

# Accelerating carton recycling in Saudi Arabia.

Obeikan Paper Industries and  
Saudi Top Plastic Factory





**A new industry collaboration in Saudi Arabia between Tetra Pak, Obeikan Paper Industries and Saudi Top Plastic Factory aims to kick-start carton package recycling and take recycling systems to the next level in the region. The collaboration aims to recycle carton packages and convert them into valuable new products.**

In Saudi Arabia, sustainability, and recycling in particular, is getting more attention. The kingdom has witnessed rapid industrialisation, high population growth and fast urbanisation in recent years, all of which has led to increased levels of waste. 15 million tonnes of municipal solid waste are generated each year and this is projected to double with the current population growth.

With only 10-15% of waste currently being recycled, the country has started to invest much more in recycling, including better waste segregation and processing. By 2035, the government has a plan to divert 85% of the waste currently going to landfills, and it sees private-public partnerships as key to increasing recycling.

In the capital Riyadh, Tetra Pak proactively invested and partnered with two leading recycling companies, Obeikan Paper Industries (OPI) and Saudi Top Plastic Factory (STP). The project aims to increase collection and recycling of cartons, securing recyclability for all its components. Marcelo Piva, Tetra Pak's Regional Sustainability Director in the Middle East and Africa, explains:

“We want to increase collection, sorting and recycling, but we cannot do it alone. Together with partners, food manufacturers, municipalities, and local authorities, we are paving the way for a new and better recycling system that can efficiently transform cartons into valuable new products.”



*Marcelo Piva,  
Sustainability Director*



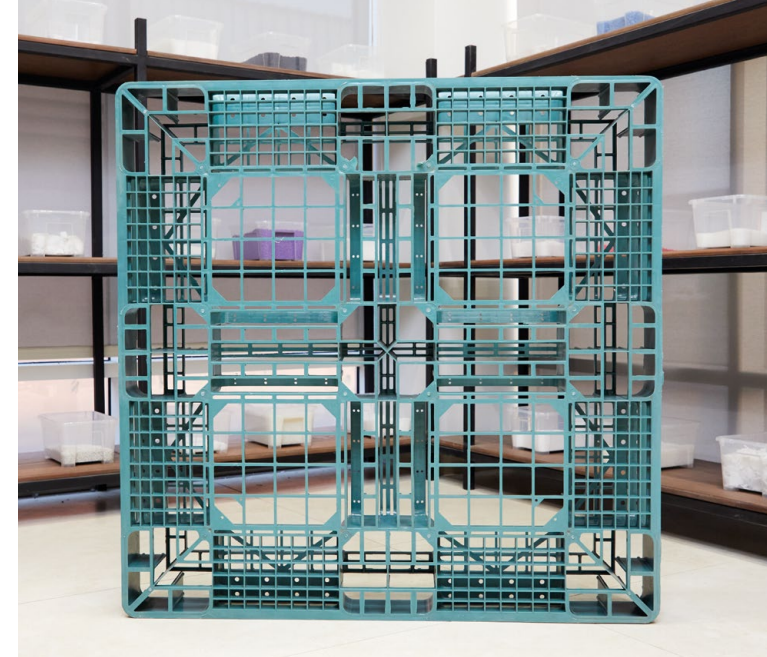


## Creating a complete recycling hub.

Together, the three partners have created a recycling hub that can recycle used carton packages collected in Saudi Arabia and neighbouring countries. Cartons are sent through a pulping process to separate paper fibres (on average 70% of cartons' composition and all of it coming from forests certified to FSC standards and other controlled sources) and the polyAl (polymers and aluminium). OPI recovers the paper fibres and cleans, presses, and dries them before converting them into high-quality recycled

duplex board that has several end applications – such as tissue boxes and other folded cartons.

The polyAl resulting from the carton recycling process at OPI becomes a raw material that is collected by STP and dry-cleaned to remove moisture and fibre residue. It is then put through an extrusion process that turns it into plastic granules, which are sold to plastic recyclers and used as a raw material for products such as pallets and crates.





## The value of high-quality paper fibres.

Tetra Pak started prospecting recycling partners in 2014 and identified OPI as a company with similar ambitions to support circularity in the region. After performing industrial trials and identifying the benefits that the high-quality fibres recovered from carton packages can deliver, OPI's General Manager Khaled Khazaal was happy to move forward with the partnership.

Tetra Pak then invested in a state-of-the-art recycling plant at OPI that can process around 8,000 tonnes a year and OPI hopes to increase capacity when carton collection levels increase.



*Khaled Khazaal,  
General Manager for  
Paper & Board Division*

*Bassel Einashar,  
Manufacturing General Manager  
for Paper & Board Division*

*“ Most of the waste collection in Saudi Arabia is focused on old containers and corrugated cartons, but with carton package recycling technology and our partnership we are making a real contribution to diverting cartons from landfills. ”*

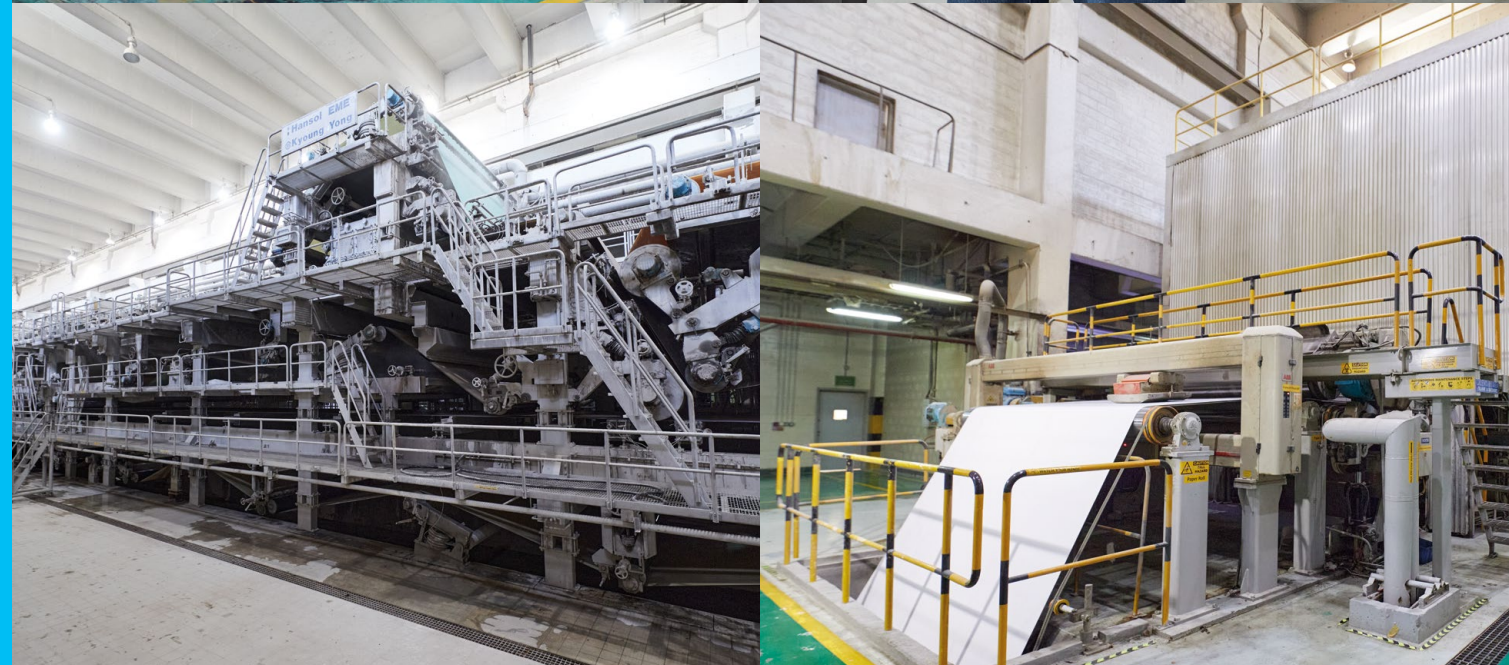
*Khaled Khazaal*

*General Manager, Paper & Board Division, OPI*

*“ The initiative has also been a great business opportunity because we get the advantage of working with a new kind of raw paper material for recycling that no one else has. ”*

*Bassel Einashar*

*Manufacturing General Manager,  
Paper & Board Division, OPI*







Wail Aljaaidi,  
Business Director

## The promise of polyAl.

STP, a leading recycling company in the region, bringing more than 15 years of experience and strong R&D capabilities to the table, saw great processing advantages when recycling polyAl.

“It decreases the plastic conversion cooling time which reduces operational costs, speeds up production and increases efficiency,” says Abdullah Alajmi, Business Director at STP.

The partners needed to determine the best applications for the material in the market and

Tetra Pak provided all the necessary support, including investment in a new polyAl recycling line at STP, polyAl recycling knowledge, experience from other countries and expertise from recycling equipment suppliers.

Currently, polyAl is mainly used for plastic pallets and crates, but STP sees this as just the beginning, and plans to develop polyAl for a wide range of applications.

“ The partnership is amazing and Tetra Pak has supported us with technical, marketing and financial investments. They also helped to bring 50 tonnes of recycled polyAl granules for customer trials to assess potential demand. The initiative has opened doors for us and helped us expand our offerings and growth ambitions in the Middle East. ”

Wail Aljaaidi  
Business Director, STP





## Planting the seeds of a new value chain.

The initiative is doing more than just recycling cartons. It has created an entirely new value chain for Tetra Pak cartons, which are produced, consumed and recycled in Saudi Arabia – and this can help accelerate legislative developments, supporting the country's recycling ambitions.

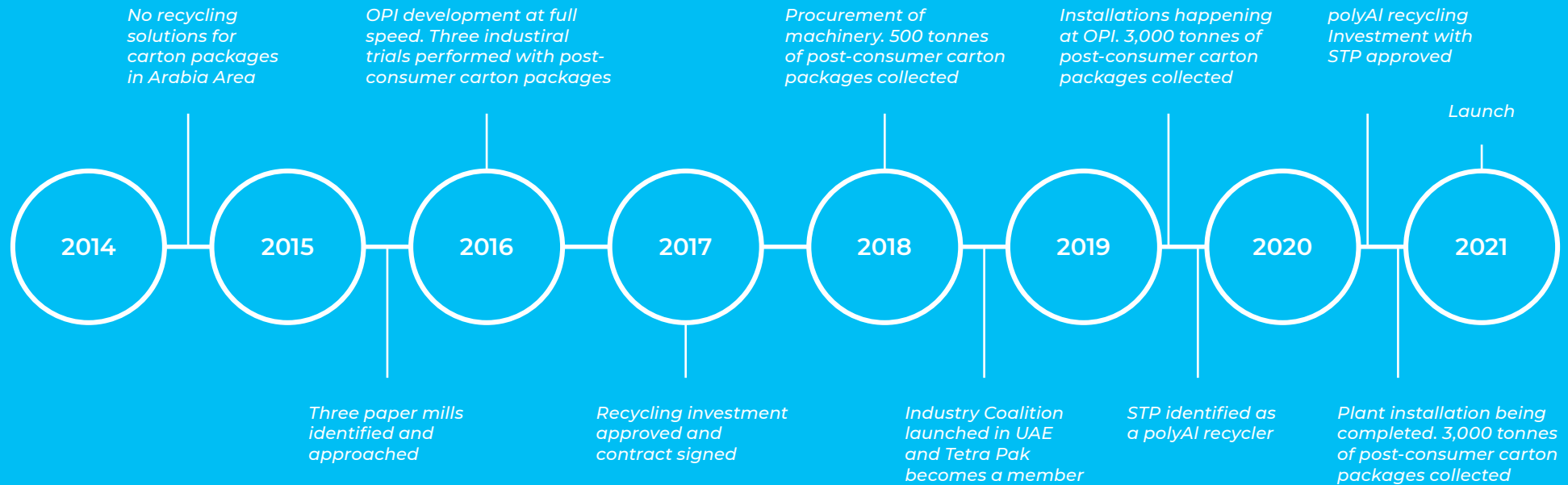
*“ Together with OPI and STP, we have kickstarted recycling of Tetra Pak carton packages in Saudi Arabia and contributed to an emerging circular economy. Our first-in-the-industry recycling initiative supports us in engaging sustainability activities with our customers and other major stakeholders, while proactively being part of the waste management regulatory discussions in Saudi Arabia. ”*

**Niels Hougaard**

Managing Director, Tetra Pak Arabia Area



## Our Recycling Journey in Arabia Area.



### Obeikan Paper Industries (OPI) in short.

One of the biggest paperboard mills in the Middle East and North Africa

Total recycling capacity of over 220,000 tonnes of paper per year

Established in 2006, has six lines today that operate with different types of wastepaper – all 100% recycled

The new line for recycling carton packaging has an expected capacity of 8,000 tonnes a year



### Saudi Top Plastic Factory (STP) in short.

A leading and innovative plastic company

Total recycling capacity of over 50,000 tonnes of plastics per year

Established in 2006, has three factories

The new plant for polyAl has a capacity of around 4,000 tonnes of granules per year



