

HUL Fast Tracks Net Zero To 2039

BP BIDDAPPA, Executive Director and Chief People, Transformation and Sustainability Officer at Hindustan Unilever, details how the company embeds sustainability into operations, innovation, and communities **By Navneet Singh**

HINDUSTAN Unilever has set an ambitious target of achieving net zero emissions across its value chain by 2039—three decades ahead of India's national net zero goal of 2070. The company believes that sustainability is not just a responsibility but a core driver of long-term value creation, with accelerated climate action marking its recent progress.

BP Biddappa, Executive Director and Chief People, Transformation and Sustainability Officer at HUL, said sustainability is now one of the key pillars of the company's business strategy. "Our sustainability strategy includes near and medium-term goals to accelerate action across four priority areas—climate, nature, plastics, and livelihoods. As India sets its sights on achieving net zero by 2070, we are well-positioned to contribute to this goal. We expect to be significantly advanced on our journey to achieving net-zero emissions across our value chain by 2039," he said.

Sharp Emission cuts

HUL has already taken significant steps to decarbonise its operations. Accord-

ing to Biddappa, 2024 marked a year of accelerated climate action. Over 97 per cent of its operations are now powered by renewable energy, while Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions have been cut by 99 per cent in FY 2024–25 compared to a 2008 baseline.

The FMCG giant has also eliminated coal from all manufacturing sites. Biddappa stated, "We have eliminated coal from all our manufacturing sites and have invested in energy-efficient infrastructure and low-emission logistics."

He added how its Sumerpur and Chhindwara factories have become benchmarks in carbon neutrality and water circularity, with both facilities being recognised for environmental stewardship.

HUL's climate action extends into its supply chain and products. The company is embedding regenerative

agriculture across 13,000 hectares, localising palm sourcing, and scaling circularity through its flagship Project Circular Bharat.

Biddappa said that its investment in Lucro Plastecycle is strengthening flexible plastic circularity, while partnerships, such as the resource efficiency and circular economy industry coalition, are shaping India's material transition in the chemical sector.

He added that, on the innovation front, the company's R&D breakthroughs have redefined its soap business. By reducing the Total Fatty Matter (TFM) in soap bars and cutting reliance on high-GHG-impact palm oil, HUL has reduced Scope 3 emissions while transitioning entirely to no deforestation, no peat (NDP) palm oil.

"Our 'load more, travel less' strategy is also driving fuel efficiency in logistics,"

HUL'S CLIMATE ACTION EXTENDS INTO ITS SUPPLY CHAIN AND PRODUCTS. THE COMPANY IS EMBEDDING REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE ACROSS 13,000 HECTARES, LOCALISING PALM SOURCING, AND SCALING CIRCULARITY THROUGH ITS FLAGSHIP PROJECT CIRCULAR BHARAT



he said, pointing to HUL's efforts to decarbonise its value chain end-to-end. HUL is coupling its net zero drive with socially inclusive models that address health, sanitation, and resilience. Its Suvidha centres in Mumbai provide solar-powered sanitation and hygiene facilities to underserved communities.

With 20 centres serving over 500,000 people, Biddappa claimed that the programme has saved more than 180 million litres of water and reduced diarrhoea incidence by around 50 per cent in the communities it serves. The model has gotten international

recognition at COP28, the World Economic Forum, and Harvard Kennedy School. "Suvidha is a great example of inclusive, climate-resilient infrastructure. We are now scaling this model nationally in partnership with the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs," Biddappa stated.

Governance & Leadership

To institutionalise its sustainability commitments, HUL has put in place a robust governance and double materiality framework that aligns its business practices with global benchmarks. This

ensures that the company's actions deliver tangible outcomes across climate, nature, plastics, and livelihoods.

HUL is also investing in future leadership for sustainability. It has partnered with FICCI to establish the Centre for Sustainability Leadership and is nurturing climate-focused entrepreneurship through a Climate Incubation Hub with IIM Bangalore.

"A robust governance framework supports our ESG objectives, ensuring responsible, transparent, and sustainable business practices," Biddappa emphasised.

Biddappa said the sustainability journey is not only about emissions reductions but also about driving systemic impact. The company has embedded sustainability into innovation, sourcing, logistics, and community development. "Our purpose is to succeed by upholding high corporate standards, positively impacting communities and the environment. By fostering a culture of integrity, responsibility, and sustainability, we aim to create lasting value for our stakeholders and contribute to a better world," he added.

Ahead of the Curve

With India aiming for net zero by 2070, HUL's 2039 commitment places it well ahead of the national trajectory. The company's sharp cuts in operational emissions, investments in regenerative agriculture and plastics circularity, and inclusive models such as Suvidha highlight a multi-pronged approach to sustainability.

As Biddappa summed up, "By embedding sustainability into every part of our strategy, we are confident of advancing significantly on our journey to net zero across our value chain by 2039." 

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