

8 April 2025

# Finding recyclable alternatives to pharmaceutical PVC packaging

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Adelphe's 2025 Call for  
Proposals



Replacing PVC blister packaging is a real challenge for this highly regulated sector. That's why Adelphe launched a working group in 2019, bringing together pharmaceutical laboratories, packaging manufacturers, representatives from the recycling streams, professional organisations and other technical partners to explore solutions for blister packaging, based on eco-design and taking account of the packaging's entire life cycle.

**This call for proposals is designed to provide support to companies registered with Adelphe who are interested individually or as a group in putting forward a large-scale project for switching from traditional PVC-aluminium blister packaging to a PVC-free solution whose recyclability is confirmed or under study.**

**Application packages must be sent to [p.tabourel@adelphe.fr](mailto:p.tabourel@adelphe.fr) by 23:59 on 22 June 2025 at the latest.**

Adelphe will endeavour to answer applicants' general questions on eco-design and recyclability of packaging to the best of its knowledge and ability.

You can contact **Pauline Tabourel at this email address: [p.tabourel@adelphe.fr](mailto:p.tabourel@adelphe.fr)**

## Overview of Adelphe

Adelphe is a French state-approved not-for-profit producer responsibility organisation whose mission is to reduce the environmental impact of packaging and graphic paper waste, with a focus on the wine and spirits, food services and health sectors.

Thanks to the environmental contributions paid by economic stakeholders from such sectors, Adelphe is able to advise companies on improving packaging reduction, reuse and recyclability; provide financing for local authorities to collect and sort packaging; and raise public awareness of best practices and good sorting habits.

Adelphe also works closely with its parent organisation, Citeo, to set up joint action programmes and achieve the statutory and regulatory goals set by France and the European Union.

Over 12,000 companies registered with Adelphe in 2024, providing more than €80 million in funds to develop this circular model and help decarbonise the economy, thereby better protecting the environment and biodiversity.

## Context

The AGECL Law, the European PPWR, and the specifications for the household packaging and graphic paper EPR scheme have set out ambitious targets for packaging in France:

- 15% reduction in single-use household packaging by 2030 compared with 2010
- All packaging must be recyclable by 2030
- 15% reduction in waste per inhabitant by 2040 compared with 2018
- 80% reduction in CO2 emissions for the packaging sector by 2050

In this context, work is accelerating on the eco-design of packaging in terms of prevention, reduction, reuse and recyclability.

**Adelphe wishes to help companies from the health sector (medication, medical devices, food supplements) attain regulatory targets and reduce the environmental impact of the sector's most prevalent type of packaging: blister packaging.**

This call for proposals concerns pharmaceutical blister packaging which currently consists of PVC cavities and aluminium foil lidding.

This type of packaging made mainly from PVC cannot be recycled and tends to disrupt existing recycling streams:

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- The aluminium contained in the lidding means that this packaging is sometimes detected by Eddy current machines used to capture “small aluminium items”. The PVC content is disruptive because it releases chloride gases that damage the industrial equipment used for the aluminium stream.
- The presence of PVC generally means the packaging is rejected at sorting, however, sorting errors can lead to the presence of these disruptive PVC blisters in the various material flows (fibrous or plastic).

To tackle these two issues, Adelphe wishes to support its clients in switching to alternative PVC-free solutions, whose recyclability is confirmed or under study.

## Call for Proposals – Purpose and Principles

This call for proposals is an opportunity to explore the technical, environmental and cost-related aspects involved, the goal being to improve the design of this type of household packaging, which represents 8 KT of household packaging annually.

**This call for proposals aims to support companies in the development of new and innovative solutions – from R&D to prototyping, through to large-scale roll-out and market launch, if possible – whose recyclability is confirmed or under study, and have been eco-designed.**

**It is targeted at companies registered with Adelphe who are interested individually or as a group in putting forward a large-scale project for switching from traditional PVC-aluminium blister packaging to a PVC-free solution whose recyclability is confirmed or under study.**

Packaging recyclability is determined according to the method developed by the Citeo-Adelphe Group, based on the recommendations of the Technical Committees in charge of assessing the recyclability of packaging in France (such as Cotrep, Cerec, Alutrec) and brought together in the TREE tool available on the client portal under the Eco-design tab.

**Applicants are invited to use the 2025 Blister Recyclability Guide (state of knowledge in March 2025) which gives an up-to-date account of the various alternatives and the challenges they pose to recycling:**

**[https://www.adelphe.fr/sites/default/files/Documents/2025-04/2025\\_adelphe\\_guide-de-la-recyclabilite-du-blister.pdf](https://www.adelphe.fr/sites/default/files/Documents/2025-04/2025_adelphe_guide-de-la-recyclabilite-du-blister.pdf)**

**In addition, the new solutions put forward will undergo at minimum an analysis to check that they do not negatively affect the environmental rating of the product.** The project leader will be able to carry out an LCA during the project, using an in-house software solution or a consultancy agency.

Lastly, projects relating to other eco-design aspects (weight reduction, volume reduction, integration of recycled or bio-based materials) can be submitted as long as recyclability is improved.

The results of **funded projects must be shared in a comprehensible and accessible format (reports, conclusions, general recommendations, best practices, research focus areas) in order to promote the development of all packaging in the sector in the long term** and improve the performance of the recycling system. The reproducibility of the findings is an essential and material condition for receiving funding from Adelphe.

Once studies and/or laboratory or industrial tests have been carried out, the project leader undertakes to include all their findings in a confidential report and produce a publicly available executive summary.

Adelphe will be given access to the intellectual property rights of the results of the projects selected for funding so that they can be disseminated in publicly available executive summaries, thereby enabling interested market stakeholders to make use of the content of the project and the key results and findings. The prototypes and packaging that are developed will remain the property of the manufacturers behind the project.

## Eligibility Criteria

Adelphe will freely select the applicants with the most relevant projects in terms of the objectives of this call for proposals.

The project should:

- Be steered by a marketer or group of marketers registered with Adelphe\*

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- Involve a health product for human use, medication, medical device or food supplement sold in France
- Target “pharmaceutical blister” packaging
- Target the marketing of a PVC and PVDC-free blister packaging solution whose recyclability is confirmed or under study
- Make it easy to reproduce the project results and conclusions, and promote the development of the market by disseminating the findings
- Begin in 2025 and end by 31 August 2027 at the latest

*\* It is expressly stipulated that only companies having signed an agreement with Adelphe that authorises Adelphe to take on their household packaging and graphic paper obligations on their behalf (“Client” Agreement) are authorised to apply for funding. If a winning company terminates their Client Agreement, this will automatically lead to the termination of the funding agreement for their project under this call for proposals. In that case, the winning company will no longer receive funding from Adelphe.*

Companies that have already been selected following a call for proposals relating to eco-design launched by Adelphe in 2024 and/or 2025 are not eligible for this call for proposals.

## Preparing the Application

### 1. **Application package**

Applicants are invited to prepare and complete their **application package (Appendix 1, Word)**, as well as an initial **expenditure table (Appendix 2, Excel)**, and send them via email [to p.tabourel@adelphe.fr](mailto:p.tabourel@adelphe.fr) by **23:59 on 22 June 2025 at the latest**.

Any other relevant elements will be considered as additional information.

These application packages will determine whether projects are eligible and will be used for the purpose of the selection process.

Any applications received after the deadline will not be selected.

**Proposal selection will take place by 4 July 2025 at the latest.** All documents submitted as part of an application will be considered in accordance with the usual rules of confidentiality.

Adelphe will inform all applicants of its decision as soon as the selection process is complete.

### 2. **Selection process**

**Adelphe will select the best applications based on the selection criteria set out in this call for proposals, with the help of internal experts.**

There is no minimum or maximum number of winners for this call for proposals. However, the selection will not exceed the budget set aside by Adelphe for 2025.

### 3. **Contracting**

For projects selected following the appraisal phase, **a partnership agreement will be drawn up between the parties, based on the General Partnership Conditions appended to this call for proposals.**

These documents will be electronically signed as soon as possible after the projects have been selected.

## Project Duration

The project must begin as soon as the winning proposals have been announced and end by 31 August 2027 at the latest.

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It is agreed that if project-related expenses are incurred in 2025 and before the selection date, they can be included in the project's funding budget.

The activities relating to such expenses will need to have begun during 2025 to be eligible for inclusion.

For projects lasting longer than the deadline provided above, Adelphe will only finance the expenses running up until that deadline.

Any project-related expenses incurred after 31 August 2027 will not be eligible under this call for proposals.

## Budget

Applicants must draw up their budget according to the specific demands of each project and must complete Appendix 2 when submitting their Application Package.

**Adelphe will fully fund (100%) expenditure for selected projects up to a maximum amount of two hundred thousand (200,000) euros excluding tax, including 30% of the total pre-tax budget for expenses related to personnel.**

The payment instalments will be as follows: 40% of the total funding allocated by Adelphe when the agreement is signed, 20% at the project's halfway mark, 40% at the end of the project, on reception of deliverables.

## Eligible Expenses

The list of eligible expenses under this call for proposals is as follows:

- Studies on the state of the art of existing solutions
- Studies to identify key improvements and impact on packaging recyclability
- Economic studies examining the development of packaging alternatives
- Environmental studies, such as life cycle analyses
- Market research and analysis of consumer behaviour
- Technical studies related to protecting the product (e.g. certification or storage life tests)
- Technical studies related to the manufacturability of the prototype
- Expenses for nominated research, engineering and technical staff, as well as purchasing and management control support staff assigned to the development project
- Purchase of equipment or tools
- Depreciation of facilities and research equipment
- Purchase of consumables for performing tests and cost of production line downtime
- Expenses for services subcontracted to laboratories (public or private), suppliers, project support consultants
- Expenses related to tests/trials during the research and pilot phase (regardless of the outcome of the tests/trials)

Non-eligible expenditure:

- Funding of the company's cash or working capital requirements
- Operating expenses other than those identified as eligible
- Expenditure unrelated to the project and/or disproportionate/ excessive
- Expenses already covered by other subsidies

## Expected Results/Deliverables

**A full confidential report and an executive summary** giving the main results and findings, as well as one (1) of the packaging prototypes developed (project permitting), should be submitted to Adelphe at the end of the project.

**An interim report and publicly available executive summary** of study progress and key findings to date should also be produced and sent to Adelphe in the course of projects lasting more than 12 months.

**Significant work is involved in producing these deliverables and human resources should be allocated in order to meet these expectations.** Human resources should be costed in the budget. In the past, some applicants have used external resources enabling them to monitor their project on an ongoing basis.

Monitoring committees will be set up as part of the project. They will include Adelphe and Citeo employees and members appointed by project leaders and any partners. The appointed individuals will be the main contacts for the respective parties

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and will jointly determine a meeting schedule for project monitoring (there must be at least one monitoring committee meeting for each deadline and for interim and final reports).

### Confidentiality of Results/Deliverables

The ownership and confidentiality arrangements governing the results and, in particular, the deliverables of the project are set out in the General Partnership Conditions appended to this call for proposals.

**Documents and any other information passed on to Adelphe using any medium whatsoever, as well as the results described in the final report that have been achieved pursuant to performance of the financing agreement shall be considered to be confidential.**

Adelphe and the applicants selected will agree on the project details to be published, in view of the fact that Adelphe has a remit to share results as widely as possible in order to help marketers implement best practice.

**However, applicants are reminded that the reproducible nature of the results and the possibility for Adelphe to publish a publicly available summary of the project are prerequisites for their participation in the projects.**

### Applicant Assessment Criteria

**Projects will be assessed primarily on the basis of the following criteria, organised into four main themes.**

**A mark out of 10 will be given for each criterion and an overall average out of 10 will be calculated according to the weighting factors below.**

#### **END OF LIFE:**

- Potential for switching to a solution whose recyclability is confirmed or under study (factor 5)
- Potential for switching to a solution with an LCA result that is better than that for the classic PVC-aluminium blister pack (factor 3)

#### **IMPACT:**

- Possibility of rolling out the solution at scale (factor 5)
- Products or volumes potentially concerned by the project (factor 3)
- Forecast and nearness of the market launch date (factor 2)

#### **FEASIBILITY:**

- Assessment of the technical feasibility and openness to several solutions (factor 5)
- Assessment of the feasibility in terms of cost effectiveness (factor 5)
- Assessment of the feasibility in terms of human resource availability (the human resources allocated to the project will be heavily scrutinised, especially with regard to testing) (factor 5)

#### **COMMITMENT:**

- Possibility that manufacturers, suppliers, equipment specialists, etc. will assist the company (factor 2)
- Potential for planning future external communication campaigns (factor 3)

Adelphe and Citeo teams need to be allowed assist with and attend technical trials.

#### **CONTACT DETAILS AND INFORMATION**

Further information can be requested by emailing: [p.tabourel@adelphe.fr](mailto:p.tabourel@adelphe.fr)

