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Vale raises 350m Reais with the sale of four-year waste from its operations

In 2014, 76% of material was disposed of sustainably; stockpiles were reduced by 27% between 2012 and 2014

Vale registered increased revenues of almost 350 million Brazilian Reais between 2011 and 2014 with the sale of waste and unserviceable assets¹ at all of its operations in Brazil. Last year revenues reached 83 million Reais. A total of 76% of the company's waste material was disposed of in a sustainable way – including iron ore conveyor belts, scrap metal, lubricant and used off-road tyres that were sent for recycling. According to Márcio Valente, manager of Sustainable Waste Disposal at Vale, waste stockpiles have fallen over the last three years from 48,600 tons in 2012 to 35,600 tons in 2014, a reduction of approximately 27%.

"The waste management process at Vale has proven to be a highly sustainable activity as, beyond generating revenues for the company, it also benefits the environment and society as a whole by feeding into a range of production chains," says Valente.

This increase in revenues from the management of waste and unserviceable assets is a result of sustainable waste disposal programs that the company has adopted over recent years. This is the case with the recycling of iron ore conveyor belts, strips and mats, which has led to the reuse of almost 52,000 tons of these rubber-based materials between 2011 and 2014. The project, developed in partnership with a company in the state of Minas Gerais, has allowed Vale to transform annual incineration and landfill expenses into revenues obtained by selling its scrap to this company. The material, which was accumulating at some operational sites in Brazil, is transformed into lining for trucks and vans, steel cables for animal pens, steel slides, animal troughs and recycled conveyor belts.

In Carajás, the waste management area is developing a recycling project for organic waste generated at restaurants at its mines and urban centre, which houses around 5,000 people. Every year almost 1,500 tons of organic waste are collected, of which 70% is transformed into compost used for the planting of seedlings and for gardening at the site's industrial areas and urban centre.

"Our results in this area are totally linked to the quality of the effort we make to separate waste at our Waste Disposal Centres (CMDs). This is where we carry out the initial sorting. We separate organic waste from dry waste such as cardboard, PET bottles, plastic and paper. After this the sorted material is fed into sustainable disposal routes. Aligned with this recycling program we have developed educational campaigns in order to reduce waste. This way we can achieve even better environmental and financial results," concludes Valente.

(1) Unserviceable assets include old equipment that can no longer be used, such as trucks, tractors and forklifts, etc. Waste can be metallic (scrap iron, wiring and copper cables) or non-metallic (paper, cardboard, plastic).

More information



Mônica Ferreira

monica.ferreira@vale.com

Rio de Janeiro

+55 (21) 3845-3636

Fatima Cristina

fatima.cristina@vale.com

Rio de Janeiro

+55 (21) 3485-3621

Murilo Fiuza

murilo.fiuza@vale.com

Rio de Janeiro

+55 (21) 3485-3627