

OVERVIEW

There's no denying it; the last decade has witnessed an explosive growth of deposit return systems (DRS) across the globe. By the end of 2018, when the last version of this report was published, nearly 290 million people worldwide had access to DRSs. Since then, several new programs have been implemented or announced, including Malta (2022), Western Australia (2020), Victoria (2023), Turkey (2023), Tasmania (2022), Portugal (2022), Scotland (2022), Romania (2022), Slovakia (2023), Latvia (2022), Singapore (2022), Jamaica (2021), New Zealand (2022), and England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2023)¹. By the time all of these programs are implemented over the next two to three years, it's estimated that nearly 500 million people will have access to DRSs for recycling their empty beverage containers, doubling the number of individuals covered from 2005.

In a nutshell, DRS – also referred to as container refund schemes (CRS) (in Australia) or 'bottle bills' in the U.S. – is a proven tool to collect high quantities of beverage containers for reuse and high-quality recycling. These systems see customers pay a small deposit when they purchase a can or bottle, which they get back when they return the container to a collection point for recycling.

Contrary to what the beverage industry might want us to believe, DRS has historically enjoyed widespread public support. New laws receive much public fervour, and most respondents to public opinion polls support expansion of existing deposit laws or introduction of new ones. A recent (2020) opinion poll showed that 83% of Austrians want a DRS, and a full 93% agreed that

the producers of plastics should contribute to managing plastic waste. A similar poll conducted in August 2020 showed that 96% of people in Romania support the introduction of DRS.

Some DRSs operate nationally (as is the case in Europe), while others operate on a state or provincial level (as is the case in the United States, Canada, Australia, Israel, and Oceania/Caribbean).

Because of the economic incentive to recycle, DRSs typically result in beverage container recycling rates that are two to three times higher than the rates achieved by jurisdictions that rely on curbside recycling programs, particularly if the deposit is set at an effective level.

In addition to higher recycling rates, DRS has shown to result in cost savings for municipalities, as well as avoided greenhouse gas emissions. They are also effective at reducing litter. According to a 2018 study by Australia's national science agency, CSIRO, "the proportion of containers found in coastal debris surveys in states with [DRS] was approximately 40% lower than in states without [DRS]." DRSs also have a positive impact on job creation, which is particularly relevant today as governments around the world emerge from the acute phase of the health crisis and invest trillions in post-COVID economic recovery efforts.

In June 2019, the Single-Use Plastics Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic prod-

ucts on the environment) was published in the Official Journal of the European Union. The Directive stipulates that Member States achieve a 90% collection for recycling target of single-use plastic bottles by 2029 (and an interim target of 77% by 2025). DRS is suggested as a method to achieve this objective. This legislation, combined with commitments by international brands to increase their use of recycled content, means that deposit programs are likely to continue to expand over the next decade, in both Europe and elsewhere. According to Container Recycling Institute (CRI), it's reasonable to predict worldwide coverage of at least 1 billion people by 2030.

As DRSs become more widespread over the next decade, it's more important than ever for industry, government agencies and other stakeholders to understand how these programs work. In this context, Reloop Platform is pleased to release the *Global Deposit Book 2020: An Overview of Deposit Systems for One-Way Beverage Containers*, which provides a comprehensive summary of over 40 deposit systems in place around the world. This edition also includes a new chapter on "upcoming programs" to highlight some of the key features of deposit systems that will be implemented in the near future and for which sufficient information is available.

¹ The latest country to announce plans for implementing DRS is Austria; in September 2020, the country's environment minister announced its plans to impose a deposit on one-way plastic beverage bottles and metal cans. The details of the DRS, including implementation date, are currently being worked out between the ministry and stakeholders involved.

Each deposit market profiled in this review is structured along the following key parameters (where information is available):

Legislative Framework
(legal basis for the system)

Program Scope
(beverages and container types included in the system)

Deposit and Fees
(deposit values and different fees)

System Operator
(entity responsible for operating the system)

Redemption System
(beverage container take-back system)

System Results
(return rates)

Money Material Flow
(visual flow schematic)

It is worth noting that all systems, with the exception of California (USA) and most Canadian provinces (Saskatchewan, Yukon, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Northwest Territories, Ontario and Prince Edward Island) have barcode-based recording systems. 'Barcode-based' means that the containers are recognized by the barcode and the information is recorded. This makes every container traceable and provides a clear picture on what is returned.

In terms of system results, it is important to point out that the way in which program performance is measured or reported on can vary between jurisdictions. While some system operators may report out a 'collection rate', others report a 'recycling rate' or 'redemption rate.' For the purpose of consistency and because it is not possible to know for certain how performance is measured in each jurisdiction, this report uses 'return rate' as a catch-all term. It is understood that the return rate represents the amount of beverage container material that is collected (by weight or unit) expressed as a percentage of the amount of beverage container material placed on the market, excluding exports.

Information for this report was obtained from a number of sources, including personal correspondence with DRS operators, annual reports published by DRS operators, internal documents, government reports, and consultancy reports. A full list of references by jurisdiction is provided at the end of this document.