



SUSTAINABLE CONCEPTS



Sustainability | In the manufacture and development of packaging, environmental friendliness has long been more than just cardboard made from recycled paper. Aida Rodriguez talks about why sustainability is something that companies are now committed to.



► **Aida Rodriguez,**
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COSSMA: To what extent is a re-thinking of corporate cultures in the cosmetics industry towards sustainability recognisable?

Aida Rodriguez: Progressively society realises that resources are limited. New generations have an environmental awareness that is changing



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become demanding with their value chain, making this policy extensive to suppliers.

How complex, time-consuming and cost-intensive is it to introduce a sustainable concept for an entire company?

Today, companies are facing many technical challenges. A committed and efficient sustainability policy is not implemented overnight, it is very complex and requires the commitment of the whole team. On the other hand it is important to set scientifically based targets to be able to quantify the improvements, and to evaluate really if the product is more sustainable on its life cycle, not only from an environmental point of view but also taking into account the society and ethics. It is a process of continuous improvement, and in Virospace we are always pushing forward to do things better.

From a technical point of view, we have launched more sustainable droppers as for example "The Wood Dropper". At first it seemed impossible. It was very complex to achieve our quality standards with a material like wood, but we did it. Currently, we can offer the market a wooden dropper, without plastic threads or glue and a very low environmental impact. This project is an example of how quality, aesthetics and sustainability can go hand in hand. ▶

markets all over the world. Moreover, these new generations are now starting to give a new approach not only in their way of life but also in their working methodology.

Nowadays, companies are trying to provide differentiating elements that make their brands more attractive to the public, and the public is now more concerned with sustainable development. Brands are pursuing renewable energy strategies, designing their products with recycled materials, producing with less waste and are trying to go for reusable products, in short betting for circular economy. Consequently, they

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- » The environmental and Audit Scheme (EMAS), also known as the EU Eco-Audit or Eco-Audit, was developed by the European Union and is a community system of environmental management and auditing for organisations that want to improve their environmental performance in a public and transparent way beyond ISO 14001.



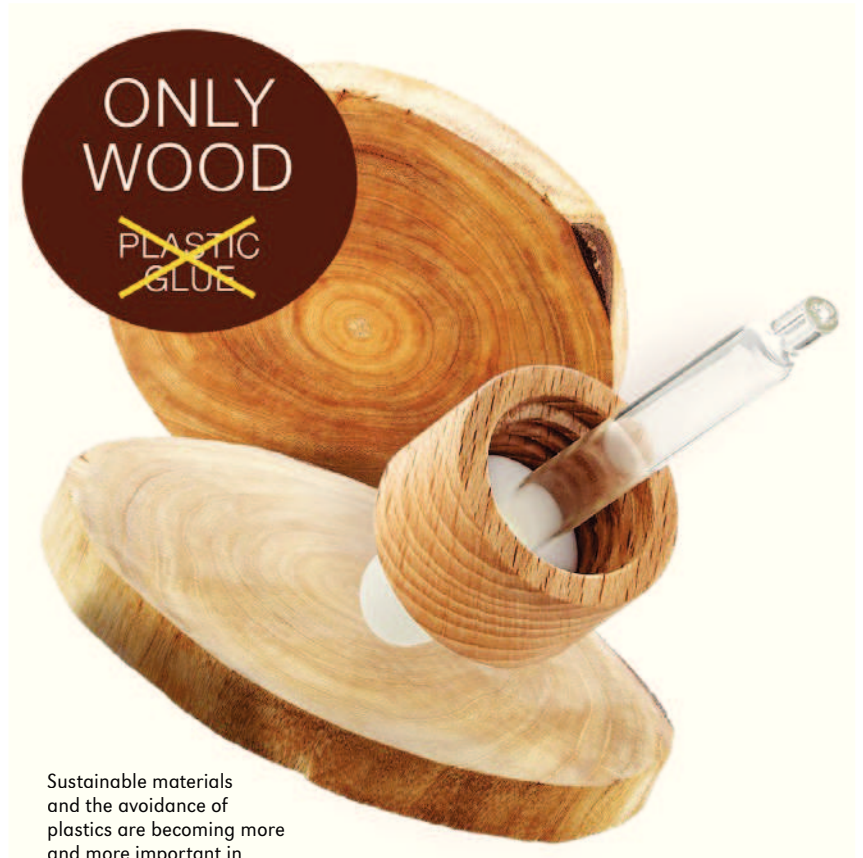
What influence does politics have on this development?

More and more countries' policies are becoming more restrictive. International agreements are being made, with which companies not only have to get involved, but must go ahead with legal requirements.

What were the first steps here?

The first steps were having the ISO14001 certification and after the EMAS, as a guarantee of quality of our commitment and good work with the environment.

But apart from certifications, Virospack's greatest achievement has undoubtedly been to be able to raise awareness among all our employees and to see how they propose daily improvements at the level of sustainability in their jobs. The involvement of our entire team has been such that today the commitment to our environment is part of our DNA. Currently, we plan to expand our facilities again and we are going to do it with a sustainable building project through the BREAM certification. Companies not only have the duty of producing or expanding in a sus-



Sustainable materials and the avoidance of plastics are becoming more and more important in the packaging industry.

tainable way, but also to commit their employees to the importance of the impact of their jobs towards the environment.

How have the environmental goals changed since then?

All Virospack's processes have environmental KPI's. In the same way that the company controls the yields, the quality or production it also controls the sustainable development of our all the sites and production processes. In fact, every year we publish the EMAS declaration, where all en-

vironmental behaviour of the company is collected. It has also changed our purchasing policy, as sustainability is now valued in our supply chain as one more factor to consider.

Did you have to struggle with setbacks in between?

Like everything, there are always ups and downs. Technically, companies are not prepared to suddenly change our production processes. Just as the supply lines for new and recycled materials are not yet as secure as conventional materials. This has required a lot of research and numerous investments and a **long journey and effort** from all technical, environmental and production equipment.

Each project has been like climbing a mountain, some projects have reached the top and others have taught us to improve. But the truth is we are happy with the number of projects carried out although there will always be more mountains to climb and our intention is to achieve higher peaks every day.

» OUR SUSTAINABILITY POLICY: LABOUR AND HUMAN RIGHTS



Compliance with all applicable human and labour rights standards, laws and regulations.



Compliance with all applicable child labour laws, including those relating to young workers and minimum age.



Compliance with the limitations of worked hours and prohibitions against certain types of work, including forced and compulsory labours.

What are your greatest achievements on the way to greater sustainability?

We have a well-defined sustainability policy on which to work to improve each of the points included in it. And to date, there are many improvements already achieved and on which, of course, we continue working.

What are your medium-term goals where do you want to go one day – if only in your imagination?

One day we would like to be able to bet heavily on the circular economy, achieving a high percentage of PCR materials to make our products. We would also like to be able to reduce our waste to almost nothing.

But the most important goals are the ones we do every day. These are the life cycle analysis studies we do of our goods, which allow us to assess which products have the most environmental impact and give us a new target. This makes us improve every day by trying to modify them. This greatly helps our knowledge of our products and processes, makes Virospace more efficient and teaches us that “nothing is impossible”. □

► OUR SUSTAINABILITY POLICY: ENVIRONMENT



Engage employees in improving environmental practices.



Source and promote products that minimise the environmental impact of manufacturing and distribution processes.



Meet or exceed all the environmental legislation related to the company. Encourage suggestions for improvement.



Take responsibility for the resources that we use and the products we create. Life cycle assessments.



Take our core values for environmental health and safety management. Social responsibility commitment.



Sustainability does not stop in Virospace with ecologically valuable materials. The entire production process and the company philosophy are also part of it.

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Irina Barbalova, Global Lead Health and Beauty, Euromonitor international
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