

## EUROPEAN SPECIALIST SPORTS NUTRITION ALLIANCE

The voice of the sports and active nutrition sector in Europe

# ESSNA's sustainability pledge: Lifting the planet

**May 2022**

# Introduction

The European Specialist Sports Nutrition Alliance (ESSNA) is the leading European trade association for the sports and active nutrition industry. It brings together major manufacturers and distributors of sports nutrition products, suppliers of ingredients, sports nutrition publications, national associations as well as specialist scientific and legal consultants advising the sector.

While producing and delivering the highest quality sports nutrition products, ESSNA also wants to ensure that these do not only support consumers' active lifestyles and nutritional goals, but also carry the lowest environmental and social impact for the planet.

ESSNA understands sustainability in its holistic sense – comprising not only of the need to protect the environment from the effects of climate change, but also the local communities which supply chains may interact with.

In this regard, ESSNA wants to play its part in the sustainable transition, making conscious improvements to supply chains and business models that reflect the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy, or the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. From the sustainable sourcing of ingredients to efficient and innovative waste management solutions, ESSNA members want to support the European Union in its transition towards carbon neutrality.

ESSNA's Sustainability Pledge sets out our ambitions to ensure that the formulation, manufacturing, distribution and overall production of sports and active nutrition products is done in such a way that the economic, social, and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised.



## **Our pledge:**

- 1** Sustainable, transparent, and responsible way of sourcing ingredients
- 2** Improvement of animal welfare practices across product ranges
- 3** Contribution to the energy transition
- 4** Investment in innovative and circular packaging for the specialist sports nutrition sector
- 5** Efficient waste management practices for sports nutrition products





# **1 Sustainable, transparent, and responsible way of sourcing ingredients**

To produce world-class specialist sports nutrition products, engagement with suppliers and trusted partners around the world to secure the highest quality of ingredients is paramount. The transition to sustainable practices can prove particularly challenging when raw materials and ingredients are sourced from countries at risk of deforestation or with laxer environmental standards.

In line with the direction of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, many ESSNA members have already started to source raw materials from sustainable agricultural and production systems and taking active steps with suppliers to ensure value chains are more transparent, allowing ingredients to be fully traced to their sources.

But more can be done. For instance, ESSNA wants to ensure that all palm oil used in specialist sports nutrition products is sustainable and ethically sourced, supporting international initiatives such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).

## **Our pledge:**

**Engage with supply chains to ensure that the origins of ingredients and raw materials can be transparently traced to sustainable sources.**

**Take environmental and ethical credentials into consideration when procuring suppliers.**

**Support international initiatives such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).**



# Improvement of animal welfare practices across product ranges **2**

ESSNA wants to support the promotion of high animal welfare practices across the sector and are committed to ensuring that all animal products in sports and active nutrition products are sourced from sustainable producers that comply with strict animal welfare standards.

Many of our members have already started to take steps to source the industry's most common source of protein – whey - from grass-fed and free-range farms.

This protein-rich liquid is a waste product resulting from dairy milk and cheese production that was popularised and made valuable by the sports nutrition sector as a healthy and efficient source of protein.

Our industry will continue to invest in innovative and more sustainable alternatives to animal-based supplements and ingredients, also in line with the F2F's objectives of reduction of animal-based protein.

Plant-based protein sources such as pea, wheat, nut, soy, or hemp, for example, are increasingly used and invested in by the industry.

## **Our pledge:**

**Adhere to the highest standards of animal welfare across value chains, opting for grass-fed whey products and free-range farming practices where possible.**

**Continue to invest in the development and roll-out of plant-based sports nutrition products.**



# 3 Contribution to the energy transition

ESSNA recognises the need to decarbonise value chains within the food sector.

Many of our members have long used renewable energy sources across their operations, such as solar panels and biomass plants on their sites, making us industry leaders in the uptake of low-carbon energy.

On top of reducing the emissions from direct operations, ESSNA is committed to engaging with suppliers and haulers to support them in the transition to renewable energy, increasing demand for sustainable practices and boosting investment into new energy infrastructure such as wind and solar farms.

But we also recognise that the transition to renewable energy can still pose challenges to small and medium-sized sports nutrition companies, further cementing the need to support investment and uptake of renewable infrastructure.

## Our pledge:

**Prioritise renewables in energy procurement.**

**Take energy efficiency and carbon emissions into consideration when procuring suppliers.**





# Investment in innovative and circular packaging for the specialist sports nutrition sector

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ESSNA's members have already started to take steps to develop innovative solutions for packaging of specialist sports nutrition products, keeping quality and circularity at the core of their efforts.

Among other measures, the industry has a clear ambition to set targets on the use of recycled or reusable plastics, established return schemes for consumers, and has adopted new and pioneering fully recyclable solutions such as PETE plastic or FSC-certified cardboard.

ESSNA is also committed to work towards the reduction of food waste via the production of long shelf-life products.

In this way, some of ESSNA's members have already started to align their operations to the objectives of the European Union's Circular Economy Action Plan and will continue to drive industry change towards the uptake of sustainable packaging materials.

## Our pledge:

**Take steps to significantly reduce the amount of virgin plastic packaging used in products.**

**Support the development and adoption of innovative and low-carbon packaging materials.**

# 5 Efficient waste management practices for sports nutrition products

As a product's sustainability journey continues after its disposal, the responsibility for the goods placed on the market is key for the sports nutrition industry. Many ESSNA's members have already been establishing practices to ensure waste is managed in a responsible, sustainable, and circular way.

The industry is building partnerships with recycling companies to ensure any hard-to-recycle waste can be reused to its fullest or converted into a resource, such as refuse-derived fuel.

We are also committed to working to review product labels, to ensure messaging and recycling instructions are transparent and clear for consumers and that products do not unnecessarily end in landfill.

ESSNA wants to take an active role in the management of waste, by collaborating with national waste management authorities through Extended Producer Responsibility schemes as well as investing in innovative waste management solutions and more circular packaging alternatives.

## Our pledge:

**Put processes and resources into place to minimise the amount of product waste through various outlets.**

**Work with local authorities and waste management facilities to ensure the highest circularity of waste products and packaging.**





# Thank you

ESSNA is conscious that the path to sustainable transition is a long one, with still much work to do. However, our members recognise that there is a pressing need for all to join the effort, continue the dialogue with stakeholders and actors across the supply chain, and ensure these commitments become a reality.

## About ESSNA

The European Specialist Sports Nutrition Alliance (ESSNA) is the leading European trade association for the sports and active nutrition industry. It brings together major manufacturers and distributors of sports nutrition products, suppliers of ingredients, national associations as well as specialist scientific and legal consultants advising the sector.

ESSNA was established in 2003 to promote a positive regulatory and policy environment for sports nutrition products and coordinate complex technical positions on issues surrounding the food chain, consumer safety and fair commercial practices.

Today, ESSNA is a mature and respected organisation, widely recognised as the voice of the responsible specialist sports and active nutrition sector in Europe. ESSNA's main aim is to campaign for appropriate policy and regulation for sports nutrition products in Europe, as well as to improve the reputation of the sector with regulators, industry stakeholders and the public. We do so by working to improve consumer knowledge of sports nutrition products and the industry.



**For more information, please get in touch at:**  
**[info@essna.com](mailto:info@essna.com)**