



Paper and paper products represent one of the major commodities bought by the FHE sector. The UK is the world's 5th largest consumer of paper. In 2005, the UK consumed 12.5 million tonnes of paper, of which 7.6m tonnes were imported. Globally, nearly 4 billion trees are cut down for paper manufacture, representing approximately 40% of all timber use.

Whilst absolute consumption of paper is high, the utilisation of this resource is also extremely wasteful. It is estimated that 65% of print-outs and photocopies are thrown away on the day that they are produced. Sources of timber for paper manufacture are global, and are becoming increasingly concentrated in parts of the developing world where issues of poverty and human rights are most critical.

The issues

Paper is produced from virgin (i.e. sourced directly from a plantation) timber products and also recycled feedstock through an industrial process. The quality of the management of the plantations that supply virgin timber for pulp manufacture and the processes in paper manufacture have critical poverty, human rights and wider social and community impacts. In recent years, the focus of many NGOs, campaigners and socially responsible investors has moved to the pulp and paper industry, concentrating on issues including the following:

- Forestry practice and poverty.
- Employment practice.
- Pollution impacts on local communities and livelihoods.

Forestry practice and poverty

The potential impacts on poor people of forestry activity include:

- employment, although such jobs can be dangerous and poorly paid;
- damage to people already dependent upon forests for food, fuel etc.;
- illegal extraction, where timber is "stolen" from its lawful owners.

Industrial tree plantations in many parts of the developing world, notably Brazil, have increasingly become targets in recent years, of protests by lands rights protestors, farmers and Indigenous Peoples. In addition, much paper manufacture relies upon specifically planted, fast growing tree species, especially eucalyptus. Eucalyptus is an extremely thirsty species, and its intensive production can have a major impact upon local water resources, minimising the availability of water for local communities.



Employment practice

While plantations have the potential to supply valuable jobs and income for communities in parts of the developing world, in practice many plantations are heavily mechanised and therefore employ relatively small numbers of people. It has been noted that some plantations in South Africa employ only 0.7 people for every 100 hectares of land owned. In addition, in recent years, many plantations have contracted out work, meaning that often employment conditions have changed radically for existing workers. A 1998 survey of forest workers in Chile found that when their jobs were contracted out, two-thirds of workers saw a reduction in pay and benefits and half lost out on pensions.

Pollution impacts on local communities and livelihoods

Paper manufacturing involves some of the most polluting industrial processes and pollution from pulp mills around the world has been accused of giving rise to a range of health problems for local communities including cancer, lung disease, reproductive problems and heart disease. In addition, pulp and paper manufacture has been associated with a range of specific and systematic pollution incidents across the world, in both developing and developed countries. Pollution incidents on local ecosystems have a direct impact upon the economic welfare and wellbeing of local communities as they impact directly upon the community's ability to feed itself through fishing and hunting and to access goods for sales and exchange.

A wide range of organisations have focused upon the development of approaches to guarantee improved management of timber production, labelling of products and traceability of supplies. This information sheet provides an overview of such approaches together with recommendations for improved procurement practice.

Possible solutions

Recycled paper

The use of paper with a high or total recycled content can significantly reduce the total impact of production, as it derives further value out of existing product and does not require the intensive industrial processes required to turn timber into virgin pulp. Over the last decade recycled papers have been developed with match the whiteness, dust content, finish and printability of virgin papers.

Paper from Virgin Timber sources

Irresponsible procurement can of course be very damaging to less developed countries but conversely, responsible procurement of timber can bring significant benefits. The following key areas of focus contribute to responsible forestry practice:

- sustainable forestry management;
- ensuring legality in forest management;
- health and safety and environmental issues in manufacturing processes.

Certification schemes provide independent verification that timber has been grown in sustainably managed forests and/or has been extracted legally and include a mechanism for tracing products from forest to end use. Both international and national schemes operate around the world. Two of the most significant are:

The Forest Stewardship Council

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, not for profit organisation which promotes environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable forestry by establishing a worldwide standard of recognised and respected principles for forest stewardship. In the UK, WWF set up the UK Forest and Trade Network, which commits members to tracing their products back to the forest source and recommends FSC certification for delivering sustainable timber production. A number of large paper suppliers are part of this group.

Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC)

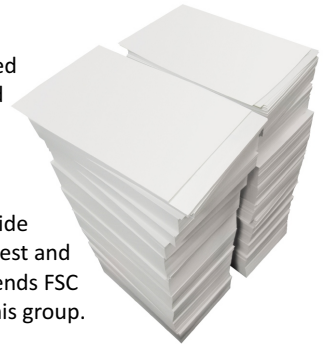
The PEFC Council is an independent, non-profit organisation which promotes sustainably managed forests through independent third party certification. PEFC is a global umbrella organisation for the assessment of certification schemes and its membership includes 35 independent national forest certification systems of which, to-date, 25 have been through a rigorous assessment process.

UK Government policy

Since April 2009, DEFRA has had a policy that only timber/timber products originating either from independently verified legal and sustainable sources or from a licensed Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) partner can be used on the Government estate. Appropriate documentation is required to prove this. Other public sector bodies, such as local authorities, have voluntarily adopted the policy.

Four certification schemes have been approved as meeting the UK Government's requirements for sustainable and legal timber:

- Canadian Standards Association (CSA)
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
- Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)
- Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).



Recommendations

- ⊙ *Buy paper utilising recycled source material, using at least 80% Post Consumer Waste (PCW).*
- ⊙ *Only buy virgin paper that has come from independently certified sustainable forestry sources.*
- ⊙ *Buy paper from members of the WWF-UK Forests and Trade Network.*
- ⊙ *Communicate your requirements to suppliers to stimulate them to support your commitments.*

REFERENCES/FURTHER INFORMATION

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This sheet is part of a series of 14 on different commodities written for EAUC's Promoting Poverty Aware Procurement project to enable universities and colleges to be more aware of poverty issues when they make procurement decisions. For more information about the project visit www.eauc.org.uk/promoting_poverty_aware_procurement_on_campus



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