



CASE STUDY TITLE

Acceptance criteria for disposable products via toilet.

SUMMARY

Respect for natural resources and the environment means that the purification and cleaning of urban wastewater is a fundamental part of the process of the integral water cycle. The dumping of non-biodegradable or difficult-to-disintegrate or containing plastics products deposited directly in the domestic toilet leads to the obstruction and deterioration of the sanitation network and the degradation of water resources. Thus, Spanish Standard UNE 149002 Acceptance criteria for disposable products via toilet has been published with the aim of preserving our urban sanitation networks and the aquatic environment itself.

BACKGROUND

The publication of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2151 of 17 December 2020 laying down rules on harmonized marking specifications on single-use plastic products, which develops the Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Union, a series of labels are imposed on this kind of products. On the other hand, the absence to date of a regulation that determines valid and objective criteria that allow identifying which products are or are not biodegradable, disintegrable and not plastic containing, as well as the confusion generated in this regard by the labeling of products designed to be disposed by the toilet, make standardization necessary.

STRATEGY

The strategy followed was sitting around the UNE standardization table all the representatives of the value chain related to this type of product in such a way that they find, through a reference document, a tool that satisfies the interests of each one. In particular:



AT A GLANCE

COUNTRY

- Spain

LEVEL

- National

SDG ADDRESSED

- SDG 6 - Clean Water & Sanitation

- The need of the water utilities that the products that are discarded through the sanitation and sewage networks are compatible with them, and that there are do not cause obstructions and blockages. Hence, the operability of the wastewater, depuration and discharge services are guaranteed, avoiding adverse consequences from a health and environmental point of view;

- The need for manufacturers to demonstrate that their products can be compatible with the operation of sanitation and depuration services and, at the same time, be friendly to the environment.



STRATEGY

- Finally, the need for consumers to have clear and accessible information on which products can be disposed in the toilet, and which should not be disposed in the toilet. Thus, the use of products not suitable for this purpose is avoided.

RESULTS & IMPACT

After the publication of the UNE 149002:2019 Standard, STANPA, the National Association of Perfumery and Cosmetics developed a code of good practices based on the standard. This code has been accepted by all their members, which are the main manufacturers of this kind of products. In parallel, some of the main supermarkets in Spain have promoted the use of products fulfilling UNE 149002, which can be currently found in most shops. Utility companies have planned to perform a large study on the impact, but has been postponed due the pandemic.

CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

The main challenge was to involve all the stakeholders in the development of a voluntary standard. Standardization activity can face challenges through the agreement on requirements for making and managing products with the goal of having clean water resources and good sanitation services. Despite the different interests of the parts, this common goal to contribute to SDG 6 and the neutral environment of the standardization committee contributed to reach an agreement.

POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

This experience is fully replicable in other countries and the Spanish standard can be used as a basis for standards in other countries as well as for a regional or international standards.

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