



A unique solution to increase the quality and rate of recycled multi-layer packaging waste will be developed by MERLIN project

PRESS RELEASE

Coordinated by the research centre ITENE, this new Horizon 2020 project gathers 14 European partners with a common objective: the development of disruptive processes for the sorting, delamination and recycling of rigid and flexible multi-layer plastic packaging.

A synergic solution to increase the quality and rate of recycled multi-layer packaging waste will be developed by MERLIN project, a new Horizon 2020 initiative that gathers 14 European partners with a common objective: the development of disruptive processes for the sorting, delamination and recycling of rigid and flexible multi-layer plastic packaging with a circular economy model.

Coordinated by the Spanish research centre ITENE, sorting technology providers, recyclers, research centres, social innovation experts and end-users have now 36 months of work ahead to design recycling solutions for rigid and flexible multi-layer plastic packaging waste coming from post-consumer and post-industrial sources in order to obtain new high-performance packaging solutions (flexible and rigid) for the food packaging industry.

Officially started on June 1st 2021, the consortium held online its kick off meeting on July 1st. During the meeting, partners presented their entities, the team involved, and the specific activities to be carried out during the project. With the project's official launch, MERLIN partners are now ready to synergising their knowledge and expertise to carry out the assigned tasks towards the realization of the expected outcomes.

MERLIN solutions will be gradually implemented starting with the sorting process that will occur combining optical sensors, Artificial Intelligence and robotics. Subsequently, the delamination process will optimize depolymerisation and using solvent-based processes; the final processes will be the recycling techniques for repolymerization and upcycling of polymers, and the validation, by developing rigid and flexible packaging solutions and demonstrating circularity of the processes. These solutions will be developed and later validated in a real environment to TRL 6.

MERLIN, which stands for "Increasing the quality and rate of MultilayER packaging recyclINg waste", is expected to have a positive impact on the environment, recovering and recycling the 3.03 Mt/year of multi-layer packaging waste in Europe, leading to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the dependence on imported fossil fuels. MERLIN will contribute to the European Strategy for Plastics, The Circular Plastics Alliance, the EU Green Deal, and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 5, 7, 13 & 19.

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For more information, please contact Mr. Jose Luis Dieguez at jose Luis.dieguez@itene.com, or Ms. Nuria Fuster Valls at nuria.fuster@itene.com.

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