Embassy of Canada to the Netherlands

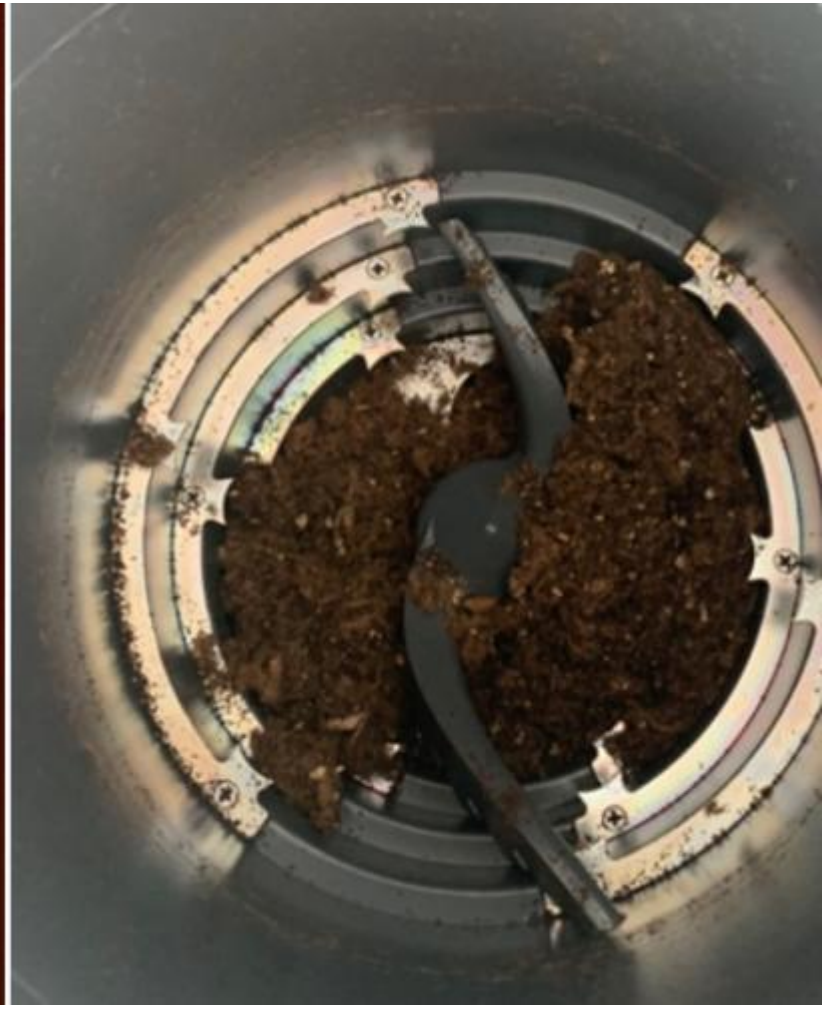
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INTERNATIONAL GREENING NETWORK
JOIN THE GREEN COMMUNITY IN THE HAGUE
Canada

- 
Deposit items
Residual waste
Plastic packaging & Drinking cartons
Paper & Cardboard
Deposit items
Residual waste
Plastic packaging & Drinking cartons
Paper & Cardboard

- 

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Location

The Hague, Netherlands

Certification level

Platinum

Percent of Overall Diversion Achieved

95.5%
Facility Size
26,000 sq ft
Type of Operation
Government
Project Overview

The Embassy of Canada to the Netherlands provides services to Canadians visiting, working and living in the Netherlands. It also represents Canada diplomatically within the Netherlands and to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The Embassy includes approximately 50 employees, as well as visitors. The TRUE certification project was a collaboration between the Embassy team in The Hague and the Sustainable Buildings Program team in Ottawa, Canada. It launched in fall 2023 when the Embassy contracted Renewi Ecosmart to conduct an initial zero waste audit, which estimated a diversion rate of 90.4% and provided many recommendations to reduce waste. From there, the Embassy developed its Zero Waste Policy and Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Guidelines, and began a broader transition to zero waste in its operations. Key to the entire process was the engagement of the mission team. It was well understood that a movement toward zero waste needed continued education and encouragement to create the behavioural changes required.

TRUE certification was an opportunity to highlight existing initiatives that the team had already done to reduce waste, such as transitioning from paper to email holiday greeting cards, returning diplomatic mail bags for reuse, and converting to foam soap from liquid soap in washrooms to reduce packaging. The Embassy also implemented many new initiatives to reduce and divert waste. These included providing zero waste training and city tours, installing new centralized sorting stations in commons area, removing deskside waste and recycling bins from offices, implementing a FoodCycler ECO-5 dehydrator for organic waste, offering reusable cups and takeout containers for lunches, launching a zero waste newsletter, and incorporating zero waste requirements into contracts and hiring. The Embassy shared its zero waste

journey with counterparts at other embassies in The Hague through an International Greening Network (co-founded by the Embassy of Canada).

In order to finalize certification, the Sustainable Buildings Program conducted a second zero waste audit in September/October 2025. This audit was a clear demonstration of the success of the Embassy's zero waste progress, with a final diversion rate of 95.5%! The Embassy of Canada to the Netherlands is proud to be the first Embassy to certify under the TRUE rating system, and the first facility within the Government of Canada as well. We were thrilled to time the announcement of our certification with Circular Economy Month in Canada. We hope to see other embassies and offices follow in our footsteps.

The TRUE rating system aligns to the Government of Canada's sustainability commitments under the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Federal Sustainable Development Strategy. It also directly supports the federal Greening Government Strategy, which includes goals of diverting at least 90% of all construction and demolition waste from landfill, and at least 75% of non-hazardous operational waste and plastic waste from landfill by 2030. It was valuable to be able to leverage a proven, third-party-verified certification to demonstrate our commitment to waste reduction and diversion.

In addition, it was important that the Embassy achieve TRUE certification to serve as an example to other embassies in Canada's portfolio that waste reduction is feasible in our operational context, and that it is crucial to reduce waste before relying on diversion measures. Being certified introduces a responsibility for maintaining the certification, hopefully always at the Platinum level, which is important given the Embassy's context of transitioning Canada-based staff every four years. TRUE also provided an opportunity to highlight the Embassy team's existing efforts to reduce waste, to bring the team together for a common purpose, and to engage and challenge local partners by showing demand for zero waste goods and services. The certification will now be a lasting point of pride for the Embassy team.

"We achieved 95.5% waste diversion. We earned TRUE Platinum certification. We became the first Embassy worldwide — and the first Government of Canada building — to reach this milestone. But the real success went deeper. A team that

chose to change. A workplace that became a movement. A culture that continues to grow, evolve, and inspire. The numbers matter — but the mindset shift is what lasts.” - Julie Normand, Management and Consular Officer, Embassy of Canada to the Netherlands

Learn more about the Government of Canada's Greening Government Strategy and the Embassy's Zero Waste Policy.

Photo credit: Paulina Pisarek and Julie Normand

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