



## Recycled, FSC, post-consumer or post-industrial?

### A little word on the many faces of paper recycling

Recycled paper is on the move and Europe is leading the way. The European Commission set an overall target for 2010 at 66% recycled paper, all applications considered, a target which will most likely be met.

Nevertheless, paper recycling still suffers from a couple of misunderstandings. That fact should not be too much of a surprise because the number of labels and certification programmes –not to mention paper types- is simply massive. In brief: the average consumer has difficulty seeing the options clearly. It's time to clarify a number of issues.

Rather than trying to explain certification schemes and paper brands (maybe in a future issue!), we will start here with a couple of basic facts, common questions and recommendations on the use of paper.

- **What is the most environmentally sound paper type?**

1. **100% recycled paper** is simply the best, because it does not contain any new wood pulp, hence no trees have to be felled to produce it. Some paper types consist of 80% recycled paper and 20% 'new' wood pulp. That is very respectable too.

2. **FSC-labelled paper**

If recycled paper is not an option, you can choose FSC-labelled paper. FSC stands for Forest Stewardship Council which implies that this paper contains new wood pulp. But the pulp comes from forests which are managed in a sustainable way, including, for instance, forests that engage in replanting. The international FSC-organisation is the impartial controlling body of all FSC-

affiliates. There are many subcategories and labels within the FSC-family, such as paper that contains partly recycled pulp and partly new FSC-pulp. For a complete overview, take a look at: <http://www.fsc.org/>

### **NOT!**

Nowadays literally every paper type exists, if not in a full or partly recycled version, then at least in a FSC-version. Paper that is not recycled and not FSC-certified comes very likely from very environmentally unsustainable sources, such as, yes, pristine rainforest. Recycled or FSC paper can be marginally more expensive, but the price difference is very, very small. Simply ask your supplier. And insist.

- **Is recycled paper always a little grey?**

In the past it always was a little grey, which is the reason some people still don't want it. Besides a number of high-quality 'non-white' paper types, there are nowadays an increasing number of very white AND recycled paper types. The cliché that recycled paper always needs to look like newspaper is simply not true anymore. As mentioned above, any kind of paper and any kind of whiteness or look and feel is now possible.

Do you have more questions about recycled paper, or other questions about environmentally aware publishing?  
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