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PAPER INDUSTRY SEEKS IMPROVED QUALITY OF RECOVERED PAPER

CEPI issues guidelines on responsible sourcing of recovered paper

In line with its commitment to continuous improvement in sustainability, the paper industry has issued new guidelines on the responsible sourcing of recovered paper. The aim is to improve the quality of recovered paper, eventually contributing to the increased availability and quality of recycled paper.

As recycling rates hit new records in Europe, the challenges of paper recycling are changing and need to be addressed responsibly. In 2004, almost 55% of paper consumed in Europe was recycled. Good quality recovered paper reduces the waste of raw materials and contributes to sustainability.

“With increasing collection of recovered paper in Europe, all easy sources have been tapped. Recovered paper quality will deteriorate unless clear guidance is given as to how to handle its collection”, says Geoff Hill, vice-chairman of CEPI recycling committee, at the launch of guidelines on Responsible sourcing and supply of recovered paper. “In parallel, quality demands on the finished paper continue to increase with the rapid technological development of the publishing and converting industries.”

The Responsible Sourcing guidelines are the first such guidance at a European level and are a major building block in the industries’ aim to ensure recovered paper is treated as a valuable raw material. They provide general guidance applying to any source of recovered paper and for any application, and list best practice along each step of the paper recovery chain. They compliment the legal framework and CEN standard EN 643 on recovered paper, as well as other voluntary industry standards such as quality control guidelines and good manufacturing practice guidelines.

CEPI believes changes are required at all points in the supply chain; to both the practical arrangements for the collection, storage and transportation of recovered paper and to the systems in place to manage the process. CEPI is committed to providing education and information to facilitate responsible sourcing and recycling.

The industry intends to regularly review the guidelines with the aim of strengthening them both in ambition and in the number of signatories from industry suppliers. The first review is expected early 2007.

“European paper mills will progressively use these guidelines in selecting suppliers of recovered paper. In time meeting them will be a fundamental element of the customer - supplier relationship”,



Geoff Hill says. “This will not happen overnight, but suppliers need to start addressing any shortcomings now.”

The guidelines also set out additional steps the recovered paper chain should follow when supplying mills producing paper and board for food contact. These steps complement the regulations and good manufacturing practices that mills already comply with. For example, they strongly recommend using paper and board collected separately from other dry recyclables (glass, metals or plastics) and commit to phasing out the use of paper and board not collected separately, as soon as possible. The paper industry hopes this clear signal will prompt local authorities where necessary to review the sustainability of their collection systems.

Some European regions already meet the level set in the guidance illustrating that more ambition is possible without necessarily involving higher costs. The guidelines encourage users to aim for higher standards if reflected in national legislation or practices.

The guidelines can be downloaded from www.cepi.org (/publications)

Further information

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