

Apple touts greater use of recycled metal in gadgets

NEW YORK, US - Apple wants to "one day" end the need to mine materials from the earth to make its gadgets, the technology giant said in its annual environmental responsibility report out Thursday.

"Traditional supply chains are linear," it said. "Materials are mined, manufactured as products, and often end up in landfills after use. Then the process starts over and more materials are extracted from the earth for new products."

"We believe our goal should be a closed-loop supply chain, where products are built using only renewable resources or recycled material," it added.



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The company's research concluded that recycled aluminum should come from Apple products rather than recycling facilities because of the high-grade quality required.

Apple has been encouraging customers to return used products for recycling and has melted down iPhone aluminum

enclosures to make mini computers used in its factories.

"For tin, we took a different approach," the company said. "Unlike aluminum, there is an existing market supply of recycled tin that meets our quality standards."

As a result, Apple has been using recycled tin for its iPhone 6s.

The ultimate aim is "to one day end our reliance on mining altogether," the company said, without specifying a date.

Apple did not disclose the amount of recycled products currently used in its products.

Environmentally friendly

"Apple's commitment to 100 percent recycled materials is ambitious, and highlights the need for greater urgency across the sector to reduce resource consumption and e-waste that are causing significant impacts on the environment and human health," Greenpeace senior analyst Gary Cook said.

Making new gadgets with reclaimed material reduces demand for mined metals and increases the tendency for devices to be recycled, according to the environmental group.

Samsung last month said it would sell some Note 7 smartphones that were recalled for safety reasons as refurbished devices, in an effort to manage its stockpile in an "environmentally friendly" manner.

The South Korean giant recalled an estimated four million of its flagship smartphones over concerns that batteries could overheat and burst into flames.

A Samsung statement said that salvageable components from devices would be detached, and metals extracted by companies that specialize in recycling.

While lauding a shift to devices made completely from reclaimed materials, Greenpeace analyst Cook urged technology companies to also design products that last a long time and are easy to repair and recycle.

Apple is also among Silicon Valley titans investing heavily in green energy for operations, saying that 96 percent of the electricity at its global facilities comes from renewable sources and that its new 'spaceship' main campus is powered entirely by renewable energy.

Source: AFP

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