Some common questions asked

Are Tetra Pak packages environmentally-friendly?
The Tetra Pak package has the following environmental profile: It is primarily made of paperboard (75%), which has a low carbon footprint, as its main raw material – wood fibre, if well-managed, is renewable. Wood fibre also absorbs carbon dioxide as it grows. The highly energy efficient processes used by paper mills and the package manufacturers reduces reliance on fossil fuel energy consumption recycling of Tetra Pak packages also reduces the carbon footprint. Tetra Pak packages to be largely paper-based, made primarily of a biodegradable and renewable material, and recyclable - and therefore ‘environmentally-friendly’.

How does Tetra Pak ensure responsible sourcing of wood fibre?
Tetra Pak works with paperboard suppliers and paper mills to ensure that the wood we source is controlled and not harvested illegally, and is traceable to acceptable and legal sources of wood. We work closely with respected worldwide organizations like Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN) and WWF who monitor and audit our sourcing as well as ensure sustainable forest management practices.

What happens to empty Tetra Pak packages once disposed?
Empty Tetra Pak packages have good quality fibre content and can be recycled completely to make valuable assets. If they are treated as waste, they will simply be thrown into the trash and get mixed with soiled waste (left-over food, liquids etc.) and then most likely be taken away to be dumped into landfills. Empty Tetra Pak packages need to be treated as ‘recyclable’ and collected separately (segregated from wet waste).
How can we contribute towards recycling of empty Tetra Pak packages?
Once the package is empty, just snip or tear it open and rinse the inside with water. Flatten the package – this way, it takes up very little space in the trash bin. Always maintain 2 separate bins – one for ‘wet’ waste, the other for ‘dry’ waste i.e. recyclables and other materials. This way, we will ensure the Tetra Pak packages remain clean and unsoiled and consequently, they retain their value in the waste trade. Just as consumer education is vital in ensuring resources don’t get wasted, similarly it is important to convey this important fact to rag pickers, waste traders, municipal authorities and recyclers. This way, we can minimize the quantum of Tetra Pak packages going to landfills and ensure as many as possible go for recycling.

Is the recycling of Tetra Pak packages economically viable?
Yes, the recycling of Tetra Pak packages can be economically viable if the following factors are taken care of:
The cost of collection and freight to the recycler is optimized
The recycler recycles not just the paper but also the poly-al fraction i.e. 100% of the package
The recycler is able to find a market for his end-products made of paper and poly-al and realizes a good contribution

Where is Tetra Pak packages recycled?
Tetra Pak packages are collected and sent to recycling centres – typically paper mills that have hydra pulping units for the recovery and recycling of the pulp as well as ancillary units that are capable of recycling the recovered polyethylene – aluminum fraction
Do I have to remove the plastic cap or straw from my Tetra Pak package before recycling?
No. The caps and straws can be left in/on. They can also be recycled during the recycling process.

Do I need to wash and squash my Tetra Pak packages?
We advise that you wash/rinse your Tetra Pak packages to reduce any potential problems with odours or pests. It’s also preferable that you flatten your packages as otherwise you will be paying to dispose of air or liquid and you won’t be using your bin to its full capacity. Remember that just a couple of teaspoons of liquid in a package can weigh as much as the package itself. If you leave liquid in the container it can contaminate the material for recycling. This might result in the contractor rejecting the load and you incurring additional costs.

Rag pickers are usually children in India. Is there a way you at a company level can ensure along with NGOs that this doesn’t happen?
We share a common vision with NGOs that represent waste-pickers community. In the long run, there will be no waste-pickers and there will be no recyclable or biodegradable waste going to landfills. In the short run, it is necessary to help waste-pickers augment their income. By pointing out that Tetra Pak packages are recyclable and that they have a certain scrap value, we help waste-pickers through NGOs get a more sustainable livelihood. We support NGOs through collection and funding support in their endeavor to ensure that the children of waste-pickers get educated, and grow up to follow alternate careers.
When did Tetra Pak set the environmental targets? Have they changed?
Tetra Pak set out the ambitious targets to drive environmental excellence was set in 2011. The targets focus on three key areas: environmental footprint, sustainable products and recycling. They are:
- Double the global recycling rate for used beverage cartons by the end of the decade to 40%
- Develop packaging based on 100% renewable materials and increase the supply of Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™) certified paper board available for use in Tetra Pak packages to 100%
- Cap climate impact across the value chain at 2010 levels by the end of 2020

How do the environment goals align with the company’s position as a producer of an increasing amount of packaging?
Tetra Pak is a global food processing and packaging company, offering products that help consumers’ access safe, nutritious food in every part of the world. Our environment ambitions to make packages with the lowest possible environmental footprint are completely aligned with the need for functionality, quality and performance to safely deliver food to consumers.

Is Tetra Pak doing anything to reduce the amount of packaging it produces?
Wouldn’t this be the ultimate environment target?
Packaging serves a vital purpose: to protect and safely deliver food efficiently to consumers wherever they are around the world, and to minimize food waste. Tetra Pak packages are inherently materially efficient packages. Through product innovation the amount of material used has been continuously reduced over the years and this remains a focus area.
For example, we recently launched the Tetra Brik® Aseptic 1000 Edge with LightCap 30, which offers reduced raw material impact across the process – from FSC-certified paperboard material and a lighter cap that is offered with renewable polymers, to an angled top and closure position, which allows 4 per cent improved pallet efficiency.

Based on these results does Tetra Pak believe that it can reach all of its targets by 2020?
Yes. Our goals are very challenging and it will require a focused effort from the entire organization and close cooperation with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. But we are confident that we are able to reach our targets. It will make us more competitive in an ever more challenging world.

How is the company driving progress against reaching the targets on a daily, ongoing basis?
Our environmental targets are integrated into the activities and priorities of every part of the organization that influence reaching the goal – from design and development to supply chain. We track progress on regular basis and identify needs for additional actions and resources to drive towards the goals. For example, for recycling we have a central team with expertise about how collection, recycling, stakeholder engagement work effectively and a global network of recycling experts that facilitate recycling in every country with all local stakeholders. The centre of expertise and global network is the key to continue grow recycling rates towards our 2020 target.

Will Tetra Pak pursue the environmental targets regardless of impact on the bottom line? If the fully renewable carton proves commercially unviable will it be dropped?
Our environmental ambitions are fully integrated as part of our business strategy. Reaching our environmental ambitions will make us more competitive in a world with
increasing strain of resources. Clearly environmental and economic factors are both evaluated in the innovation and development process to ensure they are commercially viable and, hence, successful in the marketplace.

**What about water use and other important environmental issues? Why only focus on climate, recycling and renewable materials?**
Our strategy is focus on reducing the environmental footprint across the entire value chain and we work within all areas, including water and energy. We have opted to set public targets within 3 key areas where our footprint is most significant and achievements have most positive impact.

**When will Tetra Pak revisit the targets?**
We are dedicated towards reaching our targets and have no plans to revisit them. Environmental performance is a fundamental part of our business strategy.

**How is Tetra Pak working with customers, suppliers and consumers to address the total carbon emissions issues?**
Sustainable sourcing of raw materials is a critical part of the equation, which is why we work with our suppliers to identify opportunities to cut energy losses and make the supply chain more efficient. Suppliers of our base materials must report on their carbon footprint and commit to continuous improvement.
Value for customers is a priority for them, and we can help reduce their emissions by stepping up carbon-lean innovations in food processing and packaging solutions, including the equipment and the packaging material. Through smarter coordination and optimisation of equipment we can help customers’ operations be more efficient.

**Why did Tetra Pak move to a total value chain goal? Is this at the expense of pursuing other goals?**
Reaching our 2020 climate goal will make our entire value chain more competitive and lean. In a world with increasing strain of resources this is important for the future of our business.

**What is Tetra Pak doing to accelerate the pace of recycling of its used cartons?**
We are focusing on fostering development in the following key areas of the recycling value chain:
- Infrastructure for collection & recycling
- Competitive and efficient recycling technology
- Secure sustainable business models for collection and recycling
- Consumer awareness and action
- Cooperation with all stakeholders

**Why is the goal set at 40% of cartons when HDPE is much higher already?**
Recycling rates for packaging vary from market to market – that’s as true for cartons as it is for plastic. For example, in markets like Germany and Belgium systems are in place to handle carton recycling and, therefore, the rates are greater than 70% and 80% respectively. When the collection infrastructure is there the recycling rates can be comparable to others packaging materials.
In Europe, 37% of cartons are recycled, and total recovery rate (recycling and energy recovery) is 68%. This is another difference between cans and carton packaging:
- Tetra Pak packages are suitable both for recycling and energy recovery.

Reaching 40% recycling be 2020 is a very challenging target, it means tripling the amount of cartons recycling compared to today as we continue to grow our business. Remember that this is a fully global target, which means that we include a large number of markets where there is no legislation, infrastructure or coordination of waste management. We work to make this happen.
What is the progress on replacing the aluminium foil barriers?
Over the past few years, Tetra Pak has been working on several fronts to develop a next generation barrier film for its traditional aseptic carton packaging. This is a key milestone in our objective of providing customers with 100% renewable aseptic packaging.

Our aim is to find a cost-competitive replacement for aluminium foil as the protective barrier against external elements like light and oxygen, significantly enhancing the environment profile of our packaging solutions while maintaining excellent levels of protection for the product inside.

That work is making good progress, both in terms of developing the next-generation barrier and modifying our existing filling machine technology to support the new, next-generation barrier material.

When will Tetra Pak have a product made of 100% renewable material on the market?
Our target remains 2020.

What are the challenges to reaching 100% renewable material?
The main challenges relate to replacing those materials currently non-renewable, with equivalent, bio-based ones while:
Maintaining the current excellent levels of protection for the product inside;
Securing the necessary cost-competitiveness;
Ensuring an adequate availability throughout the world.
These criteria are in line with our philosophy of always offering our customers the best mix of product protection, functionality, environmental performance and cost competitiveness.

Will the carton be the same cost, or is it a premium strategy?
The non-foil packaging solution, including the packaging material will be priced competitively.

**Have customers indicated a desire to have this product?**
Yes. There is an increasing interest in the food and beverage industry to use renewable resources. It is essential to the business performance of our customers as well as our own business performance. And it’s essential to the well-being of the planet.