

Coca-Cola Beverages expands rollout of 2L returnable PET bottles

Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa (CCBSA) is rolling out its 2L returnable bottle, also known as its refillable PET bottle (RefPET), in Mangaung in the Free State and Northern Cape, as part of its stated commitment to reduce plastic waste.



Source: Supplied

Since 2019, CCBSA has successfully launched RefPET in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo, North-West, Mpumalanga and parts of the Free State and plans to expand this offering in a bid to include consumers as an important part of the recycling value chain.

Food and beverage packaging is important to ensure food safety and reduce food waste, but packaging has also created an environmental waste problem that requires a comprehensive response.

As part of its responsibility to help address this challenge, Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa, a subsidiary of Coca-Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA) and a bottler for The Coca-Cola Company, has committed to help collect a bottle or can for every single one it sells by 2030.

It will also use 50% recycled content in all packaging and make 25% of its packaging reusable by 2030, while making all its packaging 100% recyclable by 2025.

“We are very excited by this progressive phase of our RefPET rollout in the two provinces. This innovation is part of our World Without Waste Vision 2030, which relies on partnerships with customers, consumers, communities, industry, and governments to succeed. Our vision and annual targets are ambitious, but our results have shown us that it is possible to make a meaningful contribution towards helping create a waste-free planet,” said Velaphi Ratshefola, CCBSA’s managing director.

Ratshefola added that the consumer response to the new 2L returnable PET bottles has been overwhelmingly positive.

“Where we have launched RefPET, we have seen consumers switching to purchasing the returnable 2L bottles and returning them after consumption. This is what we envisioned with this innovation, to encourage consumers to return the bottles for reuse, for as long as the bottle passes the quality test. We are excited about this next phase of the project in the two provinces,” says Ratshefola.

How the system works

The returnable PET bottles are identifiable by a paper label, with ‘RETURNABLE’ appearing in green on the front of the bottle. To start the communities and households on this loop, the company will give each household a 2L RefPET sample that they can exchange for a deposit when they buy any of the products available in a 2L RefPET from the local store.



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The recommended retail price for the 2L Coca-Cola Original Taste – Less Sugar beverage is R16, which excludes a R9 deposit. Other brands, like Coca-Cola No Sugar, Sprite and Fanta, are also available in the new 2L returnable PET plastic bottle at a recommended retail price of R14 excluding the R9 deposit. This means a saving of around R9 per bottle, depending on where a customer purchases their favourite beverage.

Once a bottle is returned to CCBSA, it goes on a looped journey to be cleaned in accordance with Coca-Cola’s stringent measures and requirements, then refilled to start its next lifecycle. When the bottle reaches the end of its useable lifecycle, it joins the recycling value chain and is repurposed into another PET product.

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