

March 8, 2024

## Kao, Lion, Ito-Yokado, Welcia Yakkyoku and Hamakyorex Jointly Receive the Minister of Environment Award in the Sixth Japan Open Innovation Prize

### In Recognition of RecyCreation Activities for Collection and Film-to-Film Recycling of Refill Packs

Kao Corporation, together with Lion Corporation, Ito-Yokado Co., Ltd., Welcia Yakkyoku Co., Ltd. and Hamakyorex Co., Ltd., received the Minister of Environment Prize in the Sixth Japan Open Innovation Prize in recognition of RecyCreation<sup>\*1</sup> activities for the collection and film-to-film recycling of refill packs. Sponsored by the Cabinet Office of Japan, the Japan Open Innovation Prize honors cases of sustainable open innovation that have large social impact and serve as a model for others.

<sup>\*1</sup> The idea combines recycling, to revert something used back into a resource, and creation, to create new value. The concept is “Throwing it away after use. We want to change this common practice.”



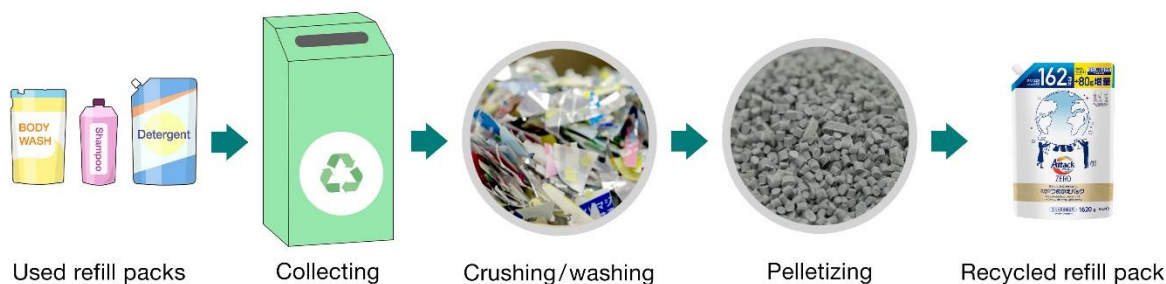
JAPAN OPEN  
INNOVATION PRIZE



Photo of the awards ceremony. From left: Representatives from Welcia Yakkyoku, Lion, Kao, Ito-Yokado and Hamakyorex with Yo Yarimizu, Director-General for Environmental Policy, Ministry of the Environment

The project that received the award is a cross-industry partnership among Kao and Lion from the manufacturing industry, Ito-Yokado and Welcia Yakkyoku from the retail industry and Hamakyorex from the logistics industry. The companies are validating the infrastructure for collecting used refill packs and developing the technology for film-to-film recycling. New systems for resource circularity must become widely used, and showing the results of this collaboration among multiple companies is thought to have created an open project that is easily expandable.

## Overview of RecyCreation activities for collection and film-to-film recycling of refill packs



Steps to manufacturing recycled refill packs

In September 2020, Kao and Lion announced that they were partnering on a project to recycle film packaging used for products such as detergent and shampoo (refill packs) toward realization of resource circularity for plastic packaging in society. Under the name “RecyCreation,” the companies aim to build the collection infrastructure and develop the recycling technology for used refill packs. Testing and validation in this project are currently still underway.

### News Release from September 2020

[Working Toward Resource Circulation for Plastic Packaging Kao and Lion Begin Collaboration on RecyCreation Activities](#)

Ito-Yokado and Welcia Yakkyoku set up collection boxes at the Ito-Yokado Hikifune Store and around 30 Welcia Yakkyoku stores to collect used refill packs from consumers. They collaborated with Kao and Lion to promote widespread recycling and awareness-building through activities designed to deepen consumers’ understanding and cooperation, aiming to increase the volume of refill packs collected. Together with Hamakyorex, which handles logistics for Welcia Yakkyoku, the partners are also reviewing the logistics process to drive efficiencies and minimize environmental load. In this process, used refill packs are loaded onto vehicles returning from making product deliveries to Welcia Yakkyoku stores and collected in bulk at logistics centers. The refill packs are then transported to the recycling center once a certain volume has been collected. The partners are currently verifying the effectiveness of this process.

### News Releases from November 2020

[Kao and Lion Begin Collaboration on Recycling Field Testing](#)

### News Releases from November 2021

[Kao and Lion, with Welcia Yakkyoku and Hamakyorex, Begin Field Testing for Recycling of Used Refill Film Packaging](#)

One result of these activities is the first commercialization of refill packs that use some recycled materials, which Kao and Lion achieved in May 2023. Film packaging technology development and

validation is underway at the pilot plant for film packaging recycling set up inside Kao's Wakayama Plant, with the technology for batch recycling of refill packs now established.

### **News Releases from May 2023**

[Kao | Kao and Lion Partner in Film-to-Film Recycling of Used Refill Packs: First Product Making Partial Use of Recycled Materials Reaches the Market](#)

### **News Release from May 2022**

[Kao Develops Practicable Technology for Film-to-Film Recycling of Used Refill Packs](#)

### **Points recognized in the Minister of Environment Prize**

“Resource circularity and film-to-film recycling are important issues in environmental policy. Establishing practices for refill packs is anticipated to open the way for future lifestyle innovations. The two leading companies, which are competitors, collaborating not only on the technology development but also on rebuilding processes to realize a circular economy has the potential to serve as a role model.”\*2

\*2 Excerpt from [overview of the award-winning projects in the Sixth Japan Open Innovation Prize](#) (in Japanese)

The Kao Group established its ESG strategy, the Kirei Lifestyle Plan, in April 2019. Since 2021, it has been promoting the Kao Group Mid-term Plan with its vision of “protecting future lives” and “sustainability as the only path.” Kao's initiatives address zero waste, leadership actions in the Kirei Lifestyle Plan. Kao understands that partnering with diverse partners is imperative to solve these kinds of social challenges and is advancing innovation through collaboration. Kao will continue to integrate ESG into the core of its company management. It will also develop its business, provide better products and services for consumers and society, and work toward its purpose, “to realize a Kirei world in which all life lives in harmony.”

\* This news release is a translation of a Japanese-language news release dated February 22, 2024.

### **About the Kirei Lifestyle Plan**

Over the past 130 years, Kao has worked to improve people's lives and help them realize more sustainable lifestyles—a Kirei Lifestyle. The Japanese word ‘kirei’ describes something that is clean, well-ordered and beautiful, all at the same time. The Kao Group established its ESG strategy, the Kirei Lifestyle Plan in April 2019, which is designed to deliver the vision of a gentler and more sustainable way of living. By 2030, Kao aims to empower at least 1 billion people, to enjoy more beautiful lives and have 100% of its products leave a full lifecycle environmental footprint that science says our natural world can safely absorb.

Please visit [the Kao sustainability website](#) for more information.

## **About Kao**

Kao creates high-value-added products and services that provide care and enrichment for the life of all people and the planet. Through its portfolio of over 20 leading brands such as *Attack*, *Bioré*, *Goldwell*, *Jergens*, *John Frieda*, *Kanebo*, *Laurier*, *Merries*, and *Molton Brown*, Kao is part of the everyday lives of people in Asia, Oceania, North America, and Europe. Combined with its chemical business, which contributes to a wide range of industries, Kao generates about 1,530 billion yen in annual sales. Kao employs about 34,300 people worldwide and has 137 years of history in innovation.

Please visit [the Kao Group website](#) for updated information.

## **Media inquiries should be directed to:**

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## **Related Information**

[Kao launches new ESG Strategy “Kirei Lifestyle Plan” to support consumer lifestyle changes](#)

[Kao’s New Challenges for the Future: Accelerating Purposeful Business Commitment with ESG](#)

[Kao sustainability website](#)