

## BEVERAGE CARTON RECYCLING TO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE WITH INTRODUCTION OF DEDICATED SORTING IN IRELAND'S LARGEST MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY

*Minister for Circular Economy launches new generation of robotic sorting technology in Panda's Ballymount MRF marking its partnership with ACE Ireland*

**Lausanne, Switzerland, JULY 5, 2023** – The [Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment – ACE Ireland](#), has announced a new partnership with [Panda](#) aimed at significantly improving the recycling process of cartons placed on the Irish market. As part of the collaboration, Tetra Pak, along with other ACE Ireland members funded the installation of state-of-the-art robotic sorting technology at Panda's materials recovery facility (MRF) in Ballymount, Dublin.

Using ground-breaking artificial intelligence as accurate as a human eye, the new robot will identify, pick, and sort cartons at the MRF into their own dedicated streams. The sorted materials will then be sent onwards to ACE's specialised carton recycling facility in the UK operated by Sonoco Stainland.

Minister of State with special responsibility for Circular Economy, Ossian Smyth TD officially launched the new sorting technology during a site visit of the Ballymount MRF. **Commenting Minister Smyth said:** "The creation of a circular economy and the achievement of our ambitious reuse and recycling targets requires strong partnerships and innovative solutions. I'm delighted to be here today at the launch of this new technology, which will improve recycling processes and drive higher recycling rates. Today also demonstrates the important role that cross-industry collaboration can play in the transition to a circular economy."

**Awantika Chadha, Sustainability Manager, Tetra Pak, said:** "Carton packaging plays a crucial role in the safe delivery of food and beverages across Ireland. As a recyclable, low carbon packaging solution, it is vital that our industry works together to ensure carton recycling infrastructure is as efficient as possible to boost overall recycling rates.<sup>1</sup>

"This initiative marks the latest step in our ongoing investment in recycling solutions. Through our partnership with ACE Ireland, we are committed to improving the resilience of our food supply chain by working closely with the Government and waste management companies to further increase carton recycling rate."

**Chief Executive of ACE Ireland, Richard Hands said:** "The beverage carton is a sustainable, recyclable, and renewable packaging choice used by Irish households as part of everyday life for many decades. As an industry we are committed to increasing carton recycling rates and improving recycling practices through targeted investment, the development of new technology, and working with industry partners.

"The carton industry has set a target of achieving a 70% recycling rate by 2030. The launch of dedicated sorting at Ireland's largest MRF in Ballymount is an important step in meeting that target. Introducing new and emerging sorting technologies across Ireland's MRF network should be a key focus in the transition to a circular economy. This will allow MRFs to separate more materials and increase overall recycling rates."

**Mr Hands added:** "We welcomed the commitment to introduce specific packaging recovery and recycling targets for beverage cartons in the Irish Government's Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy. We encourage the Department of Environment, Climate, and Communications to follow-up on that commitment and prioritise the setting of these targets. This together with the installation of new technology can drive higher recycling rates and lower residual waste streams. We're delighted to see the launch of this technology through our partnership with Panda and look forward to working with Minister Smyth, his Department, and our industry partners to further expand dedicated sorting of cartons in Ireland."

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The automated sorting technology, which was developed by Recycleye and Fanuc, has the capacity to deliver 33,000 picks over a ten-hour shift. Capable of scanning, detecting, and picking materials across 28 classes including beverage cartons, the sorter is quick and easy to install over existing recycling lines with minimal disruption to the operation of the MRF. This offers MRFs a real option to drive recycling innovation by separating materials like beverage cartons, while lowering the cost of automated sorting.

**CEO of Beauparc, the parent company of Panda, Brian McCabe said:** “Working with ACE Ireland, we are delighted to announce our long-term commitment to sorting cartons at our Ballymount MRF. We receive over 90,000 tonnes of mixed dry recyclable materials into the Ballymount facility per annum from over 400,000 homes, all of which needs to be sorted into different waste streams. As such, we recognise the important role we have in delivering and supporting innovation to enhance recycling and waste management in Ireland.

“The installation of this latest generation of robotic sorting technology in Ballymount will allow us to significantly increase the quality of target materials extracted from sorting lines in the MRF. We anticipate over 500 tonnes of cartons will be sorted per annum for onward recycling with an expectation that this will further increase as we bed in the new technology.

“Ireland has the unique advantage of having a 100% kerbside collection system in place for household mixed dry recycling. Our message to the consumer is to place cartons into the green or blue recycling bin – clean, dry, and loose – along with their other recyclable materials,” Mr McCabe concluded.

For more information about the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment – ACE Ireland visit: [www.ace-ireland.ie](http://www.ace-ireland.ie).

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#### **Notes to editors**

<sup>1</sup> [Beverage carton: Recycling facts and figures](#)

#### **ABOUT TETRA PAK**

Tetra Pak is a world leading food processing and packaging solutions company. Working closely with our customers and suppliers, we provide safe, innovative and environmentally sound products that each day meet the needs of hundreds of millions of people in more than 160 countries. With more than 25,000 employees around the world, we believe in responsible industry leadership and a sustainable approach to business.

Our promise, “PROTECTS WHAT’S GOOD™,” reflects our vision to commit to making food safe and available, everywhere.

More information about Tetra Pak is available at [www.tetrapak.com](http://www.tetrapak.com)

#### **ABOUT ACE IRELAND**

The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment - ACE Ireland represents Tetra Pak, Elopak and SIG Combibloc, the leading manufacturers of beverage cartons for the Irish and European markets. ACE delivers sector-wide environmental initiatives on behalf of its members. Its objective is to provide a platform in Ireland to benchmark and profile beverage cartons as a safe, circular, and sustainable packaging solution with low carbon benefits.