
Press release

Non-wood fibre is a new innovation frontier for Europe's paper and board sector, shows nova-Institute study

Brussels, 13 February 2023

There is an increasing interest in paper and paper products made out of non-wood fibre, sourced from the agricultural and textile sectors. A study commissioned by Cepi to the nova-Institute, a German private research body, and carried on 33 producers of non-wood pulp, concludes that the material streams hold potential to contribute to the sustainable growth of the pulp and paper sector.

All types of non-wood raw materials used by European producers in the sector were considered in the study, including residues, by-products and side streams as well as dedicated non-wood fibres. The use of materials such as straw, flax and hemp, but also textile waste, could help the industry to **diversify and increase the availability of fibre**. It would also be a driver for future innovation in processes, as well as in products, where specific properties of agricultural crops and residues could be used to develop novel biomaterials.

Products already using non-wood fibres addressed in the study cover the following list: tissue, hygiene, printing, cigarette, technical, security and speciality paper, as well as board, including for food packaging.

These developments would also help the agricultural and textile sectors in becoming more circular, benefiting from the long expertise of the pulp and paper industry in recycling and the ecodesign of products.

The study also covers the potential limitations of using non-wood pulp, including in land-use or stemming from applications in other sectors. In some cases, it would require the development of entire value chains which do not exist yet.

Experts from the nova-Institute observe that any challenges are to be balanced with the **specific functionalities and qualities of some non-wood fibres**, in addition to the positive effects on sustainable sourcing and product diversification.

Cepi will continue to monitor the developments of non-wood fibres for the paper industry in the future and remains open to collaboration with other actors interested in the topic.

Download the [executive summary of the study: "Non-wood Fibre Use in the European Pulp and Paper Industry"](#). Results of the full study are available to Cepi members on demand.

Quote

"The sustainable management of our raw material sourcing remains, along with our high level of circularity, the defining features of our industry. Non-wood fibres have a role to play, and will be an additional component of the paper mills and recycling mills of the future. Most importantly, paper industry can offer here a sustainable solution for using, resource-efficiently and towards a higher value-added, a stream that may not have been used or was a problem before."

Jori Ringman, Director General Cepi, Confederation of European Paper Industries

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For more information on Industry commitments, please consult

[Cepi's Sustainable Product Pledge,](#)

[Cepi's Pledge to support the 3 billion trees initiative.](#)

[The 4evergreen cross-industry alliance.](#)

For our latest industry statistics, please refer to

[Cepi Key Statistics 2021](#)

About Cepi:

Cepi is the European association representing the paper industry. We offer a wide range of renewable and recyclable wood-based fibre solutions to EU citizens: from packaging to textile, hygiene and tissue products, printing and graphic papers as well as speciality papers, but also bio-chemicals for food and pharmaceuticals, bio-composites and bioenergy. We are a responsible industry: 85% of our raw materials are sourced in Europe and certified as sustainable, 92% of the water we use is returned in good condition to the environment. We are the world champion in recycling at the rate of 71.4%. At the forefront of the decarbonisation and industrial transformation of our economy, we embrace digitalisation and bring 21 billion value addition to the European economy and €4.5 billion investments annually. Through its 18 national associations, Cepi gathers 490 companies operating 885 mills across Europe and directly employing more than 179,000 people.

More information about our sustainability performance [here](#).

About nova-Institute:

nova-Institute is a private and independent research institute in Germany. nova was founded in 1994 and provides research and science-based consultancy with a focus on the transition of the chemical and material industry to renewable carbon: How to substitute fossil carbon with biomass, direct CO₂ utilisation and recycling, how to defossilise the industry. Nearly 50 experts offer their unique understanding to support the transition of industries into a climate neutral future. Our subjects include feedstock, technologies and markets, economy and policy, sustainability, communication and strategy development.

More information about nova-Institute here: <https://nova-institute.eu/>