

**Hong Kong Green Label Scheme**  
**Product Environmental Criteria for**  
**Degradable Non-Food / Drink Containers and Non-Food Bags (GL-005-006)**



## **BACKGROUND**

The Hong Kong Green Label Scheme (HKGLS) is an independent and voluntary scheme, which aims to identify products that are, based on life cycle analysis consideration, more environmentally preferable than other similar products with the same function. The Scheme is organized by the Green Council (GC) with contributions from the HKGLS Advisory Committee and a number of supporting organizations.

The prime objectives of HKGLS are:

- For Consumers: assist in making purchases of products that are less harmful to the environment;
- For Industry: stimulate development and production of environmentally preferable alternatives.

This specification sets out the requirements that degradable non-food / drink containers and bags will be required to meet in order to be licensed to use the HKGLS label. The requirements include physical performance as well as environmental criteria. The specification also defines the testing and other means to be used to verify conformance with the criteria and product characteristics.

## **POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

Plastic wares account for about 20% of the total weight of municipal solid waste disposed of in landfills in Hong Kong, with plastic bags and expanded polystyrene (EPS) products (e.g. containers and packaging materials) making up the most significant portion. These plastic materials do not decompose and remain in the earth for a long time, thereby polluting the earth and creating environmental problems. The use of degradable (biodegradable or photodegradable) containers and bags could alleviate the loading of landfill sites.

## **LABEL OBJECTIVE**

The aim of the environmental criteria developed for degradable non-food/drink containers and bags is to:

- Promote the use of degradable materials.
- Reduce the massive consumption of plastic bags and containers, which would not decompose after disposal at landfill.

## **PRODUCT DEFINITION**

This document and all product environmental criteria therein apply to Degradable Non-Food / Drink Containers and Degradable Non-Food Bags.

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**PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA**

The table below sets out the product performance and environmental criteria for Degradable Non-Food/Drink Containers and Bags (GL-005-006) under the HKGLS. They have been developed based on the HKSAR Environmental Protection Department's "Testing Guideline on the Degradability and Food Safety of Containers and Bags".

<b>Product Criteria</b>	<b>Verification Method(s)*</b>
<b>PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE CRITERIA</b>	
1. Containers shall be resistant to static loading such that the average deformation in height of specimens subject to test shall be $\leq 6\%$ .	✓ Review of laboratory test report(s). Static Loading Test HS 3001 (1) or equivalent (2).
2. Fold resistance of containers with non-detachable lids shall be resistant to folding and unfolding and no hinge breakage shall occur for at least two out of three test specimens.	✓ Review of laboratory test report(s). Fold Resistance Test HS 3002 (1) or equivalent (2).
3. Low temperature resistance: When the product is stored at a temperature of $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$ for about 4 hours, there shall be no breakage for at least two out of three test specimens.	✓ Review of laboratory test report(s). Low Temperature Resistance Test HS 3003 (1) or equivalent (2).
4. Oil and water proof at raised temperature: The container shall not permit oil and grease, moisture or small amounts water to penetrate at raised temperature for a minimum of about twenty minutes.	✓ Review of laboratory test report(s). Oil and Water Proof Tests at raised temperature HS 3004 (1) or equivalent (2).
5. Acid resistance: The container shall be resistant to acidic foodstuffs, and there shall be no discoloration, defects, distortion and leakage for all the test specimens.	✓ Review of laboratory test report(s). Acid Resistance Test HS 3006 (1) or equivalent (2).
6. Tensile strength: Degradable food bags shall meet the standard as claimed.	✓ Review of laboratory test report(s). Tensile Strength Test HS 3005 (1) or equivalent (2).
<b>PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA</b>	
7. Degradability: The percent biodegradation of the product material shall be $\geq 60\%$ within 180 days.	✓ Review of laboratory test report(s). Biodegradability Test HS 2001 (1) or equivalent (2).

\*Analytical testing should be accredited and performed by laboratories that meet the requirement laid out in the IEC/ISO 17025 or EN45001 standards or any equivalent systems e.g. HOKLAS, CNAS.

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Under special situation and with the approval from GC, test can be performed by in-house method by the accredited laboratory or manufacturer.

Note:

1. The Environmental Protection Department's HS series of tests as set out in the "Testing Guideline on the Degradability and Food Safety of Container and Bags", available at [https://www.wastereduction.gov.hk/en/assistancewizard/guide\\_food\\_cont.htm](https://www.wastereduction.gov.hk/en/assistancewizard/guide_food_cont.htm).
2. Recognized standards that have international acceptability (these may include regional or national standards, or industry or trade methods which have been subjected to peer review)
3. For Degradable Non-Food Bags, only *Tensile Strength* and *Degradability* are relevant and require testing.