

Print and Paper The Facts

Harvesting trees through sustainable forestry

A definition of Sustainable Forest Management is “the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.”¹

The print and paper industry supports the principles of sustainable forest management (SFM) and is committed to managing forests accordingly. The industry supports the development of forest certification systems and other mechanisms to promote SFM and improve forest management on the ground and the extension of SFM certification systems to all nations, as an assurance that forest products are being produced sustainably from forests managed to the highest standards.

The industry’s perpetual use of trees harvested from responsibly managed forests has a host of economic, social and environmental benefits. For example, it discourages the sell-off of land for non-forest development, it encourages sustainable forestry practices and it supports hundreds of thousands of jobs.

While it’s true that collecting used paper and recycling it into new products is good for the environment, there’s a catch. Not only is the durability of wood fibres limited in repeated production and consumption cycles but most importantly, collection systems are not able to get back 100% of materials placed on the market. That’s why we need fresh fibre harvested from responsibly managed forests, too.

- “A fibre can be recycled several times, yet not indefinitely, depending on the paper grade, therefore there is a continuous need to feed the inflow of recovered fibre with paper products made of virgin pulp. The share of non-collectable and non-recyclable paper is, for technical reasons, estimated to be 19% of the total paper and board consumption, such as libraries, archives, sanitary paper, etc... Consequently the theoretical maximum collection rate would be 81% instead of 100%. The more one approaches this threshold, the less benefit can be made from it (long transportation, no economies of scale, etc.). Many countries have already reached this threshold.”²
- “Responsibly managed forests are necessary for the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystems services, both on individual sites and within the wider landscape. Forest management, including intensive commercial management, can be a critical and cost-effective conservation tool within larger-scale conservation strategies. Well-managed commercial or community forests can for example provide vital buffers for and links between protected areas. Forest management should therefore seek to maintain forest quality and not degrade either the timber resource or the range of associated goods and services (non-timber forest products, environmental services, biodiversity, spiritual values, recreational uses, etc.).”³
- “Sustainable forest management is commonly viewed as one of the most important contributions that the forestry sector can make to sustainable development.”⁴ The future of a thriving print and paper industry, and all its economic spin-offs, also depends on well-managed and healthy forests.
- “Healthy forests absorb more carbon than unhealthy forests. Sustainable forest management practices (including fire and disease prevention, better growing conditions, healthier trees and more efficient stand rotation) produce trees that help further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”⁵
- “In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained [climate change] mitigation benefit.”⁶
- Paper-making creates the need for a dependable supply of responsibly grown wood fibre. “When landowners receive

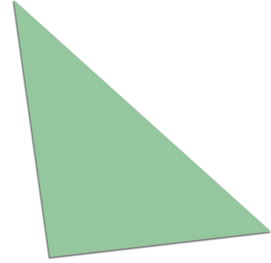


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income for products grown on their land, they are encouraged to maintain, renew and manage this valuable resource sustainably. This is an especially important consideration in places facing economic pressures to convert forestland to non-forest uses..”⁷

- “Changing forest ownership patterns and the divestiture of large tracts of forest land by traditional forest management companies in particular, are important trends to consider when analysing the loss of forest lands. A number of studies have shown that managing forests for timber production can enhance biodiversity and other ecosystem services in certain settings (Gustafson et al. 2007; Miller et al. 2009). Moreover, where profitable, timber management and the revenues it generates can serve as a hedge against the conversion of forest land to other uses such as real estate development, although the extent to which it can actually do so in the face of rapid increases in land values close to urban areas will vary. The same issue faces non-industrial private forest landowners who must balance concerns such as their need for current income and desire to maximize their long-term investments for themselves and their children with their desire to be good stewards of the forests under their care (Stein et al. 2009).”⁸
- “European forests remove 870 million tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere every year, equivalent to about 10% of European countries’ greenhouse gas emissions. The area of protected forests is expanding, and forest management practices increasingly promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Most forests have management plans, and the forest sector accounts for about 1% of GDP and 4 million jobs. The net annual increment in forest volume is higher than annual felling in almost all countries. Across Europe as a whole, only about 40% of the increment is felled, and the total growing stock of forests increased by nearly 9 billion cubic metres between 1990 and 2010.”⁹
- According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat, the overwhelming direct cause of deforestation is agriculture. Subsistence farming is responsible for 48% of deforestation; commercial agriculture is responsible for 32% of deforestation; logging (legal and illegal) is responsible for 14% of deforestation and fuel wood removals make up 5% of deforestation.¹⁰
- Among countries with a per capita GDP of at least US\$4,600, net deforestation rates have ceased to increase.¹¹

1. [MCPFE, 1993](#)
2. [ERPC, 2015](#)
3. [WWF, 2010](#)
4. [UN FAO, 1995](#)
5. [GreenBlue, 2013](#)
6. [International Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\), 2007](#)
7. [WBCSD, 2011](#)
8. [USDA, 2010](#)
9. [Forest Europe, 2011](#)
10. [FAO, 2011](#)
11. [Kauppi, P. et al, 2006](#)

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