



## BITS ON SUSTAINABILITY

# Virgin fibers or recycled only?

Virgin fibers are essential to keep the paper cycle viable and renewable.

**The paper cycle would be impossible to keep going without new virgin fibers** since recycled ones deteriorate after a few uses. Virgin fibers are always needed to create high performance papers and recycled ones. Moreover, they are necessary to start the recycling process to produce papers for other applications (such as corrugated boards). In 2021, 61% of the Italian paper industry production will come from recycled fibers, and over 80% in packaging [source: Assocarta].

**Paper, unlike aluminum, cannot be endlessly recycled.**

Multiple paper recycling processes affect the mechanical and chemical properties of fibers. While some of these fibers are lost in the converting process, a large proportion can be recycled up to 7 times; gradually the yield is reduced, the fibers become shorter, and finally weakened. Recycled fibers do not exceed 5 times, then they lose their strength.

Using virgin fibers, which must be sourced from **sustainably managed forests (FSC®)**, is therefore a commitment to ensure the strength, quality and unending availability of paper products.

European forests are growing by an area equal to 1.5 million soccer fields each year [source: TwoSides] partly due to the **promotion of sustainable forest management** where far more trees are planted as opposed to those cut down.

Mostly affecting tropical areas, deforestation is minimally caused by paper production. As much as 53% of all the wood from the world's forests is used for energy production, 28% ends up in sawmills and only 11% is used in the paper industry [source: FAO, 2007]. The main direct cause of tropical deforestation is the conversion of land to farming and grazing.



The mark of  
responsible forestry

Bits on sustainability are written by Fedrigoni's Sustainability Team and are part of the Group commitment to spread the culture of sustainability.

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*Reworked leaves to produce new paper.*

**Fedrigoni is a leading company in the production of high-performance and high aesthetic value specialty papers** manufactured from virgin fibers sourced by certified forests regularly renewed; in the case of recycled fibers, we prefer pre-consumer waste given the quality of recycling and lower carbon footprint.

Fedrigoni products are **downstream in the paper recycling chain**, representing the source of that portion of virgin fibers necessary to support the chain as a whole.

## Definitions:

### Virgin fibers

The plant fibers used by the paper industry are derived mainly from trees. The most basic distinction is between long fibers, mostly from resinous woods (pine, fir, larch) and short fibers, from hardwoods (beech, birch, eucalyptus, poplar).

### Recycled fibers

Recycled fiber (or pulp) is defined as the semi-finished product obtained from waste paper and cardboard delivered by the end consumer to the appropriate recycling platforms (post-consumer waste) or from the waste of paper mill or papermaking processes (pre-consumer waste or post-industrial waste). Therefore, production waste from woodworking processes or from the wood pulp itself is not to be regarded as recycled fiber.

### FSC®

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that has created a forest certification system focused on proper forest management and traceability of derived products.

### PEFC

The Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes is an organization recognized worldwide for certifying sustainable forest management.

### TwoSides

The global communications project intended to provide truthful and evidence-based information on paper and printing sustainability.

#### Sources:

[Group Code of Ethics](#)

[Group Sustainability Policy](#)

[Group Sustainability Report](#)

[Assocarta](#)

[TwoSides, myths & facts](#)

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