

Sustainable nonwovens in Latin America: What next?

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In the lead up to the third edition of OUTLOOK™ Plus Latin America in May, we caught up with Maria Luiza de Oliveira Paiva, Sustainability Director at Suzano, to discuss sustainability initiatives in the nonwovens sector.

Marines Lagemaat (Scientific and Technical Affairs Director, EDANA): In Sao Paulo you will join us to provide insight on sustainability initiatives in Latin America. How have you seen sustainability develop as a priority in this region?

Maria Luiza de Oliveira Paiva: Given sustainable nonwovens the current outlook of growing populations and demand on one side, and depleting resources on the other, we have simply run out of time. In Brazil particularly, we suffered severe droughts that impacted all sectors in 2015 and 2016. Some of us are still reaping the effects of such a climatic issue. Aggravated social divide has led to conflicts such as the truckers' strike in 2018, which also impacted the population at an individual-level, company-level and national-level. Sustainability is not only a priority but part of our operational context, our "new normal". Companies must consider all aspects systemically and their bottom line must include social and environmental criteria. If they don't they will, at some point sooner rather than later, stop delivering value and risk their survival in the long-run. So to answer your question, I have seen great examples in Latin America of companies that are addressing sustainability systemically, as is the case with the rise of green bond issuances in the region in order to attract capital to deliver solutions to our collective environmental and social challenges. However, we have to do more and act quickly. We need to partner and work together to ensure that we evolve and advance at the speed and scale that is required to revert to the current direction.

ML: How do you judge Suzano's role? You are active through initiatives like the Ecofuturo Institute for example.

MLOP: Suzano is the world leader in market pulp and responsible for the production of several innovative products such as lignin, paper products that will substitute fossil fuel derivatives and Eucapuff. Due to its sheer size, Suzano should and does play a huge role in embedding sustainability into business strategy and adding value with its customers, suppliers, investors, communities, etc. Suzano manages 2 million hectares of forest, almost half of which is designated for conservation of native forests, ensuring the formation of ecological corridors and protecting local biodiversity and its ecosystem services. Together, these eucalyptus plantations and native forests play an essential role in carbon capture and storage. Our social projects span over 300 municipalities and benefit more than 8000

