

PRODUCT USE AND END OF LIFE



THE CHALLENGES

IN THE WORLD

The use phase of a product begins when the consumer starts to benefit from it, and ends when they choose to dispose of it (which can happen even if the product remains perfectly functional!).

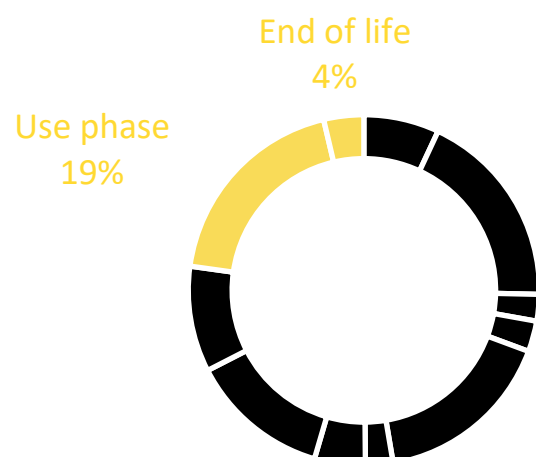
Prolonged use of a product allows the impact of prior stages (raw materials, manufacturing, transport, etc.) to be amortised.

However, the use phase is not without impact, and in some sectors even represents the stage of the life cycle with the greatest impact on the environment. For example, a shower gel needs water to be used, a pair of jeans needs the water and energy of a washing machine to be washed... and in the same way, a pair of glasses is cleaned a number of times. The end-of-life stage follows the use phase, and is the final stage in the product's life cycle. It poses major environmental challenges, such as waste treatment. In the best cases, end-of-life products are reused or recycled, or incinerated or landfilled.

FOR THE OPTICAL SECTOR

According to the life cycle analysis of a pair of glasses, its use phase for 19% of its environmental impact. This stage mainly involves the maintenance and cleaning of the product, which will require the use of water and cleaning products such as wipes, etc.

Moreover, while the lifespan of a pair of glasses depends on how well they are cared for, it is also heavily influenced by fashion trends. The challenge for the sector is therefore to slow down the renewal of frames, in particular by offering timeless models. The end-of-life phase represents 4% of the environmental impact of a pair of glasses. Its recycling rate is relatively low (need for dismantling, infrequent return of used glasses for recycling, etc.). The sector needs to create a genuine recycling industry.



WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR)

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) states that all companies are responsible for the waste they produce, in line with the polluter pays principle. They are therefore obliged to manage their products, or have them managed, until they are recovered or disposed of.

In practical terms, Europe-wide obligations may include making it easier to dismantle spectacles for recycling, setting up systems for recovering used spectacles (collection points, return campaigns) or paying eco-contributions to approved organisations that manage the collection, processing and recycling of waste.

DESTRUCTION OF UNSOLD NON-FOOD ITEMS

While the ban on destroying unsold new non-food products currently only applies to the textile sector in the European Union, it will soon be extended to other sectors. In France, for example, it has applied to all sectors since 1 January 2024.

Moreover, the European Union is imposing increasingly strict standards on product design: manufacturers now have to make their products more reliable, reusable and repairable.

WHERE TO START?

USE PHASE

MAINTENANCE

- Raise consumer awareness of the correct way to maintain the product in order to extend its lifespan (e.g. through training of salespersons or a guide being provided)
- Offer a “green” maintenance kit for products

MAKE IT LAST

- Offer timeless models to minimise the obsolescence of pairs of glasses

REPAIR

- Provide basic tools and information for carrying out minor home repairs
- Offer a repair service
- Optimise the availability and price of spare parts

END OF LIFE

RECOVER

- Encourage consumers (through benefits or discounts, for example) to return used optical products

REUSE

- Give a second life to the used products collected (for example, by working with associations that repackage pairs for disadvantaged people)
- Offer second-hand products

RECYCLE

- Optimise the recycling of your products (as with OneSight or Recycloptics)
- Work with other players in the sector to set up a genuine recycling network

THEY DID IT

ACTIONS RESULTING FROM APPLICATIONS FOR THE SILMO 2023 CSR PRIZE

USE PHASE

- Send spare parts to distributors, and offering a repair service – EIO
- After-sales service for up to 20 years on certain models – VUILLET VEGA
- Interactive videos on frame care and maintenance – MYKITA

END OF LIFE

- Systematic recovery of defective parts from opticians so that they can be recycled in the best possible conditions and the problem studied with a view to improving the quality of our products – VUILLET VEGA
- Regular sales of prototypes at headquarters and on the e-shop – MYKITA
- Recovery and recycling of end-of-life spectacles – EIO