

Appendix: Policy instruments applied around the world to tackle the plastic bags problem

Country	Instrument	Details	Outcome(s)
China	Charge system (EI)	A selection of supermarkets in Shanghai will charge shoppers for plastic bags from 2004 in an attempt to reduce waste.	This is expected to reduce the more than one million bags per day given away by the supermarkets-which either end up in landfills or blowing around the city as litter
Bangladesh	Ban (CAC)	A ban was put on production and distribution of plastic bags which had been the cause of blocked drains and severe floods	
Ireland	Earmarked Charges (Levies) (EI)	The government has imposed a charge on all plastic shopping bags (of around 30 NZ cents per bag)	There have been reports of a (maintained) 97.5% reduction in plastic bag distribution. Consumers have accepted the change and are using a range of reusable bags offered by the supermarkets. The charge has generated approximately NZ\$ 5 million. This money will be channelled into a fund to promote waste management and environmental initiatives
South Africa	Charges (EI)	A charge has been imposed on plastic bags, which have assumed a new identity as the 'national flower' as a result of many getting caught up in trees and fences.	
Australia	Voluntary agreements (EI)	Environment ministers have challenged retailers to voluntarily reduce the 6.9 billion bags used each year	

	Public information campaigns	The 'Say No to Plastic Bags' campaign has been launched in Christchurch, South Island to raise awareness on issues associated with plastic bags. It has been encouraging the supermarkets to stock alternatives to plastic bags such as jute bags.	
	Recycling	Christchurch City Council collects plastic shopping bags for recycling through a process called thermo-fusion, which turns the bags into durable plastic planks suitable for boxing, pallets and fenceposts.	
Italy	Pollution taxes (EI)	In 1989, Italy introduced a tax on plastic bags. The new tax sought to have the price of bags better reflect the cost that they imposed onto society and the environment. By levying a tax of 100 lira per plastic bag on importers or producers, the Italian government created a new signal to the market—the cost of plastic bags was now greater compared to alternatives. The tax was about five times as great as the manufacturing cost per bag.	From 1989 to 1992, the government collected over 250 billion lira (around \$150 million) through this tax.
Hong Kong	Public information campaigns- (EI)	'Use Fewer Plastic Bags' campaign was launched with an initial target of reducing use by 10%. More than 1500 retail outlets agreed to take part in the drive and devised action plans to achieve the target.	The campaign was a resounding success. In the 1 st year, more than 30% of the participating retailers achieved or surpassed the 10% reduction target, leading to an overall reduction of more than 35 million plastic bags.
Taiwan	Bans (CAC)	Taiwan is moving towards banning the free distribution of plastic bags	
Singapore	Public information campaigns-	The government of Singapore is launching a campaign to discourage the use of plastic bags	

	(EI)		
Canada	Recycling	Almost all of the big grocery chain stores accept bags for recycling. The average household produces 8.88 kilograms of plastic bags per year. 2.46% of the total waste stream consists of plastic bags and locally 44.93% of all plastic bags produced are recovered	
United States of America	Product / Technology / Performance Standards (EI)	California passed a law that required plastic trash bags (manufactured for waste disposal rather than shopping) to be made up of a minimum of 30% recycled content. California's requirement changed requiring plastic trash bag manufacturers to comply with one of the following two options: ensure that its plastic trash bags intended for sale in the state contain a quantity of recycled post-consumer plastic equal to at least 10% of the weight of the regulated bags; or ensure that at least 30% of the weight of the material used in all of its plastic products intended for sale in the state is recycled post-consumer plastic.	