

LESSONS IN SUSTAINABILITY

Our Group HSE Manager for Performance, Environment & Sustainability Philippe Coune has overseen our sustainability progress since we first set our 2020 targets in 2010. We asked him to provide an honest assessment of our journey so far.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SINCE 2010?

Sustainability is a process of continuous improvement and requires everybody's expertise and involvement. We have to constantly find new ways to drive change and keep sustainability at the heart of everything we do. Setting targets is just the start – maintaining continuous momentum is the key to success.

IN WHAT WAY?

For example in 2016 we achieved our target of reducing energy use by 20% – four years before our 2020 deadline. We have gone far beyond the easier 'low-hanging fruit' consumption reductions by investing in new machinery, techniques and processes.

BUT THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT INCREASE IN ENERGY USE FROM 2016-7

There has been a 0.2% increase. However, we have been running at maximum capacity, increasing the quality of our products and we are testing the results of new investment. Energy saving is always a step-by-step process where results plateau and then jump forward. We do a project, learn about it and if it does well we invest in other plants. The fact that we have reduced our emissions without real energy increases shows we are running at a high level of efficiency. So this means we obviously face new challenges in the future.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017?

From 2016 to 2017 we have seen a decrease of 22% in the amount of waste sent to landfill. This represents almost 10,000 tonnes of waste that have been valorised and around 300 fewer truck trips to landfill sites. Now we are sending 64.9% less to landfill than we did in 2010. Still, achieving our target of zero waste will be a challenge. I'm convinced we will need the help of others – companies that can use our waste and support from the authorities as well as regulation – to create the virtuous cycle required to take a major step forward.

WHERE WERE THE MOST WASTE GAINS ACHIEVED IN 2017?

Across our Rock Mineral Wool plants, waste has fallen by 25% as a result of better recycling techniques for the improved use of production residue. Our team in North America has achieved great success, but recently their waste recycling partner decided to stop using our material. Now our teams are searching for new solutions – which proves that you can never become too comfortable with the success of your waste management.

THERE HAS ALSO BEEN A HUGE DROP IN SO_x AND NO_x EMISSIONS. WHY?

Our SO_x emissions have been reduced by increasing the efficiency of our abatement system and the improved selection of raw materials. The decrease in NO_x has been achieved by improving the efficiency of the melting technology with new equipment, improved settings and better plant maintenance planning.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO PEOPLE WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT EMISSIONS FROM OUR PLANTS?

When we carry out any health study we always use the maximum allowed emission level as a worst case scenario. Our values always fall well below these levels because we believe that better process efficiencies provide the best for our communities and employees.

KNAUF INSULATION IS ALSO CERTIFIED TO FOUR KEY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

All our sites are certified to ISO 9001 standard for quality management; ISO 14001 for environmental management; ISO 50001 for energy management and to OHSAS 18001 for health and safety management. The standards are all voluntary but internationally recognised as independently verifying a company's performance claims. In 2010 we became one of the first companies in our sector to achieve all four ISO standards for our organisation and all our plants in Europe, North America, Russia and CIS.

AND HOW DOES KNAUF INSULATION ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN?

We have a supply chain approval and management process to make sure suppliers commit to low environmental impact – ensuring raw materials are extracted in a responsible manner and respect communities. We want to see this process carried out by workers who have fair salaries and support strong anti-pollution and waste management measures. We are now planning to develop this process further.

HOW WILL KNAUF INSULATION'S NEW PLANTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMPANY'S SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY?

Our new Rock Mineral Wool plant scheduled to open in 2019 will represent the epitome of the cutting-edge technology we have developed over the years to ensure zero waste and outstanding energy efficiency. We are also examining the installation of solar panels as well as our Urbanscape® Green Roof Solution – every small energy saving can add up to a big difference – as well as developing a system that can share extra heat with nearby buildings.

Philippe Coune, Group HSE Manager for Performance, Environment & Sustainability



ENERGY-SAVING MINDSET

“Forklift drivers, managers, operators... everyone's attention is being focused on saving energy. In recent years, we have made a major difference to energy savings through capital expenditure but now we have audited data that allows us to analyse the areas of our plants where we can make further consumption gains. Through this regression analysis, training, dedicated energy-saving champions in each plant and awareness raising, we are working on changing the mindsets that can make a real difference.”

Berin Onur, Knauf Insulation's Group HSE Manager, Energy