Choose FSC® certified wood and paper

Discover the benefits for your business
Introduction

From a good idea to a global market tool

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) was formed in 1993, and the issue of the first certificates for sustainable forest management followed shortly afterwards. This ground-breaking act had a profound impact not only on the practice of commercial forestry but also on the expectations of consumers and the companies that produce and distribute forest products. Being able to buy products with an FSC label gave consumers the chance to make a positive difference around the world, allowing them to feel the connection between the product they had bought and the forest floor and the people who live and work there.

Since 1993, FSC has grown into the forest certification scheme with the most certificate holders worldwide. There are now more than 27,000 Forest Management and Chain of Custody certificate holders, and almost 180,000 million ha of forest is FSC certified worldwide. In twenty years, an ethical idea has been transformed into a globally-recognized, trusted brand in the market.

But despite this huge success, the need for certification has never been stronger. Climate change is probably the biggest threat facing life on the planet, and its impacts are being felt first and most strongly by the poorest, traditional communities.

Sustainable forestry is one of the most effective means to mitigate climate change. Trees absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere as they grow. When harvested, carbon is stored in every piece of furniture, timber-framed house and piece of paper. And FSC certification ensures responsible management of forests with new trees growing, absorbing more carbon – a prerequisite to upholding the cycle. At the same time, FSC certification requires the maintenance or enhancement of the biodiversity of forests and demands that communities depending on these forests benefit from the forestry operations.
Wood - when purchased from a sustainable source like FSC - is a great raw material. It is environmentally friendly and renewable. And there are many more reasons to prefer certified wood or paper.

This report has been designed to support different players in the market to explain the benefits of certified wood, not only from an environmental and social perspective, but also from the perspective of companies, in particular industries.
Paper and publishing

Source sustainably with FSC

Paper is one of the most important items in the forestry products portfolio. Around 11 percent of the wood extracted from the world’s forests is used by the paper industry,\(^1\) which annually produces 400 million tons of paper. The USA, Canada, Japan and China account for more than half of this production.\(^2\) The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) reports that the 2011 turnover in the pulp and paper industry in Europe alone was €81 billion.\(^3\) According to WWF, more than one million tons of paper are used every day, and in emerging markets such as China this consumption is steadily increasing.\(^4\)

This means that the industry must meet a substantial demand for paper. Despite modern technology, paper-based media are still very popular, even among young consumers. A study of 734 Europeans between the age of 16 and 26 shows that 80.5 percent think that paper is useful and necessary, and that they “need it around.”\(^5\) According to the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers, over 2.5 billion people worldwide read print newspapers at least once a week.\(^6\) The global publishing market – including books, newspapers and magazines – reached a value of US$244.4 billion in 2011, and is projected to reach US$273 billion by 2016, an increase in value of 11.7 percent. Books are the largest segment of this market, accounting for 36.9 percent of its total value.\(^7\)

Both the paper and publishing industries rely on thriving forests to meet demand. Deforestation and unsustainable forestry are a threat both to the world’s forests and to the industry itself.

**Why choose FSC?**

As the paper industry depends on forests to provide the raw material for production, a long-term management plan and halt in deforestation are key. Through responsible management of forests, the FSC certification system ensures that no more trees are harvested than the forest itself can manage to reproduce, thus securing a constant source of raw material.

FSC proves to be beneficial not only when it comes to ensuring a continuous supply of raw material. Although consumers regard paper and paper products as an important part of their everyday lives, many also feel that the paper industry plays a big role when it comes to irresponsible forestry. A survey of 5,000 European and US consumers conducted in 2011 showed that 76 percent believed that there was a connection between the paper industry and the loss of tropical rainforest, and 73 percent regarded paper as the product having the biggest impact on forests.\(^8\)

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According to WWF every day 1 million tons of paper is used globally. That is the equivalent of 500 Boeing 747 aircrafts.
In light of these findings, the value of the FSC logo as a way of reassuring consumers that the paper comes from sustainable forestry with the highest environmental and social production credentials becomes clear.

The industry itself has already taken several steps towards more sustainable and environmentally-friendly paper production. In Europe, 92.2 percent of forests managed by European pulp and paper companies are certified either by FSC or the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification. In addition, 54 percent of the energy used in European paper mills is renewable, while 95 percent of the paper industry’s on-site electricity use is produced through co-generation (combined heat and power). In Europe, 72 percent of consumed paper is sent for recycling and 90 percent of newspapers are printed on recycled paper. In addition, 90 percent of corrugated boxes in Europe are made from recycled fibers. Furthermore CEPI reports that while paper production in Europe increased by 46 percent between 1991 and 2010, and the use of virgin fiber increased by 19 percent, use of recycled fiber has nearly doubled, with an 89 percent increase, taking advantage of paper’s excellent environmental credentials. Both recycled and virgin paper are biodegradable, recyclable and, if they carry the FSC logo, come from responsible and renewable sources.

Nothing wrong with responsibly using certified paper and paper products

While some people think that using fewer forest products will protect forests, this is not necessarily the case. Especially when they are privately owned, pressure to convert forests to non-forest uses increases if there is diminished demand for forest products.

Paper is both biodegradable and easily recyclable, and as long as the paper products are derived from responsibly managed forests there is nothing wrong with using them. Wood is a sustainable material in that it is a renewable source, and also has the benefit of storing carbon, thereby contributing to the reduction of global warming.

The consumer prefers paper

A survey of 4,500 European consumers in 2011 shows that: 

80% thought that “reading from paper is nicer than reading off a screen.” That rate rose to 83 percent for consumers between the ages of 18 and 24. 74 percent – and 78 percent of 18 to 24 year olds – found paper more pleasant to handle and touch than other media.
Mondi, an international packaging and paper group, relies on healthy, functioning ecosystems to source wood for the production of uncoated paper and containerboard. The Group also leases and manages 2.1 million hectares of boreal forests in Russia. All of its leased, owned and managed land is FSC certified. In 2012, 522,260 hectares (25 percent) of the Russian landholdings and 76,398 hectares (25 percent) of the landholdings in South Africa were set aside for conservation.

Mondi also supports and uses FSC and other standards for wood and fibre purchased. In 2012, a total of 46 percent of wood supplied to Mondi processing plants was from FSC certified sources and another 19 percent from other certified sources, an improvement of 8 percent against 2010. Their potential wood self-sufficiency (wood sourced from our FSC certified owned or leased forests) is 53.2 percent.

Furthermore, the company is aiming to get all of its mills certified to chain of custody standards by the end of 2013. This means it will have long term access to sustainable fiber and will allow its customers to be confident that the products they buy can be traced back to responsibly managed forests.

Mondi is integrated across the supply chain, from the responsible management of forests, through the production and marketing of packaging and paper products to the recycling of these products.

“Ensuring that we meet the requirements of responsible forestry practices, from the management of our own forests through to the procurement of our wood and fiber through the supply chain, is a fundamental business imperative.”

Mondi Sustainable Development Report, 2012
References


