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Finns world leaders in paper recovery and recycling

About 70% of the paper consumed in Finland is recovered. This is a top result in international comparison and an excellent achievement for a sparsely populated country with long distances, which makes the organising of paper recovery expensive.

Recovered paper is a good and valuable raw material for the industry. The importance as industrial raw material of the fibres derived from it has been increasing steadily over the past 15 years. "All of the recycled fibre available in Finland is used here, but, because of our population base and consumption volumes, fibre use does not reach Central European levels," says Fredrik Blomfelt, Senior Advisor, Environment, Finnish Forest Industries Federation.

The forest industry in Finland uses some 750,000 tonnes of recovered paper as raw material annually. This equals about 5% of its raw material fibre requirement. The small share of recycled fibre is explained by the fact that over 90% of the paper produced in Finland is exported and subsequently recovered primarily in Central Europe, which is the largest market area for the Finnish forest industry.

Wood fibre cannot be recycled indefinitely, however. According to Blomfelt, fibre only tolerates some 3-5 use cycles. This means that some new fibre from paper that has not been recycled must always be added to the mix. The Finnish pulp and paper industry specialises in paper grades that require primary fibre, which is available in abundance in the forests of Finland and neighbouring countries. On the other hand, recycled fibre is a significant raw material for the Central European paper mills owned by Finnish forest companies.

95% of the commercial forests in Finland have been certified, which enables the origins of a product's wood raw material to be traced to specific forest lots. Certification acts as a guarantee of high-quality forest management.

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The Finnish Forest Industries Federation represents companies in the forest-based and related industries in Finland. Its task is to promote the competitiveness and profitability of the paper and wood products industries by strengthening their operating conditions and positive image in Finland and abroad. The organization's membership covers the entire pulp, paper and paperboard industries and about 80% of the wood products industry in Finland.



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The sustainable use of renewable natural resources supports growth, employment, welfare and sustainable development in Europe. The forest-based sector is a significant European branch with a key role in promoting sustainable development. The sector wants to make the sustainable use of renewable natural resources one of the themes of the Finnish Presidency of the EU.