

The Plastic Resource Circulation Act

October 2021

Ministry of the Environment

Background

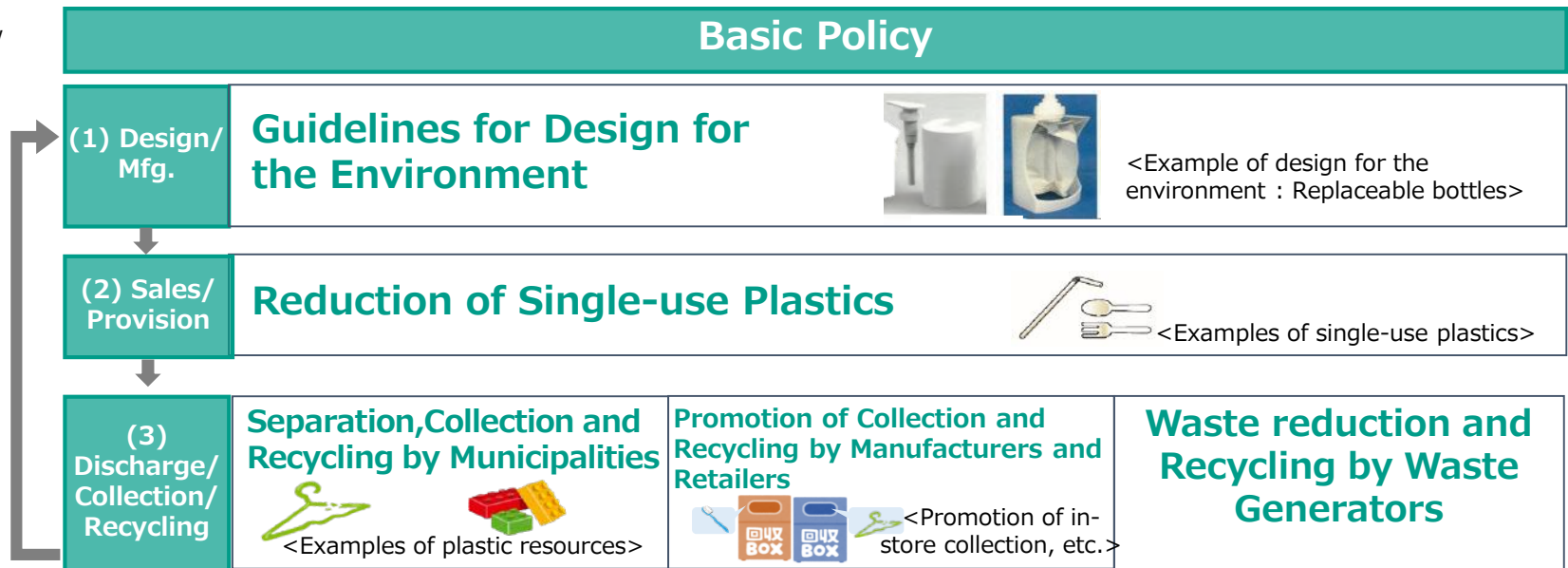
- Issue: Respond to the issues of marine plastic pollution, climate change, and foreign waste import regulations.
- Growing importance of **promoting the recycling of plastic resources**. Necessity to **create a comprehensive and enhanced circulation system for plastics**.

Purpose of the act

- The purpose is to contribute to the conservation of the living environment and the sound development of the national economy by promoting the recycling of plastic resources. Specifically, the following actions shall be taken:
 - Reduction of the usage of plastic products
 - Promotion of recycling of plastic waste by municipalities
 - Establishment of a system to promote voluntary collection and recycling by business operators

Main measures

↓ : Plastic flow throughout the product life cycle



<Effective date: Schedule to come into effect on April 1st, 2022>

1. Purpose, basic policy, and responsibilities

Formulation of a basic policy

- **Formulate a basic policy** to promote circulation of plastics.

<Matters stipulated in the basic policy>

Measures related to:

- Basic direction
- Guidelines for design of plastic products
- Reduction of the usage of single-use plastics
- Promotion of voluntary collection and recycling of used plastic products
- Promotion of waste reduction and recycling by waste generators
- Dissemination of knowledge on the significance of promoting circulation of plastic resources
- Important matters on the promotion of circulation of plastics

<Responsibilities of each entity>

- The government: Securing funds; collecting, organizing, and utilizing information; promoting R&D; and educating the public and conducting public relations activities
- Municipalities: Separation, collection and recycling; and measures necessary for the implementation of national measures
- Business sector and consumers: Waste reduction, sorted discharge, and recycling; and use of products made with recycled materials

2. Individual measures

(1) Guidelines for design of plastic products

- Formulate **guidelines for design for the environment** that manufacturers, etc. should endeavor to follow.
- Establish a system to **certify** products designed in accordance with the guidelines.
 - The **government procures preferentially** the certified products. Provide equipment support for the use of recycled materials.

□ Examples of matters stipulated in the guidelines for design of plastic products:

- Weight reduction
- Extension of long-term use and long service life
- Easier disassembly and sorting
- Use of alternative Material
- Use of recycled plastics and bioplastics
- Product lifecycle assessment

<Procurement of certified products>

- The government procures preferentially the certified products.
- Business sector and consumers endeavor to use the certified products.

<Examples of designs for the environment>



Reduce: Replaceable bottle



Recycling: Easy to disassemble



Alternative material:
100% recycled material

(2) Reduction of single-use plastics

- **Formulate standards** that single-use plastics providers (retailers, service providers, etc.) should work on to reduce plastic waste.
 - In the case of insufficient actions, the competent ministers may issue **recommendations** and **orders** to suppliers who provide large amounts of single-use plastics.

<Targeted types of single-use plastics and industries>

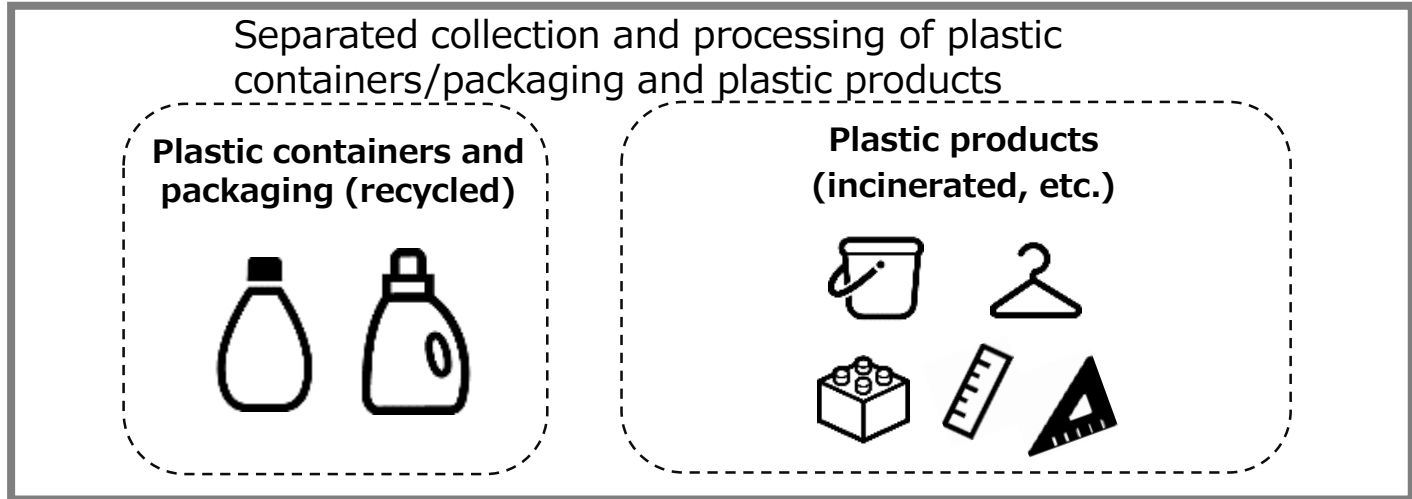
Retail stores, restaurants, etc.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forks• Spoons• Knives• Stir sticks• Straws	
Accommodation facilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hairbrushes• Combs• Razors• Shower caps• Toothbrushes	
Laundry service providers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hangers• Clothing covers	

- Examples of ways to reduce usage:
 - Charge for the items
 - Confirm consumers' intention to use the items
 - Grant benefits to those who decline the items
 - Use thinner and lighter products
 - Use products made with alternative materials

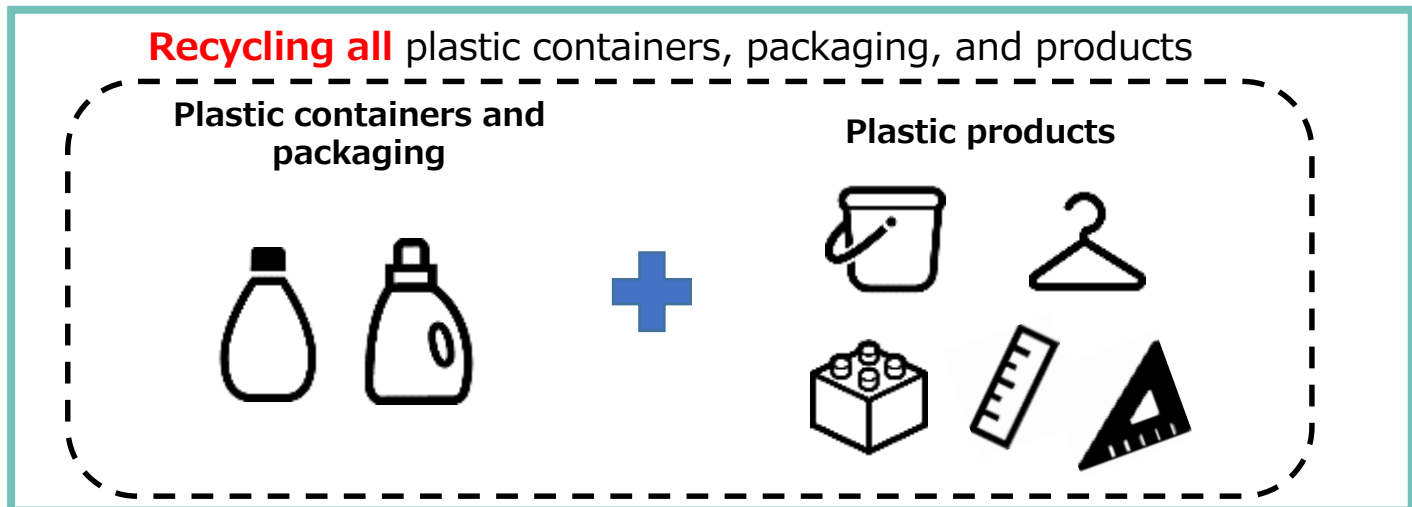
(3)-1 Separation, collection and recycling by municipalities (Recycling as plastic resources)

- In order to promote the separation, collection and recycling of plastic resources, enable the **recycling of plastic containers and packaging as well as plastic products**.

Before enforcement



After enforcement



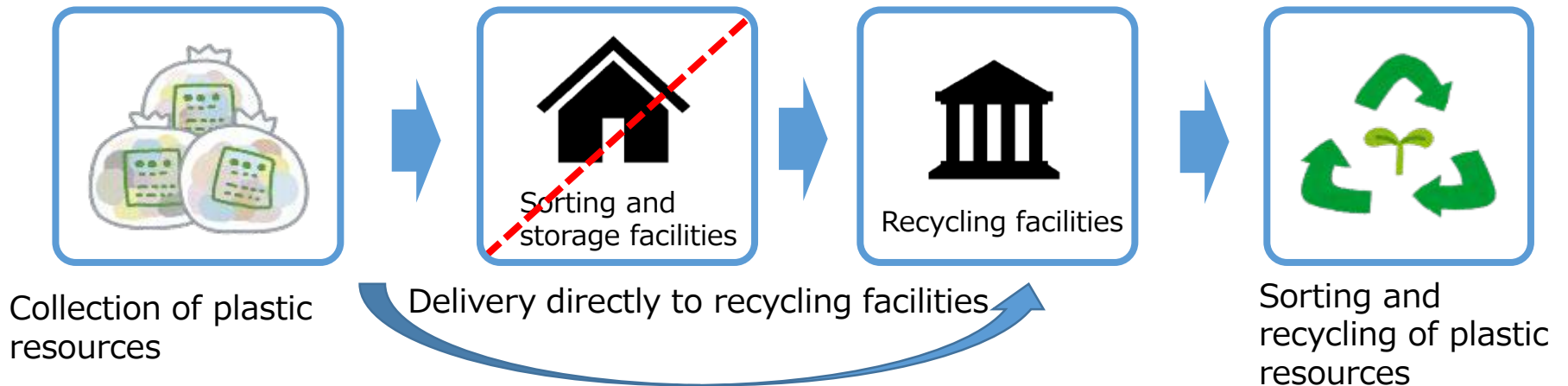
(3)-2 Separation, collection and recycling by municipalities (Streamlining intermediate processes)

- When municipalities develop a **recycling plan**, it enables recyclers to conduct recycling **without sorting and baling** by municipalities.

Before the enforcement



After the enforcement



(3)-3 Promotion of collection and recycling by manufacturer and retailers

- When manufacturers and retailers develop a **plan to collect and recycle** their used products and the plan is approved by the competent ministers, the certified manufacturers and retailers **can recycle without service permission** under the Waste Management Act.

<Examples of voluntary collection>



Toothbrushes



Hangers



Toys



Ink cartridges



Pens, writing implements, and correction tape



Model waste

(3)-4 Waste reduction and recycling by waste generators

- **Formulate standards** that plastic waste generators should address, such as waste reduction and recycling.
 - In the case of insufficient actions, the competent minister may issue **recommendations** and **orders** to waste generators who generate large amounts of plastics.

<Criteria that plastic waste generators should address>

- **Principles of implementation**
 - Reduce and recycle plastic industrial waste as much as possible.
 - If recycling cannot be carried out, energy recovery should be carried out.
- **Waste reduction**
 - Promote the adoption of plastic products that can be used as long as possible.
- **Recycling, etc.**
 - Reuse as much as possible. If reuse is difficult, energy recovery should be performed as efficiently as possible.
- **Planned implementation**
 - Businesses that generate (large amounts of) plastic waste shall set targets for the reduction and recycling of waste plastics and systematically implement measures to achieve them.
- **Provision of information**
 - Provide information such as the status of waste generation and sorting.
 - Endeavor to disclose information such as the amount of waste generation and the status of targets for the previous fiscal year on the Internet or other media.

(3)-5 Waste reduction and recycling by waste generators

- When the waste generators or recyclers prepare a **recycling plan** and the plan is approved by the competent ministers, the certified waste generators can recycle **without service permission** under the Waste Management Act.

<Example of a recycling scheme>

