

EU must put cascading use of wood at the heart of circular economy and the bioenergy strategy – WWF and Mondi

Brussels, Belgium (March, 2016) - Using wood more efficiently to meet projected demand for wood-based products in Europe should be at the heart of the European Commission's bioenergy strategy and circular economy, according to a new report.

The report, *Mapping Study on Cascading Use of Wood Products*¹, commissioned by WWF and global packaging and paper group Mondi, looks at how regulation either hinders or promotes what is known as 'cascading use' of wood – prioritising value adding non-fuel uses so wood is burned for energy only after it has been used, re-used and recycled as a material first wherever possible.

“Demand for wood-based materials and energy is projected to increase threefold worldwide between 2010 and 2050. We urgently need to innovate and make more products from fewer resources to help reduce pressure on our forests”, says Emmanuelle Neyroumande, Manager: Forest Product Consumption & Footprint at WWF International.

“Cascading use of wood is the smart way to use a natural resource – putting it to good use before it is reused, recycled and finally burnt for energy. Taking wood straight from the forest and burning it just doesn't make sense if it can be used for other products first”, says Peter Oswald, CEO Mondi Europe and International.

The report's findings suggest the need for: a broadly accepted definition of cascading use among policymakers, researchers and industry; EU policy guidance that incentivises effective cascading use; as well as better integration and implementation of existing bio-energy and waste policies.

At a national level, the analysis found that countries such as Finland and Germany had practices that promote cascading wood use and recycling; and that while others like Spain had advanced policies in place, these were challenged by poor integration with other policies.

It also revealed that the need for cascading use was felt more acutely in countries with relative scarcity of wood resources, such as Germany, and more weakly in countries with a relative abundance, such as Poland. In Germany, where 50% of the wood resource (recycled or virgin) is used for bioenergy, increasing demand could only be satisfied by imports, more cascading use or the expansion of the forest area from which wood can be harvested.

We urge the European Commission to take the report's recommendations into account for the sustainable bioenergy policy up to 2030 and as they take forward activities related to the circular economy. We believe the Commission needs to provide guidance to the Member States on how best to integrate cascading use of wood into relevant national policies.

The European Commission consultation on a sustainable post-2020 bioenergy strategy is now open until 10 May 2016.

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¹ The report is based on research from the nova-Institute and the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)

The full and summary *Mapping Study on Cascading Use of Wood Products* report can be accessed here:

http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/cascading_use_of_wood_web.pdf (full report)

http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/exec_summary_digital.pdf (executive summary)

Notes:

WWF has published a position paper, which states that “Cascading use of biomass as well as combined heat and power production need to be incentivised where appropriate” (WWF 2012). Mondi has a similar position, aligned to the one of CEPI, which is to “Place the cascading use principle at the core of its climate and energy policy, with a view to ensure the most efficient use of the available biomass, in particular to contribute to the EU growth and jobs objectives”.

About the WWF Mondi Global Partnership

Mondi Group and WWF are working together in a three-year strategic partnership (2014 to 2016) that focuses on promoting environmental stewardship in the packaging and paper sectors.

The partnership enables shared learning and action to promote ecosystem, manufacturing and product stewardship.

Through its initiative, the partnership aims to demonstrate that environmental stewardship and responsible business practice can, and need to go hand in hand. It also hopes to catalyse widespread positive change in the global packaging and paper sector and beyond

For more on the partnership please visit: www.panda.org/mondipartnership

Contacts:

WWF

Emmanuelle Neyroumande
Manager: Forest Product Consumption & Footprint
Email: eneyroumande@wwfint.org
Mobile: +33 6 62 10 74 78

Mondi Group

Lora Rossler
Group Head of Communications
Email: lora.rossler@mondigroup.co.za
Tel: +27 31 451 2111