

PlomBOX

THE CARD GAME

PlomBOX the card game is a fast-paced game for 2 to 4 players lasting 15 to 30 minutes where you will play a proud activist in an NGO, a zealous Corporate in a global company, or a simple Citizen, in the context of the PlomBOX project.

More about the PlomBOX project can be found on its website at plombox.org.

While no knowledge of the project is needed to play it may be worth knowing more to understand better the game mechanics and references.

Contents

PlomBOX, The game! consists of a deck of 90 cards with different use:

1 QR card with QR for this rulebook and for the PlomBOX webpage



1 spotlight card



4 role cards



3 victory cards, giving the victory conditions for 2, 3 or 4 players



81 PlomBOX playing cards (19 of them marked on the back with a 4 and 19 marked with a 3, used depending on the player count)

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RHULes*

*Note: this game was developed during week-ends and non working hours by members of the PlomBOX project as a way to cope with the COVID lockout, and many private jokes are included in the game. In particular, the "RHULes" is a wink to Royal Holloway University of London, the institution handling the PlomBOX grant. RHUL is however not related to this game at all.



Your role will be determined randomly at the start of the game, and you will keep it secret until the end of it.

During the game you will play resources to reach a goal, different for each faction, and denounce areas for contamination in the hope to have them closed.

In case you are a simple citizen, you will thrive to have the PlomBOX project completed by assigning resource cards in order to fulfill the 4 work packages in different sites (player stacks).
As a corporate your aim is to develop industries and have as many industrialized sites as possible. Note however that a site too heavily contaminated can be incriminated and all the effort lost.
As an NGO activist your goal will be to end the game with as few contaminated sites as possible.

NOTE THAT THESE GOALS ARE NOT TOTALLY EXCLUSIVE AND A GAME MAY WELL END WITH DIFFERENT FACTIONS WINNING, OR NONE OF THEM!

Game Setup

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First, select the first player and a playing order.

Then prepare and shuffle the deck (cards with green background). All the cards are used when 4 players are playing, but the cards with a “4” on their background are discarded when there are 3 players, and cards with “3” or “4” on their back are discarded when there are 2 players.

The role cards are also shuffled. If less than 4 players are playing then one of the citizen cards is discarded so only 3 role cards are used. Each player then draws a card (the remaining card is discarded without being revealed if there are only 2 players). Each player keeps the card and can check it secretly. This will be their role for the whole game, defining the winning conditions (see end game).

Each player then draws 5 cards from the deck, and the spotlight card is placed in the middle of the play area. 5 cards per player (10 for 2 players, 15 at 3 and 20 at 4) are placed on the spotlight card, forming the spotlight stack. The remaining cards from the deck form the deck stack.

Deck Cards

There are 5 kinds of cards (in the spotlight and deck stacks):

Incrimination cards that will reveal the cards in front of the target player and will check if the area is contaminated (see incrimination)





Positive cards that allow you to play 2 cards in one turn (so-called “green cards”)



Negative cards that are played on a player to make that player lose its turn (co-called “red cards”)



Resource cards, that are normally played hidden at any player and accumulated (hidden) in front of them, one on top of each other (their so-called stack or site). Each provide resource for one work package of PlomBOX (top left, 1 to 4), industrial resources (marked by ) and contamination (marked by )



Corruption cards that are played like resources cards (hidden on a player stack) and will counteract incrimination (see incrimination)



Note that the industrial and/or contamination values can be negative. They will define how developed is the PlomBOX for each site, as well as the level of industrialization and contamination

Game play

Each player has to play a card during their turn. It can be a card from their hand or the first card of the spotlight stack. If played from the hand, a resource or corruption is played face down on any player stack. Red, green or incrimination are played visibly.



If a green card is played 2 more cards can be played, either from the hand or from the spotlight stack. If a red card is played the targeted player will lose their next turn.



When a card is played from the spotlight stack it is revealed to all. If it is a resource or a corruption it is played on the current player stack.

If it is a green card, the player can play 2 more cards (either from their hand or from the spotlight stack).


If it is a red card, it ends the player's turn, even if they have more cards to play thanks to a green card.

Finally, if it is an incrimination, the player stack is checked for contamination (see incrimination, below).

At the end of the player's turn, they have to draw cards from the deck stack until back to 5 cards in hand. If there are no cards left in the deck stack they will keep playing with less than 5 cards in hand.

Incrimination

When a player stack is incriminated, all cards are turned visible side up, in the opposite order they were played. If a corruption card is reached then no more cards are revealed and the corruption card is discarded.

The total of contamination is then computed, summing the  values of all visible cards. If the total is 2 or less, the site is found clean and nothing happens. If the total is 3 or 4, the site is found contaminated and all resource cards with contamination values of 1 or more are discarded.

If the total is 5 or more the site is overcontaminated and all resource cards (including eventual hidden face down ones) are discarded.

Discard then the incrimination card but keep it visible in the play area as the total number of incrimination cards played is important for ending the game (see below).



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Endgame

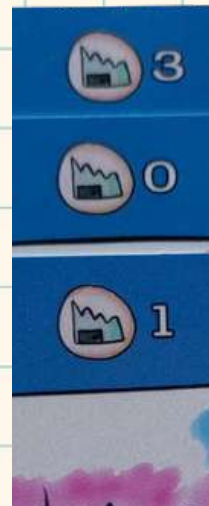
The game ends when, at the beginning of a player turn, there is no card left in both stacks (deck and spotlight) or a specific number of Incrimination cards has been played, one more than the number of players: 3 for a game with 2 players, 4 in a game of 3 players, or 5 for a game with 4 players.

When the game ends all cards in player stacks are revealed and the following is computed individually for each player:

If there are cards of all workpackages (1 to 4) in the player stack, then its PlomBOX is done



If the industry total is 3 or more, then the industry is considered developed



If the contamination total is 2 or less, then the area is considered clean

Winning conditions depend on the role and the number of players. The Citizen player(s) need a specific number of PlomBOXes to be completed to win. A Corporate needs a specific number of industries developed, and an NGO need a specific number of clean areas, according to:

2 players

- 3 incriminations end the game
- a Citizen wins if a PlomBOX are done
- a Corporate wins if at least 2 sites are industrialized
- an NGO wins if at least 2 sites are clean

3 players

- 4 incriminations end the game
- a Citizen wins if at least 3 PlomBOX are done
- a Corporate wins if at least 2 sites are industrialized
- an NGO wins if at least 3 sites are clean

4 players

- 5 incriminations end the game
- a Citizen wins if at least 3 PlomBOX are done
- a Corporate wins if at least 3 sites are industrialized
- an NGO wins if at least 3 sites are clean

	Citizen Number of PlomBOXes	Corporate Number of Industrialized sites	NGO Number of clean sites
2 players	1 or more	1 or more	2 or more
3 players	2 or more	2 or more	2 or more
4 players	3 or more	2 or more	3 or more

Note that it is possible for multiple factions to win, or for everybody to lose.

Endgame

- PlomBOX done if all 4 WP are in the stack
- Site industrialized if Industry total is 3 or more
- Site clean if the contamination total is 2 or less

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tips

In order to win as a citizen or a corporate, developing the PlomBOX/industry at your site is not necessary. You can also assign resource cards to other player stacks. Note that you can win without developing your PlomBOX/industry if there are enough other developed sites.

While the citizens and corporates have a similar way of achieving their goal, developing sites, the NGO player aim is usually the opposite. Of course an NGO player can contaminate on purpose a site (their own or another one) in order to incriminate it later. Note however that if citizens/corporates guess a player is an NGO, they will probably be the target of most negative cards during the reminding of the game to force them to skip their turn, so staying low profile is usually a good idea.

Be careful about the end arriving fast when positive cards are played. A combination of a positive card and 2 incriminations can be a very efficient way of ending the game for a player who believes they are in a winning situation.

Credits

Concept: X. Bertou, M.B. Lovino
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*Any resemblance to reality
may not be pure coincidence*



Play table example

Unused cards (one role card and all marked with 4 as there are only 3 players)

