

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

Gro Harlem Brundtland, the “Mother of Sustainability”, in *Our Common Future. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development* (The Brundtland Report), 1987.<sup>1</sup>

## Note on Sustainability

### Responsible Care: Fecc’s Contribution to Sustainability

Responsible Care is the global chemical industry’s unique initiative to improve health, safety, security and **environmental performance**, and communicate with stakeholders about products and processes.<sup>2</sup>

Within *Fecc*, Responsible Care commits member National Associations and member companies to comply with the **Eight Guiding Principles**: Legal Requirements, Management of Risk, Policies & Documentation, Provision of Information, Training, Emergency Response, On-going Improvements and Community Interaction which, put in practice, can be considered as **long-standing sustainability actions** in the framework of Responsible Care.

Sustainability is a key part of the chemical distributors’ business model, and guides their activities in their interaction with manufacturers and downstream users. The issues of health, safety, security and environmental protection (HSSE) are deeply embedded in *Fecc*’s members’ corporate culture – as cornerstones of their responsibility to their employees, customers and suppliers, as well as to the local communities in which they operate.

As a consequence, key elements of **Sustainability** and **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** have been incorporated into SQAS/ESAD (European Single Assessment Document) in 2015, including criteria on the Environment (ESAD DI Section 1.4.2, 3.5, etc.), Labour Policy and Human Rights (ESAD DI Section 1.2, 2.8, etc.) and Fair Business Practice (ESAD DI Section 2.9 etc.).

Many chemical distributors have historically taken proactive actions which are recognized as meeting the criteria of sustainable development. The use of **returnable, reusable packaging** and **packageless** delivery are just two examples of such actions that have been introduced over a period of many years, reducing both raw material consumption and material entering the waste stream. Another positive action is the **optimisation** of distribution movements,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *OECD* definition of **Sustainable Chemistry**:

[www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/risk-management/sustainablechemistry.htm](http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/risk-management/sustainablechemistry.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Launched in Canada in 1985, Responsible Care has since spread to nearly 60 countries, implemented through national chemical industry associations and overseen by the *International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA)*.

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which has ensured that distribution is carried out in a more fuel-efficient manner. Modern and advanced driver training have also helped to **reduce fuel use and emissions** from each vehicle.

Other initiatives such as the **recycling of used products** and **chemical leasing** are increasingly being explored by distributors as a valuable contribution to circular economy.

### **Responsible Care: A Driver for Sustainability**

Responsible Care, as practiced within the chemical distribution sector, goes historically beyond legislation and contributes to the “three pillars of sustainability” (environment, society and economy). In this context, chemical distributors strive to strike an appropriate balance between business, ecology and social issues and reconciling these different priorities.

We, the European chemical distribution industry, call upon our members, National Associations, stakeholders and policymakers to join us in **continuing our efforts within the Responsible Care framework** to create economic, environmental and social value as our contribution to sustainability.

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#### **About Fecc**

The *European Association of Chemical Distributors (Fecc)* is the voice of the Chemical Distribution Industry in Europe. With a growing membership of companies and national associations, *Fecc* represents around 1,600 companies of which many are small and medium sized companies (SMEs). The Chemical distribution industry in Europe employs more than 30,000 people and has an annual sales leverage of approximately €28 billion.

Fecc promotes initiatives such as Responsible Care, Product Stewardship and Good Trade and Distribution Practices.

#### **Fecc European Responsible Care Programme**

An important **objective of Fecc is to enhance sustainability** by promoting the implementation of the European Responsible Care Programme which starts with CEO commitments to the above-mentioned Guiding Principles and is driven through exemplary governance: companies are required to prioritise issues, set goals, implement policies and procedures, use measurement systems to track progress and make adjustments to systems when needed.

Moreover, commitment to the principles of Responsible Care encompasses:

- Product Stewardship guidelines defining the way that distributors collaborate and communicate with their direct partners to manage chemical products, ensuring that supply chains gain access to the right support to meet the increasing demands for health, safety, security, **environmental protection and sustainability along the supply chain.**
- Occupational health and safety, including transportation
- Comprehensive protection of the environment (air, water, soil, raw material and waste).