expertise in Standards Development and Knowledge Solutions, Assurance, Regulatory Services and Consulting Services, BSI improves business performance to help clients grow sustainably, manage risk and ultimately be more resilient and trusted. To learn more, please visit: www.bsigroup.com

About British Plastic Federation

Established in 1933, the British Plastics Federation is the most powerful voice in the UK plastic industry, with over 500 members across the plastics industry supply chain, including recyclers, polymer producers and suppliers, additive manufacturers, service providers, end users, plastics processors and machinery manufacturers, representing over 80% of the industry by turnover. To learn more, please visit: www.bpf.co.uk

About Fauna & Flora International

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) is an international biodiversity conservation organisation, formed in 1903. Its mission is to conserve threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, choosing solutions that are sustainable, based on sound science, and which take into account human needs. FFI has been working on marine plastic pollution for a decade, collating scientific evidence and working with partners to propose effective upstream solutions, such as phasing out unnecessary microbeads in personal care and cosmetics products and working towards a supply chain approach to tackling pellet pollution. For more information, go to <https://www.fauna-flora.org/conservation-challenges/ocean-plastic-pollution>

About Marine Scotland

Marine Scotland is a Directorate of the Scottish Government and is responsible for the integrated management of Scotland's seas. Its purpose is to manage Scotland's seas for prosperity and environmental sustainability, working closely with key delivery partners and others. The Scottish Government formed a steering group of industry, regulators and NGOs to develop a certification system design which would allow for auditing against the requirements which will be set in the PAS. The steering group has developed proposed system designs with businesses across the supply chain and shared final recommendations internationally through the OSPAR Commission, the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic. For more information, go to www.gov.scot/about/how-government-is-run/directorates/marine-scotland

About the Investor Forum

The Investor Forum is an independent, not for profit organisation founded in October 2014. The purpose of the Investor Forum is to position stewardship at the heart of investment decision making by facilitating dialogue, creating long-term solutions and enhancing value. As at 31st December 2020, 52 organisations had become Members, including asset managers, insurance companies, pension funds, and endowments. For more information, go to www.investorforum.org.uk

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¹[ICF and Eunomia, "Investigating Options for reducing releases in the aquatic environment of microplastics emitted by \(but not intentionally added in\) products – Final Report for DG Environment of the European Commission"](#)

²[Wright, Thompson & Galloway, "The physical impacts of microplastics on marine organisms: A review"](#)

³Steering group

British Plastics Federation (BPF); British Ports Association; Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM); Consumer & Public Interest Network (CPIN); ECOS; Environment Agency, Eunomia Research & Consulting Ltd; Fidra; Fauna & Flora International (FFI); INEOS Olefins & Polymers UK; Innovia Films; Leviton; Marine Scotland – Scottish Government; Plastics Industry Association; PS Partnerships & Consultancy Ltd; Road Haulage Association (RHA); RPC BPI Group; Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA); Scottish Plastic and Rubber Association; The Co-Operative Group, University of Plymouth; Waitrose & Partners; and Zero Waste Scotland.