
Stora Enso and Huhtamaki launch industrial scale recycling programme for paper cups in Europe

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Huhtamaki and Stora Enso have joined forces to launch a new paper cup recycling initiative, The Cup Collective. The programme, which is the first of its kind in Europe, aims to recycle and capture the value of used paper cups on an industrial scale. Initially the programme will be implemented across the Benelux. With the aim of setting new standards for paper cup collection and recycling in Europe, The Cup Collective has issued an open invitation for partners from across the supply chain to get involved in working towards a systemic European solution.

The EU has set recycling target for paper and board packaging of 85 percent by 2030. Paper cups are recyclable but need to be collected before they can be turned into new paper products. The Cup Collective initiative will create the necessary collection infrastructure to significantly increase the recycling rate of wood-fiber in paper cups. Above all, the programme will make it as easier for consumers and businesses to collect used paper cups to be regenerated into valuable recycled raw material.

The first paper cup collection bins will be available in restaurants, cafés, office buildings and transport hubs in the Brussels and Amsterdam metropolitan areas. The Cup Collective aims to recycle half a billion paper cups in the first two years and, as it is designed to be scalable, has the capacity to significantly increase recycling volumes in Europe. The programme is managed by Co-cre8 - co-cre8.earth, a UK-based firm with over a decade's experience in designing and implementing recycling programmes across Europe.

“Huhtamaki is a world leader in developing and manufacturing recyclable fiber products. For us, every cup counts. We want to go to the next step and ensure that recyclable cups also get effectively recycled. We have combined the best expertise from Huhtamaki and Stora Enso to create this new vision for industrial scale cup collection and recycling,” says Eric Le Lay, President, Fiber Foodservice EAO at Huhtamaki.

“Stora Enso wants to accelerate the circularity of all packaging materials and we have an excellent foundation to make that happen. The paperboards we make are designed to be recycled and our own production sites, including Langerbrugge in Belgium, can process and recycle paper cups into new fiber-based products. By partnering with Huhtamaki and Co-cre8 we will now be able to provide a platform to collect and capture the value of paper cup fibers on an industrial scale,” says Hannu Kasurinen, EVP, Stora Enso Packaging Materials division.

Call for action

The Cup Collective will work with partners throughout the supply chain, from the largest restaurants and café chains, retailers and transport hubs to independent coffee shops, collection partners, waste management operators and policymakers across Europe to address the challenges to recycling and deliver a viable scalable solution for Europe. Initially, The Cup Collective is being financed by the two companies but a key factor in the success of The Cup Collective will be its ability to become self-funding in the future.