Sustainability is central to all European paper industry activities and a large proportion of our resources are devoted to ensuring the industry remains competitive while minimising its environmental impacts across the EU.

This newsletter provides a short overview of best sustainability practices throughout the EU in the pulp and paper industry.

More at www.cepi-sustainability.eu

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Sustainability of Paper – a Natural Fact

The paper sector is at the heart of the 2050 bio-economy. It is, after all, an essential platform for a range of bio-based products and a model for the recycling society.

European paper industry - Resource efficiency at its best
Recent study results show that using wood and paper for recycling for manufacturing purposed does not only add value and create jobs, it does so in a resource efficient manner. Due to recycling and the use of waste and by-products in the pulp and paper industry, 1m³ of wood creates products worth 2.38 m³ of wood. This is resource efficiency at its best.

Global Conference on Sustainability and Reporting by GRI, 22-24 May 2013 in Amsterdam
The 2013 Global Conference on Sustainability and Reporting will be a three-day event, including training sessions, workshops and networking time. A year-long process of community-building activities precedes the Conference, engaging business leaders and other stakeholders globally to develop a compelling agenda.

CEPI is a stakeholder of the GRI and uses the GRI criteria in its Sustainability Reports. In 2011 CEPI achieved a B+ level report and is continuously improving the reporting process.
Continuous improvements in the paper industry’s environmental performance are part of the commitment to environmental management systems that are present in almost all paper mills in Europe. Performance across a range of environmental indicators has improved in spite of reduced production following the economy crisis.

Paper production: Decoupled Growth Levels and Environmental Impacts

The global aim is to halt the decrease of biodiversity by 2020. The forest industry of Finland has cooperated closely with forestry and environment authorities in the development of an operating model, which has enabled forestry actors to access data gathered by the environment administration on the occurrence of endangered species.

The various parties involved in forest work in Finland share the goal of preventing any decline in the occurrence of endangered forest-dwelling species. Safeguarding vulnerable species is an integral aspect of the everyday work of Finland’s forest industry corporations and forestry actors, but now professionals working inside forests can access location information on these species already when planning measures to be implemented in the woods. This development also strengthens the valuable cooperation between forest industry and environment professionals that promotes the conservation of the living conditions of forest-dependent species.
The recycling rate in Europe reached 70.4% in 2011. The total amount of paper collected and recycled in the paper sector remains stable at 58 million tonnes, the same as in previous years.

**Germany: Raw material use reflect sustainability of the industry**

The German paper industry’s raw material supplies reflect the principle of sustainability. This is also documented by the high recycling rate. In 2011 paper for recycling was the most important raw material in quantity terms. The input rate of paper for recycling in Germany is stable at an extremely high value of 71%. In total, some 16 million tonnes of paper for recycling were used in 2011, 1% less than in 2010, which had to do with the slight fall in output.

At the same time, it was also possible to increase the collection of paper for recycling yet again: 77% of the paper and board consumed in Germany was collected and reused in 2011 (Europe 2010: 63%). The structurally high costs of the valuable secondary raw material go on imposing a burden on companies’ bottom line. Prices for paper for recycling were marked by a steady rise in 2010 and in the first six months of 2011. After a decline in prices in the second half of 2011, prices are heading north again.

Qualified employees in the paper industry are an invaluable asset for companies, which is why the sector also thinks long-term in employment issues. In 2011, it was possible to keep the number of employees largely stable despite the slight fall in output. In spite of economic uncertainties, the German paper industry has had an average decline of only 2% annually in the last five years. In Germany, the sector employs a good 41,100 workers.
On occasion of the International Year of Forests, in 2011 a paper company in Romania decided to put in place an environmental awareness program in collaboration with the Association for Sustainable Development, “Dunarea de Jos”, in Calarasi, where the company is located. Entitled, “The Forest – A Shield against Natural Disasters”, the project is aimed at encouraging ecological education and making people aware of the role of forests and natural resources. The project, which is spread over several years, is divided into three phases. The first phase involved the planting of 2638 new trees over a 5 ha area of land (involving the collaboration of “Dunarea de Jos” volunteers and the students from the technical college, “Stefan Banulescu”); the second phase involved two maintenance projects (the first has taken place in April 2012 and the second will take place in April 2013). The third phase will be a final conference to be held in spring 2013, where the results of the project will be presented.

Belgium: Renewable energy up by 150% in 20 years

The Belgian pulp and paper industry produces around 8% of the green energy in Belgium. These investments in renewable energy represent an important contribution to the energy independence of the country and support the efforts in fighting Climate Change.

Belgian pulp and paper producers committed to ensure the legal origin of all wood fibres used as raw material. Their aim was to ensure that all paper and paperboard products in Belgium came from legally logged timber in order to fight against illegal logging. An independent auditor now certifies that the wood pulp used has legal origin.

Austria: International Year of Forests

As the UN declared 2011 the International Year of Forests, Austropapier – the Austrian association for the pulp and paper industry – co-organised several events throughout the year on this topic. Forest messages on free cards, educational packages for schools, presentations in the parliament and special reports on public television covering forests and paper related topics. In total more than 30 events took place in Austria throughout 2011.

Submit your Idea!
Visit
http://twoteam.unfoldthefuture.eu/
Sweden: 2.5 million hectares of protected forests

The six major forest owner groups of Sweden presented a map showing all voluntarily protected areas. The map is found at http://skyddadskog.se/en/. The map also includes all areas under formal protection. The map shows a total of 2.5 million hectares of protected areas.

Swedish forest owners practice sustainable forest management. Area protection, formal and voluntary, together with conservation measures in all forest operations, is the main tool to secure biodiversity in their forests.

The interactive map found at http://skyddadskog.se/en/en enables you to seek information about areas formally protected, e.g. national parks and reserves, and can also help you locate areas voluntarily set aside by the forest owners. These areas are found all over the country. Voluntary set-asides cover 1.3 million hectares of forest land. More than 25% of the Swedish forest area is exempted from active forestry through a blend of formal and voluntary forms of protection.

The Netherlands: Paper mills working together in saving energy

In the Netherlands, the Royal Dutch Paper and Board Association are aiming to achieve a 50% energy and material reduction per end product between 2004 and 2020 in a special Transition Program. A significant share is being achieved inside the 23 paper and board mills apart from savings ‘downstream’ (distribution, converting, printing).

In the Netherlands, the situation is rather unique as in these 23 paper mills work closely together to reduce the use of energy. One may call it a Dutch cultural thing: ‘the Dutch debating culture’, we like to talk things over and over. Representatives of the mills regularly come together to discuss implementation of best practices to produce paper as environmentally friendly as possible. This is possible because grades and end-products are hardly competitive and therefore a healthy ‘energy savings competition’ exists.

Every year millions of euros are saved by focusing on energy reduction. Furthermore, every year a trophy is handed to the paper mill that achieves a high reduction in energy relative to the benchmark set in 2004 (now held by the Sappi Nijmegen mill for the 2nd consecutive year).

The ambitions in sharing best practices are even going beyond the sector. First exchanges have been made with other process intensive sectors such as steel and chemical production plants in order to achieve a more sustainable paper and board production.

Green books by the Dutch paper and board chain

Another prerequisite to achieve energy reduction is a close cooperation with value chain organisations that did not work closely together before. It is important to find out which organisations have the biggest influence on material and energy consumption. The Publishers are one of those when it comes to book and magazine production. A few front runners and printers produced four ‘Green Books’ using 10 to 30% less energy just by working closely together in the chain. A great result!

Discussions are also underway between food producer Unilever, a large retailer and the Dutch Paper and Board Association. They try to develop more sustainable packaging solutions. A ‘Green Packaging’ project will soon be launched with these organisations.
Contributing to sustainable growth

The paper industry plays a key role helping to add value and create jobs within a long value chain. It shows that sustainability and competitiveness can and must go hand in hand!

A very recent study by Pr. Udo Mantau (Hamburg University), based on forests data from FAO and Eurostat and the resource availability model EFISCEN of the European Forest Institute, shows how much wood is growing in the EU forests and which fraction of this wood is harvested to be used either as raw material or as fuel for the production of power and heat.

Several conclusions can be drawn from that study, that are relevant with respect to the issue of forest biomass availability for the European bio-economy:

• The EU-27 exports more wood than it imports. In the European pulp and paper industry 81% of wood is from domestic origin.

• The study shows clearly that, already today, the energy use of wood consumes a large share of the harvested wood, either directly (208.9 million cubic meters) or indirectly (in the form of by-products of processing industries or at the end of the life-cycle of wood-based products) (132 million cubic meters).

• The wood input-output factor in the pulp and paper chain is 2.38, meaning due to recycling and the use of waste and by-products in the pulp and paper industry, 1m³ of wood creates products worth 2.38 m³ of wood.

Combining better and sustainable mobilisation with efficient use and conversion of resources would enhance the cascading effect and free sufficient resources for the European bio-economy.

Labour productivity increased by 40% between 2000 and 2011

Wood flows in EU27 – a study and infographic

All information at www.cepi.org
France: Myth & Reality – combating misperceptions

COPACEL has published some communication tools (brochure, display and totem) with content correcting misperceptions about the pulp and paper industry and its products. These misperceptions are often addressing forest destruction and that the industry supposedly pollutes the environment. These communication tools have been created in order to render a representative image of the industry by providing simple facts and figures, demonstrating how sustainable the pulp and paper industry truly is. Three messages have been highlighted: the pulp and paper industry respects its environment, this industry recycles paper and it uses biomass to generate energy.

Spain: New sustainability goals and achievements

The new Pulp & Paper Sector’s Sustainability Report 2012 Update, published by ASPAPEL, provides a comprehensive, sector-wide perspective about how the 30 sustainability indicators have evolved and sets new objectives and actions.

Main new goals:
- Mobilization of an increasing amount of domestically produced timber and promotion of certified wood and certified products
- Improvement of electrical energy efficiency by 5%
- Improvement of separate paper collection with focus on the 6 largest cities
- Improvements to make transport in the sector more sustainable

Some 2011 achievements:
- 27.3 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent stored in plantations for papermaking
- 71% of process waste valorised
- 93% of sector’s production made under Environmental Management Systems
- 1.8% increase in paper collection (collection rate stood at 73.5%)

The Report was drawn up according to GRI reporting methods under Bureau Veritas accreditation and has been awarded a GRI B+ mark.


Italy: Assocarta publishes environmental report for 2009-2010

The environmental report has been recording with consistency for 13 years the environmental performance of the Italian paper mills, attesting not only the progress and achievements, but also the difficulties and problems that still hinder the full development of the sector on an economic, environmental and social level.

Published for the first time in 1999 on the initiative of the association to promote and support the adoption of environmental management systems by affiliated companies, it is now a reference for the same companies and a common development element. The Environmental Report of the paper industry is drawn up each year by Assocarta on the basis of data collected by means of a questionnaire sent to all the Italian paper mills.

The information collected is processed, with the technical support of the Station Experimental Paper, Cardboard and Pulp (now Innovhub), and controlled according to methods designed to ensure the consistency and reliability of published results.

Click here for the report in pdf format
Maintaining a safe work place

Employment issues are at the heart of the European paper industry’s business practice. Recent initiatives underscore the importance the industry attaches to its social responsibilities through investment in staff training and striving for higher safety standards.

CEPI Health and safety best practices - No paper without healthy, skilled and safe people

CEPI and industriAll Europe launched a good practice report on health and safety in the European paper industry at a conference in Germany. CEPI and industriAll Europe – the European Trade Union Federation – worked jointly on this new report compiling a set of 22 exemplary practices that were collected from members under the auspices of the paper sector social dialogue, funded with the support of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

The good practice report addresses different types of pulp and/or paper mills and the health and safety issues they may carry, as well as various kinds of activities (daily operation, transport and handling, maintenance) and can in most cases be adapted and transposed. The good practices included in the report are not exhaustive, but the report paves the way to identify more practices to be shared. It also illustrates the benefits of constructive co-operation towards a common goal.

This report is part of the EU-OSHA campaigns towards healthier and safer workplaces. It was distributed to all pulp and paper mills in Europe.

Dutch paper and board industry strives to be safest and healthiest industry in the Netherlands

Horizontal Safety Checks were started to give participating companies free Health & Safety advice on a regular base. Every three years these companies are visited by an expert team, consisting of colleagues from the paper and board industry.

Key elements in the Safety Checks are:
• Opening meeting with management and works council;
• Extensive plant tour: safety issues and ideas for improvement;
• Presentation of findings to the local team;
• Report: summary of findings.

With the help of this practice, continuous attention to Health and Safety issues was created within the sector.
Next CEPI
Sustainability Report
November 2013

CEPI aisbl - The Confederation of European Paper Industries
The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) is a Brussels-based non-profit organisation regrouping
the European pulp and paper industry and championing industry’s achievements and the benefits of its products.
Through its 18 member countries (17 European Union members plus Norway) CEPI represents some 520 pulp, paper
and board producing companies across Europe, ranging from small and medium sized companies to multi-nationals,
and 1000 paper mills. Together they represent 25% of world production.