Lightweight glass bottles can help the spirits sector make significant commercial savings, according to a detailed study. Container Lite, an industry-wide initiative funded by WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) found that lightweight glass packaging can reduce costs, maintain brand appeal and reduce environmental impact.

Why change?
The UK spirits industry uses more than 500,000 tonnes of glass each year. With home drinking on the increase and off-trade spirits sales continuing to rise, demand for glass packaging is stronger than ever.

Lightweight glass containers offer a crucial way forward – helping the sector to reduce overheads, underline corporate social responsibility and meet challenging waste reduction commitments.

Container Lite highlights the business case. This major year-long project saw a cross-section of industry experts work together to reduce the weight of glass packaging, and investigate the commercial and practical advantages of innovative lightweight containers.

The project found that there is significant scope to reduce the weight of spirits bottles, without negatively affecting consumer perceptions or container performance.

A clear success story
Allied Glass, the UK’s fourth largest glass container manufacturer, produces clear glass bottles for many spirits brands.

As part of the Container Lite project, the company worked with British Glass to develop new lightweight versions for two generic spirits bottles.
Both bottles are now in circulation. A new 340g 70cl bottle (24 per cent lighter than the previous bottle) and a new 710g 1.5l bottle (11 per cent lighter) were produced. The innovations saved over 1,900 tonnes of glass during the project, with a further 8,591 tonne saving projected for the first 12 months following the project.

Brian McMillan, technical director at Allied Glass, said:

“These bottles demonstrate that it is possible to create packaging that saves on raw materials and energy consumption, while still meeting our customers’ high expectations. We’re delighted with the outcome.”

The future’s light
Container Lite has inspired the next generation of lightweight 70cl spirits bottles.

Glass companies Allied Glass and Rockware have both developed sub-300g 70cl spirits bottles. The Rockware ’Best in Class’ bottle weighs 298g and is used by the Co-op for its own-label finest blend Scotch whisky and the consumer-owned retailer is also looking to use it for other spirits.

Lightweighting by numbers
- **13,000 tonnes of glass** could be saved if all whisky sold in the UK switched to ‘Best in Class’ bottles.
- **9,500 tonnes of carbon** could be saved if all whisky in the UK switched to ‘Best in Class’ bottles.
- **3,200 tonnes of glass** could be saved if all the UK’s top three selling vodka brands switched to 30% lighter bottles.

Want to know more?
More detail on the Container Lite project, including a full technical report and further case studies, are available from www.wrap.org.uk/retail

WRAP continues to work with the glass and spirits industries to increase the use of recycled glass in products, and to reduce the amount of material used in glass packaging.

To learn more about these initiatives, or to find out how WRAP can assist your business, please contact the Retail Innovation team at WRAP. Tel: 01295 819686; email: retail@wrap.org.uk

The WRAP Retail Innovation team works with retailers and their supply chains to reduce the amount of packaging and food that households throw away.

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