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Lenovo

While Lenovo sells smartphones and tablets, the company is best known for its personal computers, for which it makes up roughly 20% of global market share. While Lenovo has made important progress in reducing its own emissions, its supply chain emissions are rapidly increasing, and already nine times larger than its own emissions. Lenovo should become more transparent by publishing its supplier list and more specifics on how it is working to transition its suppliers to a renewably powered supply chain. As one of the world's leading IT companies, Lenovo has an opportunity to drive significant reductions across its suppliers, and should begin by setting a more ambitious 100% renewable energy goal for its own operations as its peers Apple and HP have already done. On circular production, Lenovo appears ready to move beyond the use of recycled plastics to incorporate more secondary and closed-loop inputs in its products. However, Lenovo has failed to fully deliver on its commitment to eliminate BVC and BFRs from its products, with the exception of the Think product line. Despite a rather thorough list for managing product chemicals and requiring suppliers to report full materials disclosure for products and parts, Lenovo has not demonstrated the same effort in monitoring manufacturing chemicals.

Renewable Energy & Climate Change

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TRANSPARENCY. Lenovo provides a detailed breakdown of its scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG footprint, including supply chain emission data, and the use of renewable energy for its own operation on its official website.¹ Lenovo discloses its green power procurement mechanisms, detailing on-site solar installation and different types of RECs purchased. In terms of product LCA, Lenovo reported detailed GHG footprint for its newer tablets and laptops.² However, Lenovo has yet to publish a list of suppliers or provide details on the distribution of emissions across its supply chain.

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COMMITMENT. Lenovo has made a commitment to cut absolute GHG emission in its own operation by 40% by 2020, compared to 2010. The company recent commitment to add 30 MW of renewable energy 2021 is a start for its own operations, but far from ambitious. Lenovo needs to apply its experience in reducing its own emissions to help its suppliers reduce Lenovo's rapidly growing emissions from its product supply chain, which is already nine times as large as its own Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and currently growing at 25% annually. While Lenovo has set a target aiming to have at least 75% of direct suppliers to have climate change reduction goals (pg 31-32),³ much stronger ambition is needed to begin to curb this growth and transition its suppliers to renewable sources of energy.⁴

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Renewable Energy & Climate Change (continued)

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PERFORMANCE. Lenovo has shown a clearer plan and overall strategy to cut its own emissions compared to the rest of the Chinese brands, but still lags behind front-runners like Apple as well as peers like Dell and HP. Lenovo has reported a 32% reduction in its scope 1 and 2 emissions (market-based), compared to 2009, in part through 130+ energy efficiency initiatives worldwide, but also from the purchase of unbundled RECs and carbon offsets, which do little to add additional renewable energy to the grid. Lenovo's supply chain (purchased goods and services) GHG footprint continues to see dramatic growth, increasing by nearly 25% just from 2015 to 2016.⁵

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ADVOCACY. Lenovo has demonstrated leadership in climate positive advocacy when it signed the American Business Act on Climate Pledge for Paris Agreement. It's time for Lenovo to speak louder with real action in greening its manufacturing and supply chain with more renewable energy.

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Sustainable Design & Resource Reduction

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TRANSPARENCY. Lenovo discloses material composition data for some products, though not for mobile phones.⁶ Lenovo has published detailed information about end-of-life management for products annually since 2012, including amount of products reused, recycled, landfilled and incinerated, by weight and by region (pg 24). Lenovo also reports its use of recycled plastic (pg 25). Lenovo also publishes its smelter list for conflict minerals⁷ and its due diligence efforts (pg 63).

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COMMITMENT. Lenovo has no public goals to close the production loop or specific targets for increased use of secondary materials across its product line. Lenovo has set a vague closed-loop commitment for its Moto line, but there is no timeline.⁸ Lenovo also stated it is investigating opportunities for closed-loop plastics, though gave no specifics about which products this would be used in.

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PERFORMANCE: CIRCULAR PRODUCTION. Lenovo shows progress in amount of products reused and recycled through its take-back channels over time. Lenovo is one of the few companies to report overall use of recycled plastic over time, which we see is slowly declining from 2012 to 2016 unfortunately. Lenovo offers take-back programs beyond only those regions where it is legally required; however, the company has not met its own target to offer take-back in all markets in which Lenovo sells product. Lenovo reports to be using some closed-loop methods for sourcing plastic for reuse in the manufacture of new Lenovo and non-Lenovo products.⁹

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PERFORMANCE: PRODUCT LIFE EXTENSION. Lenovo shares repair manuals online for some but not all products,¹⁰ as well as some video tutorials on repair.¹¹ Many Lenovo products have spare parts available on Lenovo's website.¹² Recent smartphones from Lenovo score average in iFixit repairability assessments.¹³ Lenovo sells refurbished products in mature markets.¹⁴

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ADVOCACY. Like Huawei, Lenovo has also supported the extended producer responsibility pilot project created by China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT).¹⁵

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Hazardous Chemical Elimination: Products & Supply Chain

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TRANSPARENCY. Lenovo does not disclose its supplier list. Lenovo publishes a fairly thorough product RSL which includes thresholds;¹⁶ however, this same attention is not paid to managing process chemicals in supplier factories. The only substances restricted for manufacturing purposes are ozone-depleting chemicals, which are not restricted for worker safety. Lenovo should follow the lead of Apple, Dell and Microsoft and publish a thorough MRSL.

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COMMITMENT. In its CSR report, Lenovo states its support of phasing out BFR and PVC from products; however, it has not established a timeline for doing so.¹⁷ The company makes no explicit commitments to restricting process chemicals.

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PERFORMANCE. While Lenovo has yet to phase out PVC and BFRs altogether the company does report some progress. Lenovo has completely phased out the use of BFR/PVC in all mechanical plastic parts (such as external covers, housings, etc.) and the company has eliminated most PVC and BFRs from ThinkPad notebooks, excluding accessories. The company is using a system of Full Materials Disclosure (FMD) with suppliers to have better visibility of what is in its products, but this information is not made public. Lenovo incorporates the EICC code of conduct into its contracts with suppliers and Lenovo conducts audits of 95% of suppliers each year; however, the results of these audits are not reported in a way that gives much detail about findings.¹⁸

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ADVOCACY. No evidence found of positive or negative advocacy.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 https://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/climate/performance/
- 2 [https://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/datasheets_notebooks](https://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/datasheets/notebooks)
- 3 https://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/FY2017-Lenovo-Sustainability-Report.pdf, Lenovo Group Ltd, 2016/17 Sustainability Report, p.23-33.
- 4 https://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/GreenPaper-Addressing-Climate-Change-at-Lenovo.pdf
- 5 https://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/climate/performance/
- 6 https://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/datasheets_notebooks
- 7 https://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility-content/Lenovo-Conflict-Minerals-Update.pdf
- 8 <https://www.motorola.com/us/about/corporate-responsibility-operations>
- 9 http://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/product_recycling_program/
- 10 <https://support.lenovo.com/us/en/>
- 11 www.lenovoservicetraining.com
- 12 <http://support.lenovo.com/us/en/partslookup>
- 13 <https://www.rethink-it.org/>
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- 15 <http://www.miit.gov.cn/newweb/n1146290/n4388791/c4667571/content.html>
- 16 <http://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/pdf/41A7731.pdf>
- 17 http://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/FY2017-Lenovo-Sustainability-Report.pdf, p. 107.
- 18 http://www3.lenovo.com/us/en/social_responsibility/FY2017-Lenovo-Sustainability-Report.pdf, p. 60.