INTEGRATED DEPOSIT AND REFUND SYSTEM (SDR)

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

METAL CONTAINERS

Version 1.0 – 18 March 2026

This document sets out the **technical specifications applicable to beverage packaging in the form of metal containers, falling within the scope of the Deposit and Refund System** (SDR).

Pursuant to Article 30-L of Decree-Law 152-D/2017 of 11 December, as currently worded, the technical specifications of the SDR are defined by the Portuguese Environment Agency, I.P. (APA, I.P.) and the Directorate-General for the Economy (DGE), upon proposal by the SDR management bodies, and must ensure the compatibility of such packaging with the aforementioned system and the proper channelling of waste from such packaging for recycling.

Under the terms of the licence granted for the management of an integrated deposit and refund system, the technical specifications applicable to beverage containers covered by the system, including any updates and adaptations to technical progress, are published on the websites of APA, I.P. and the DGE, as well as on the Licensee's website.

SDR PORTUGAL

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Introduction

The specifications set out below apply to single-use metal beverage containers with a maximum capacity of 3 litres.

The implementation of the SDR must comply with the framework established by Regulation (EU) 2025/40 of 19 December 2024 on packaging and packaging waste, applicable from 12 August 2026, in particular with regard to the recyclability of packaging and the harmonised standards to be defined under this Regulation.

Notwithstanding the need for revision in line with future harmonised standards, the SDR model prioritises high-quality recycling with a view to producing recycled material for use in new beverage cans or bottles.

For a better understanding of this document, we recommend consulting the "SDR Glossary", available at SDRPortugal.pt, which contains definitions of technical terms, as well as abbreviations and acronyms used.

1 Shape of Packaging

Ideally, to ensure correct acceptance at reverse vending machines (RVMs), metal containers should be cylindrical and symmetrical in shape.

2 Dimensions

Metal containers (cans and bottles) must have dimensions within the ranges shown in the table below.

Table 1 – Recommended dimensions for beverage cans and bottles compatible with RVM

Dimensions	Minimum	Maximum
External diameter	50 mm	120 mm
Height	85 mm	360 mm

Metal containers (cans and bottles) smaller than the recommended minimum dimensions may also be accepted by automatic collection and counting equipment (namely reverse vending machines and automatic counting machines).

Any exclusion of such containers on the grounds of technical unfeasibility must be demonstrated and may only be considered for containers with a capacity of less than 0.1 L, provided that such impracticability remains duly demonstrated, as provided for in the last paragraph of Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) 2025/40 of 19 December 2024 on packaging and packaging waste.

3 Materials

In line with the principles of the circular economy, packagers must ensure that the packaging materials used are suitable for high-quality recycling[1] .

Recyclability requirements are defined in accordance with the recycling technology solutions available on the national market (preferably) and the EU market, taking into account the need to ensure that packaging accepted into the SDR is free from materials that hinder recycling and/or compromise the quality of the recycled material produced, taking into account the principle of circularity and future use for incorporation into new beverage packaging.

The recyclability criteria for metal beverage cans and bottles within the SDR are adopted, using the *guidelines* published by CIRCPACK[2]as a reference, without prejudice to the need for revision based on future harmonised standards for the recyclability of packaging materials issued by the European Commission.

The aim is to promote features of these containers and their components that are compatible with the production of high-quality recycled material for use in the manufacture of new beverage cans and bottles. Consequently, containers that fully comply with the recommendations set out in the will be classified as **"Accepted"**.

Containers exhibiting one or more of the characteristics listed in the yellow and red columns will be classified as **"Accepted with a penalty" and "Accepted with an increased penalty"**, respectively, and will be subject to a differentiated financial contribution in accordance with the financial contribution calculation model, approved by the Directorate-General for the Economy (DGE), which should reflect the environmental impact of the materials and the loss of value of the recycled material obtained.

1 In accordance with the concept of "high-quality recycling" established in Regulation (EU) 2025/40 on Packaging and Packaging Waste

2 Adapted from "Design for Recycling – Guidelines for packaging – CIRCPACK by VEOLIA" (https://www.circpack.veolia.com/make-your-packaging-recyclable/design-guidelines)

Table 2 – Recyclability criteria for metal beverage containers

	Accepted	Accepted with penalty	Accepted with increased penalty
Packaging body material	Aluminium. Steel.	Aluminium alloy with other metals (max. 5% by weight). Steel alloy with other metals (max. 5% by weight).	Other metals. Any mixture of other non-metallic materials (e.g. plastic).
Opening/closing system	Same material as the body.	Other metals or plastic (except PVC).	Presence of components that may affect recycling or cause risks during the compaction process in RVM.
Labels / Sleeves / Seals	---	Paper and plastic (except PVC).	Any component containing PVC.
Inks and Printing	Inks not subject to the proposed exclusion by the European Printing Inks Association (EuPIA)[3]. Direct or laser printing for batch and expiry date identification.	---	Inks subject to the EuPIA's proposed exclusion.
Other	---	Cans containing gas capsules (N_2, CO_2, or N_2/CO_2 mixture) for which it is demonstrated that they do not pose risks during the compaction process at the RVM.	Presence of components that may pose risks during the compaction in RVM.

4 Compactability

Containers containing materials that are excessively resistant to compaction and which, according to the results of packaging acceptance tests, may be likely to cause disruptions to the operation of the RVM, shall be rejected.

5 Labels supplementary to the original labelling

Cans and bottles are normally labelled by direct printing; however, in exceptional circumstances, duly justified to SDR Portugal, packers may use secondary marking with paper or plastic labels, in addition to the original labelling, in accordance with the rules set out in the document attached to the Packer's Manual "SDR - Marking", available at *SDRPortugal.pt*. These labels must comply with the criteria for material recyclability, particularly with regard to the adhesives and inks used.

3 https://www.eupia.org/our-commitment/eupia-exclusion-policy-for-printing-inks-and-related-products/