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Project launch: First specification to prevent plastic pellet pollution

[BSI](#), in its role as the UK National Standards Body, announces a new project to create the first specification that will help prevent plastic pellet pollution.

The fast-tracked standardization document, to be known as Publicly Available Specification 510 (PAS 510) *Plastic pellets, flakes and powders – Handling and management throughout the supply chain to prevent their leakage to the environment – Specification*, will provide an important tool for companies to demonstrate good practice in pellet loss prevention measures across the supply chain.

The specification is being designed for all supply chain organizations involved in using, processing, handling, storing or transport of plastic pellets, flakes and powders. It will set out measures to prevent the leakage of plastic pellets, flakes and powders, collectively referred to as pellets, into the environment and demonstrate procedures for continual improvement. This will build on the existing plastic industry's programme Operation Clean Sweep which is coordinated by the British Plastics Federation (BPF) in the UK and offers comprehensive guidance and tools to prevent plastic pellet loss across the supply chain.

The standardization document will be developed by a steering group consisting of experts from across the international supply chain including plastics manufacturers, transportation, retailing and recycling organizations. It is sponsored by [Marine Scotland](#), the [British Plastics Federation \(BPF\)](#) and a number of investors* through [The Investor Forum](#) who are being represented by [Fauna & Flora International](#) (FFI).

David Fatscher, Head of Environment, Social and Governance Standards at BSI said: "Plastic pollution is a complex global issue that requires urgent collaboration and action between governments and the corporate sector to help stop pellets making their way into the ocean each year; PAS 510 is a landmark step in the right direction. We are working with a range of experts to agree best practice to prevent the leakage of plastic pellets into the environment."

Victoria Sant, Senior Adviser at the Investor Forum said: "We are delighted to have been able to bring together investors who want to play their part in catalysing change. Compliance with a globally-recognised standardization document allows companies to demonstrate best practice, and gives investors a means for engagement on this issue, and the ability to hold companies to account. We believe this is the first time investors have sponsored a specification to improve corporate behaviour, and see this as a tangible stewardship action."

BPF Sustainability Executive Adela Putinelu comments: "The development of the PAS provides a unique opportunity for companies to verify and demonstrate compliance with pellet loss prevention measures. As the loss of valuable raw material along the supply chain

has serious environmental and economic consequences, the plastics industry is taking a proactive approach to successfully mitigate this risk.”

Hazel Akester, Marine Plastics Programme Officer at FFI said: “Plastic pellets are estimated to be the second largest source of direct microplastic pollution entering the ocean, where they can have severe impacts on a wide range of species, including fish (which provide critical protein to billions of people) and seabirds, such as puffins. We are pleased to be part of this crucial initiative bringing together experts from industry, government and the non-profit sector to develop a globally applicable standard that can be used by all stages of the plastic supply chain to address this preventable source of plastic pollution.”

It is expected to publish in July 2021.

To find out more about BSI standards please visit: <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/standards/benefits-of-using-standards/>

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Notes to the editor:

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About BSI

BSI is the business improvement company that enables organizations to turn standards of best practice into habits of excellence. For over a century BSI has championed what good looks like and driven best practice in organizations around the world. Working with 84,000 clients across 193 countries, it is a truly international business with skills and experience across a number of sectors including aerospace, automotive, built environment, food, and healthcare. Through its expertise in Standards Development and Knowledge Solutions, Assurance, Regulatory Services and Consulting Services, BSI improves business performance to help clients grow sustainably, manage risk and ultimately be more resilient and trusted. To learn more, please visit: www.bsigroup.com

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About the sponsors

The Investor Forum

The Investor Forum is an independent, not for profit organisation founded in October 2014. The purpose of the Investor Forum is to position stewardship at the heart of investment decision making by facilitating dialogue, creating long-term solutions and enhancing value.

As at 31st December 2019, 50 organisations had become Members, including asset managers, insurance companies, pension funds, and endowments.

For more information, go to www.investorforum.org.uk

Marine Scotland

Marine Scotland is a Directorate of the Scottish Government and is responsible for the integrated management of Scotland's seas. Its purpose is to manage Scotland's seas for prosperity and environmental sustainability, working closely with key delivery partners and others.

The Scottish Government has formed a steering group of industry, regulators and NGOs to develop a certification system design which would allow for auditing against the requirements which will be set in the PAS. Their steering group will test proposed system designs with businesses across the supply chain and share final recommendations internationally.

For more information, go to <https://www.gov.scot/about/how-government-is-run/directorates/marine-scotland/> and see the recent report: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/preventing-plastic-pollution-pellet-loss-taking-supply-chain-approach-reduce-pollution-waste/>

British Plastic Federation

The British Plastics Federation (BPF) was established in 1933 to represent the UK industry and to promote a successful UK plastics sector. The BPF also works on industry-wide issues such as sustainability, safety and education.

It has over 450 members that span across the supply chain. This includes plastics recyclers, polymer producers and suppliers, additive manufacturers, services providers, end users, plastics processors and machinery manufacturers, in total representing over 80% of the industry by turnover.

For more information, go to <https://www.bpf.co.uk>

Fauna & Flora International

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) is an international wildlife conservation organisation, formed in 1903. Its mission is to conserve threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, choosing solutions that are sustainable, based on sound science, and which take into account human needs.

FFI has been working on marine plastic pollution for a decade, collating scientific evidence and working with partners to propose effective upstream solutions, such as phasing out unnecessary microbeads in personal care and cosmetics products and working towards a supply chain approach to tackling pellet pollution.

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For more information, go to <https://www.fauna-flora.org/conservation-challenges/ocean-plastic-pollution>