

Orangina and Pepsi unveil 'endlessly recyclable' bottle

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A group of global companies including the firms behind Orangina and Pepsi have produced a new “endlessly recyclable” bottle made from plastic waste.

The consortium – Suntory Beverage & Food Europe, Nestlé Waters, PepsiCo, L’Oréal and French biochemistry firm Carbios – said it had created the world’s first bottles made entirely from enzymatically recycled plastic.

According to the group, each company has successfully manufactured sample bottles based on Carbios’ recycling technology.

Gloucestershire-based Suntory, which makes drinks including Ribena and Lucozade at the Royal Forest Factory in Coleford, said it was using the tech in its Orangina bottles first – but could extend this to its other brands.

The announcement is the culmination of nearly 10 years’ research and development by Carbios to create a new process and supercharge an enzyme naturally occurring in compost heaps that normally breaks down leaf membranes of dead plants.

By adapting this enzyme, Carbios has fine-tuned the technology to break down plastic (regardless of colour or complexity), which can then be turned back into like-new, virgin-quality

plastic.

The consortium said it would work to scale the innovation to help meet the global demand for sustainable packaging solutions.

“In a world first, we have created food-grade clear bottles from enzymatically recycled colored and complex plastic,” said Carbios’ chief executive Jean Claude Lumaret.

“In partnership with the consortium, we have proved the viability of the technology with the world’s leading brands. This is a truly transformational innovation that could finally fully close the loop on PET plastic supply globally, so that it never becomes waste.”

In September, Carbios will break ground on a demonstration plant in the Clermont-Ferrand region of France before launching a 40,000-tonne-capacity industrial facility by 2025.

Suntory said the development was a “ground-breaking milestone” in its roadmap to full circularity for its drinks packaging and its transition to removing fossil-fuel-based plastic from its packaging by 2030.

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Michelle Norman, director of external affairs and sustainability at Suntory Beverage and Food Great Britain and Ireland, added: “Today’s announcement will ensure a valuable material like plastic stays in circulation and out of the environment, which is ultimately what we’re striving for.

“I’m excited not just by the potential this holds for our much-loved drinks brands, but the entire food and drink industry.”

The news follows Suntory’s recent £7.8m investment to make its existing packaging more sustainable.

The changes include new designs for its Ribena and Lucozade bottles that aid bottle-to-bottle recycling, the switch to 100% recycled plastic for Lucozade Sport by the end of this

year, and the switch to recyclable paper straws on its Ribena cartons.