

IJGlobal ESG Climate Transition Award – Vauban – Paprec

Angus Leslie Melville

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Waste management, recycling and energy created from the residue have long been a thorn in the side of society and a challenge for the infrastructure community to overcome... and this award celebrates innovation on that front.

This is a challenge that has been met and tackled in an innovative manner by Paprec in France, where a €388 million investment by Vauban Infrastructure Partners has allowed the company to step up to the next level. And it is this investment that wins Vauban the IJGlobal ESG Climate Transition Award.

Paprec is an integrated French waste management and recycling company, operating in the collection, sorting, and treatment of non-hazardous waste. It is the third largest player in the French waste management market.

The company facilitates the recycling and reuse of waste (paper, plastics, metal, etc.), which in turn reduces production/energy costs, and also reduces the negative impacts that the extraction and processing of virgin raw materials have on the environment.

In 2021, Paprec recycled around 9.3 million tonnes of waste, which avoided the emission of some 4.4 million tonnes of CO₂. In addition, it has recently heavily invested in producing green energy and now operates 25 waste-to-energy units. As a result, 901,387MWh of green electricity and 69GWh of biomethane were produced and injected into networks.

Vauban's recent investment provided Paprec with a substantial capital increase – a key contributor to its decarbonisation strategy and its effort to consolidate its position as best-in-class player in the recycling sector.

To optimise the value of non-recyclable waste by generating clean energy, Paprec intends to develop its refuse derived fuel (RDF) preparation and combustion activities, which require strong significant expenditure.

The RDF sub-sector provides a more beneficial and optimised outlet for waste sorting: combustion of non-recyclable waste with a high calorific value allows for the production of heat and electricity, intended for urban heating networks or industrial use. This type of waste currently mostly goes to landfill.

Paprec intends to develop the organic waste methanation subsector which is underpinned by its recent close of a concession to construct and operate the largest urban waste methanizer in Paris – which was partially funded by Vauban's participation in Paprec's latest capital increase.

In addition to the above initiatives, Paprec continues to invest €60 million in its plants annually to provide them with high-tech tools that can handle new recycling challenges. Cutting-edge equipment – like optical sorting machines used on sorting and selective collection lines, or sorting robots that use artificial intelligence – enable faster and more precise sorting of materials, which contribute to increased recycling rates. This enables Paprec to outperform its French peers.

Finally, to reduce its environmental impact, Paprec invests in new trucks – electric, hybrid, gas powered – and is constantly working to optimise its routes (technology to consider the filling rates of bins) and training drivers in eco-driving.

Picture added after IJGlobal ESG Awards 2022: IJGlobal editor Ila Patel and editorial director Angus Leslie Melville with the Vauban team.





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