



PETCORE EUROPE Factsheet

Reusable PET Bottles



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The **EU MARKET** for reusable PET bottles

The first reusable bottle made of PET was introduced in **the 1990s** in Germany by Coca-Cola in collaboration with the manufacturer Schmalbach-Lubeca AG.

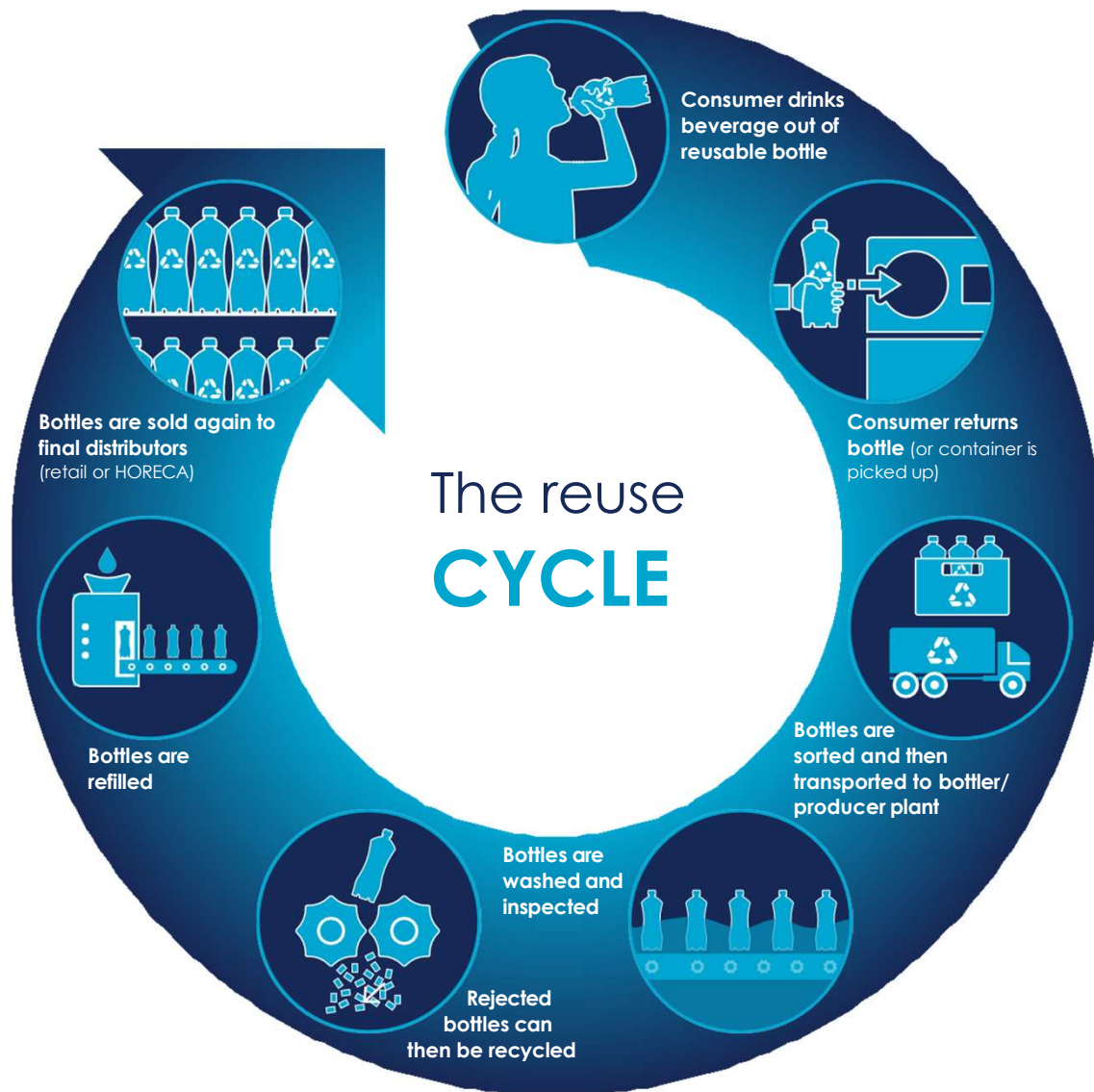
Today, reusable PET bottles are mainly used for packing soft drinks and water.

Reusable PET bottles represented in 2023 **3%** of the soft drinks packaging and **4%** of the water packaging in Europe.

This is mainly thanks to the uptake of those containers in Germany where reusable PET bottles achieved **14%** for soft drinks and **19%** for water in 2023.

REUSABLE VS. SINGLE-USE PET bottles

	REUSABLE	SINGLE-USE
Design	Sturdier and designed for multiple uses. They have thicker walls, can withstand wear and tear, and are up to 2,5 as heavy as single-use bottles. Reusable PET bottles often feature robust closures like screw caps or flip-tops.	Designed for convenience, single-use PET bottles are thinner and lighter, prioritizing lightweighting.
After use treatment	Collected for reuse after usage (requiring bottle washing prior to refill)	Collected for recycling after usage
Recyclability	Both reusable and single-use PET bottles are recyclable and can contain up to 100% recycled content.	
Production	The filling cycle of reusable PET bottling lines is longer compared to single-use PET bottling lines due to the added washing time and the additional quality control checks on returned bottles.	
Space	2 to 3 times more space is needed for a reusable bottling line, packing and storage of crates and empty bottles.	



HYGIENE & FOOD SAFETY

Reusable PET bottles undergo several checks throughout their life cycle to ensure they maintain hygiene conditions and food safety compliance:



Food migration and NIAS (Non-Intentionally Added Substances) tests prior to a new formulation being placed on the market.



'Sniffer' check upon bottle return. This determines any misuse/contamination of the bottle (with detergents, etc.) and automatically rejects it from the pool.



Bottle performance check before it is being placed back in the pool.



The washing process, including elevated temperatures and used of NaOH (caustic soda), also cleans the inside surface of the bottles.

BENEFITS of reusable PET bottles



When the right conditions are met, reusable PET bottles can have a lower carbon footprint than their single-use counterpart (this depends on a large number of factors including energy mix, distance between return and refill, etc.)



They contribute to waste reduction objectives



They meet consumer demand for more sustainable products and packaging



As their single-use counterpart, they are fully recyclable and can contain high amounts of recycled content

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