



# WOOD - THE NATURAL CHOICE

Wood panels are produced using a range of sources, including small roundwood, chips, sawdust and recycled wood. Each type of panel has various applications in the construction, furniture and do-it-yourself sectors, including cladding, packaging, kitchen worktops and laminate flooring. Panels are a vital component that can only be replaced by more expensive and less sustainable products

Subsidies that incentivise the use of wood harvest in energy generation are causing tension between the processing industry and the energy sector. The direct use of biomass and wood for energy production is not only reducing the wood supply but also creating negative consequences for the environment.

Several studies indicate an important difference between the available amount of woody biomass in Europe, and the quantity that is needed to fulfil the targets concerning renewable energy. For the year 2020, a shortage of 230 million m<sup>3</sup> wood (McKinsey, 2007) – 400 million m<sup>3</sup> wood (FAO/UNECE/University of Hamburg) is estimated. This deficit accounts for 1/3 of the total demand of wood in 2020.

## The European Panel Federation calls on European legislators and Member States

- To embed the hierarchy of use principle into EU and Member States law, prioritise recycling of wood over burning and ban wood going into landfill
- To reopen discussion on the sustainability criteria for solid biomass taking the environmental benefits of wood into account
- To support the efforts of the wood industry to promote a recycling society
- To increase the sustainable mobilisation of wood

## The hierarchy of use principle

Wood products should be reused and recycled before being turned into fuel. Forest products have the ability to store carbon, because carbon remains bound for the entire service life. After wood-products have been used, they can often be re-used and recycled, then eventually burnt, when the stored CO<sub>2</sub> returns to the atmosphere.

The hierarchy of use principle would help rationalise the use of wood and define preferred options, i.e. using and recycling wood and only burning in last resort.

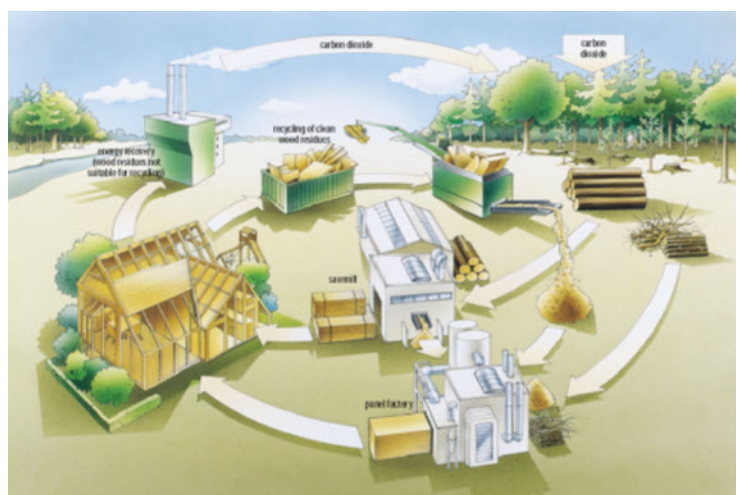
If more and more wood and forest residues go directly to energy plants we are wastefully minimising the carbon cycle of wood.

**1. Use wood**

**2. Re-use**

**3. Recycle**

**4. Energy recovery**





# WOOD - THE SUSTAINABLE CHOICE

## DID YOU KNOW ?

- Wood is Man's only naturally renewable material. Burning wood is the most carbon intensive use of that material
- The total carbon stored in Europe's wood products is estimated 60m t C , the equivalent of 240 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> captured from the atmosphere by the trees.
- An annual 4% increase in Europe's wood product consumption would sequester an additional 150 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. 150 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year = 40 Mio "low carbon" cars (95gCO<sub>2</sub>/km) can drive around the world (40.000km)
- Wood materials provide the best insulation in buildings, saving more heat than concrete, steel or aluminium
- Wood building products last 75 years on average

### Wood products have the unique ability to store CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere

Growing forests are carbon sinks, absorbing and storing huge volumes of CO<sub>2</sub> from the environment. Processing wood locks carbon away for the lifetime of the product. We therefore need to treat wood as a vital raw material and ensure its potential is maximised.

### The forest-based industries are crucial for the survival of the rural economy

The combined effect of carbon storage and substitution means that 1m<sup>3</sup> of wood stores 0,9 t CO<sub>2</sub> and substitutes 1,1 t CO<sub>2</sub> - a total of 2,0 t CO<sub>2</sub>

*Dr A. Frühwald*

### Wood panel industry is essential in the value chain of wood

Using wood based products makes a positive contribution to maintaining and increasing forests' market value which is powerful incentive to preserve them. The more wood products replace other materials, the more CO<sub>2</sub> is sequestered from the atmosphere.

## NOTE TO EDITORS:

The European Panel Federation (EPF) represents the European manufacturers of particleboard, MDF and OSB from 29 countries. The sector includes more than 180 factories- which are mostly located in rural areas. In 2009 the industry produced 34.6 million m<sup>3</sup> of particleboard, 12.2 million m<sup>3</sup> of MDF and 3.3 million m<sup>3</sup> of OSB, generating a turnover € 25 billion.

For more information: [www.europeanpanels.eu](http://www.europeanpanels.eu)