



Strengthening Global Recycling Networks to Meet EPR Goals

Thought leaders of the packaging industry share their perspective and action shift towards a circular economy with the *Outlook*

Sustainable waste management lies at the core of the circular economy, emphasising waste reduction, resource efficiency, and the continuous reuse of materials. Therefore, the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is an essential global policy approach that makes producers, importers and brand owners responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products, particularly post-consumer disposal.

Over 70 countries have implemented EPR frameworks, driving both environmental benefits and stronger secondary materials markets. Companies are focusing on compliance with evolving regulations, including the EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), with key provisions becoming applicable from

August 2026 onward; the UK's pEPR framework; and expanding US state-level EPR laws. California, Colorado, and Oregon are advancing major implementation milestones, with the Circular Action Alliance supporting compliance across states. Meanwhile, countries including Vietnam, South Korea, and several Middle Eastern and African nations are strengthening packaging waste regulations.

Indian companies, under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, are redesigning packaging to meet EPR targets by using recyclable, biodegradable materials or paper-based alternatives. Digital traceability systems such as QR codes and smart labelling are driving compliance and waste tracking. This shift has accelerated the adoption of sustainable packaging practices

across FMCG, food, pharmaceutical, and e-commerce sectors.

Despite high compliance costs and infrastructure issues, industry reports suggest that India's packaging market will grow rapidly, while becoming sustainability-focused, driving investment in recycling infrastructure, boosting demand for eco-friendly materials, and encouraging innovation in sustainable packaging technologies.

Today, many companies have made significant progress towards their EPR targets. A pioneer in comprehensive, end-to-end flexible packaging solutions and materials, UFlex has embedded EPR into the core of its global packaging and recycling strategy, positioning sustainability as a driver of value chain transformation.

Across India and international markets, UFlex is aligning its operations with evolving global circular economy practices by integrating recycled content, investing in post-consumer recycling infrastructure, and redesigning packaging solutions to improve recyclability and material recovery.

"Over the past year, we utilized approximately 1,200 tonnes of recycled material in India alone—an important step aligned with our



Anantshree Chaturvedi
Vice Chairman & CEO
Flex Films International

"By bringing recycling operations in-house, we are enabling brands to advance their sustainability goals while meeting evolving expectations from regulators, consumers, and global retailers"



Apoorvshree Chaturvedi
Director-Global Operations
UFlex Group

"Every UFlex facility strengthens the company's ability to meet region-specific EPR regulations and sustainability requirements across global supply chains"

Extended Producer Responsibility commitments and the broader shift toward circular packaging solutions," says Anantshree Chaturvedi, Vice Chairman and CEO, Flex Films. "This progress is further strengthened by our investments in in-house post-consumer recycled (PCR) capabilities. By building these systems internally, we gain tighter control over feedstock quality, ensure reliable supply, and enhance traceability and regulatory compliance. More importantly, it allows us to make sustainable packaging adoption simpler and more scalable for brand owners who are navigating increasing expectations from regulators, consumers, and global retail partners."

In line with international packaging sustainability trends, UFlex is actively transitioning away from conventional and aluminium-based structures toward recyclable and mono-material solutions. This shift is important in export-oriented markets where environmental regulations are becoming stricter, particularly in Europe and other regions implementing advanced EPR frameworks. UFlex has engineered packaging formats that maintain barrier performance and functionality while improving recyclability and reducing packaging complexity.

UFlex's sustainability strategy extends beyond infrastructure into technological capability building and ecosystem development. Since 1995, the company has recycled millions of PET bottles and significant volumes of multi-layer plastic waste, contributing to the development of India's recycling ecosystem. It has promoted wider industry adoption through technology sharing, training initiatives, and collaborative engagement, supporting broader circular economy objectives.

"To support these initiatives, we have established a growing global recycling network spanning India, Mexico, Egypt, and Poland. Our recycling facilities manufacture PCR PET chips that can be reintegrated into packaging applications and recycle multi-layer plastic waste (MLP) into granules that can be converted into moulded products, enabling a more sustainable approach to material usage," says Apoorvshree Chaturvedi, Director – Global Operations, who oversees corporate sustainability initiatives focused on ESG and growth ventures at UFlex Group. "Existing facilities include PET, MLP, and AMLP waste



Jeevaraj Pillai
Director-Sustainability, President,
Flexible Packaging and New Product
Development, UFlex Limited

"We have expanded our recycling footprint, enabling recycling of nearly 115,000 tonnes of waste annually, with most recycled outputs reintegrated into films and flexible packaging products"

recycling operations in Noida, Jammu, and Malanpur in India, alongside international recycling units in Mexico, Egypt, and Poland."

"We have scaled up our recycling footprint through strategic new investments. In Noida, UFlex has recently added a 36,000 MTPA PCR PET plant and a 3,600 MTPA MLP recycling facility. These investments are expected to enable the recycling of nearly 115,000 tonnes of waste annually, with most recycled outputs being reintegrated into films and flexible packaging products," explains Jeevaraj Gopal Pillai, President - Flexible Packaging and New Product Development and Director – Sustainability, UFlex Ltd.

At the core of this evolution is a material science-led innovation strategy focused on creating packaging solutions that meet emerging regulatory and environmental expectations without compromising product performance. Innovations such as heat-sealable polyester films and advanced barrier structures are enabling customers to migrate from complex multi-layer laminates to fewer-layer or mono-material configurations. UFlex also offers a broad portfolio of PCR PET films, including food-grade variants, helping global and domestic brands comply with sustainability mandates and recycled-content targets. Simultaneously, the company is advancing mechanically recycled, potentially food-safe polyethylene and polypropylene solutions — an area widely regarded as one of the most technically challenging frontiers in flexible packaging sustainability.

Through structured initiatives, companies can align with global EPR practices by integrating circularity across sourcing, manufacturing, recycling, product design, and customer collaboration, while being an active participant in the global transition toward a circular economy.