

Sustainability Working group Report

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As our governments in Canada and Europe set our societies on the path to a sustainable recovery, our industries have a great role to play and solutions to offer to help the world transition to a net-zero future - leveraging new opportunities for growth, performance, and competitiveness that also delivers positive environmental and social outcomes.

On November 19, 2021, the EU Chamber of Commerce in Canada thus convened European companies operating in Canada across various sectors for the first meeting of its “Sustainability” working group. This roundtable offered them a platform to discuss how their companies were progressively shifting towards low-carbon circular business models and how their solutions could contribute to Canada and the EU’s net-zero roadmap.

Journeying towards circular business models in Canada

Over the past decade, the European Commission and European National governments have placed an increasing regulatory pressure on European-HQed companies to market more sustainable products, to manage the waste resulting from their operations in an environmentally sound manner and to reduce their global carbon footprint. By now, most European companies have started to adopt globally sustainable supply chain management strategies, to shift from a cost based to a carbon neutral based approach to manufacturing, to incorporate targets of renewable or recycled materials in their products/packaging and/or to reduce their overall carbon footprint. Some of the most ambitious companies even aim at transforming their value-chains to become 100% circular and carbon positive by 2030-50.

Ikea's strategic goals

Ikea has pledged to become net-zero latest 2050, and halving its greenhouse gas emissions in absolute terms from the total IKEA value chain by 2030.

To achieve these goals, Ikea will seek 1/ to drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions; 2/ to remove and store CO₂ through better forest and agriculture management within its value chain; 3/ to take an extended responsibility for the climate footprint of our customers, suppliers and sourcing – including by:

- Using more materials and food ingredients with a low climate footprint
- Striving towards electrification, 100% renewable energy and continually improving efficiency
- Promoting sustainable choices and transforming into a circular business
- Improving sustainable management practices within forestry and agriculture
- Prolonging the life of products and the carbon storage in renewable materials
- Enabling customers to generate renewable energy at home
- Transforming their suppliers' entire factories or operations to renewable energy

Tetra Pak: partnering with Stora ENSO to recycle packaging

Achieving a truly circular economy where waste is designed out and materials stay in use requires that all packages can get new life. Used carton packages placed into a recycling bin in many parts of the world enter a process that ends with their component parts – paperboard, plastic and aluminium – getting a new life as new products. Yet, globally only 13.5% of total waste is recycled, while 37% ends in landfills and 33% is burned or openly dumped as litter.

Tetra Pak and Stora Enso have partnered to provide circular packaging solutions to the European market – 1/ reducing or fully replacing the fossil components with renewable fibre-based or other non-fossil materials; 2/ and investing into new repulping line(s) to recover the carton fibers and recycle consequent volumes of food and beverage cartons across geographies where the two company operates.

Air France - KLM: dealing with catering and cleaning wastes

Air France – KLM handles many forms of waste, mostly arising from flight operations and maintenance, within a context of strict regulatory requirements. About 70% of waste results from onboard catering and the cleaning of the cabin - ranging from used cups and cutlery to packaging materials and any items left behind by our passengers.

In 2021, in partnership with Newrest, Air France deployed in Canada a pilot to recycle part of the cleaning and catering wastes generated during flights between Paris and Montreal – duplicating processes already in place in France (CDG) and the Netherlands (Schiphol). This pilot phase enabled the company to identify the potential risks of organic contamination and to develop a mitigation action plan. But Canadian waste management regulations are very strict and no international waste can currently be recycled, leaving no alternative option but incarceration or burial.

On their journey towards sustainability and circularity in Canada, some EU Companies operating in Canada are finding it difficult to implement sustainable materials and waste management strategies and/or transition to closed loop production systems. It is notably due to the lack of infrastructure and waste management systems to collect, recycle and repurpose their post-customer wastes. Some already experimented and tried different options to collect their products and their packaging at the end of their lifecycle (e.g., notably setting financial incentives and rewards program) or have looked towards the U.S. as an export market to recycle and repurpose some of their wastes.

EUCCAN believes the adoption of an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme, standardized across provinces, could do a lot to improve recycling rates, reduce litter, create the conditions to incent efficiency and reduce costs for end-of-life management of packaging and paper, and ultimately lead to the development of a professional recycling ecosystem in Canada.

The EU “EPR” overarching regulatory framework

A number of Directives provide for the extended responsibility of producers. While the Waste Framework Directive provides that it is for the Member States to decide whether the producer of a product “has extended producer responsibility”, the implementation of EPR is indeed organised at various levels by the Directive on batteries and accumulators, the Directive on packaging and packaging waste, the Directive on end-of-life vehicles, and the Directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment. Those Directives primarily rely on the imposition of recovery and recycling targets on the Member States for the concerned end-of-life products.

More info: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/6/module_1_5.htm

Bringing to market the future of clean mobility

Another major dimension of the corporate reflection on circularity relates to the adoption of clean mobility solutions across the value chain – companies increasingly looking towards Electric Vehicles (or “EVs”) for commercial fleets and distribution systems.

Ikea

Towards a net-zero distribution system

As part of its efforts to become net-zero by 2050, Ikea has pledged to have emissions-free shipping by 2040 and emissions-free delivery by 2025 in Canada. To that end, Ikea has already:

- signed up to a pledge to only move cargo on ships using zero-carbon fuel by 2040.
- partnered with technology-enabled logistics and last mile delivery provider, Second Closet, and Lion Electric, a leading manufacturer of all-electric medium and heavy-duty urban vehicles, to integrate zero-emission trucks into its fleet for IKEA home deliveries in several markets across Canada.

Schneider Electric

Adopting a Green Fleet

Moving forward with its commitment to build a net-zero carbon world, Schneider Electric joined The Climate Group’s EV100 initiative to launch a Green Fleet policy which aims to replace 100% of its car fleet with electric vehicles latest 2030.

By then, Schneider Electric will convert 14,000 company cars in over 50 countries to EV. Schneider Electric will also install EV charging infrastructure in its major offices and factories by 2030, with flagship sites showcasing innovative EcoStruxure e-mobility architecture with microgrid technologies, asset management and new energy management systems.

EU companies operating in Canada have welcomed the efforts of the federal government to jumpstart the production of electric vehicles in Canada. At the same time, they are also pointing out that the development and adoption pace of electric mobility solutions remained slower than needed.

Voicing concerns about the availability of electric vehicles in Canada (incl. in relation to the Biden Administration Infrastructure Plan), they also reflected on the need for increased public investment to deploy pilots and bring to market clean transportation solutions to fill in the lack of clean transportation infrastructures in the country.

Hydrogen hub the “Zero-Emission Valley”

The Zero Emission Valley is the first European initiative to deploy hydrogen mobility on a regional scale (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes). This project provides for the installation of twenty stations powered by green hydrogen and the deployment of 1,200 hydrogen vehicles for business use by 2023.

- Alongside local stakeholders, Symbio (a joint venture between Michelin and Faurecia also operating in North America), is a shareholder of Hympulsion, the company in charge of installing and operating the twenty stations

Alstom’s Coralia iLint

Alstom-Bombardier, a world leader in green and smart mobility, has been developing a portfolio of zero-emission mobility solutions for several years and has launched an ambitious battery and hydrogen innovation program.

Alstom’s Coradia iLint train, the first in the world to be powered by hydrogen, entered commercial service in 2018 in Germany and, to date, 41 trainsets have been ordered by two German states and successful trials have taken place in Austria, in the Netherlands, in Sweden and now in France.

You would like to take part of our
sustainability working group
to support the transition to a net-zero future?

Contact us or join us



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Contact us

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