

Paper: Here today ...
here tomorrow

Sustainability FAQs

sappi | southern
africa



Why use paper?

Paper offers a sensory experience no other communication medium can replicate.

The type of paper used can evoke a world of emotions, memories, experiences shared and those still to come – it can say so much, without using any words.

We do not merely use paper, we engage with it. Paper stimulates our senses and our emotions. A world without paper would provide information in a soulless, impersonal manner; never tangible and always dependent on an electronic device, batteries and power sources. A world without paper would have no sustainable, renewable and biodegradable solution for packaging.

Imagine a world without paper: no books to snuggle up with in bed; no magazines with views, trends and features to read and share with friends; nothing on which to scribble your brilliant ideas or to practise your art; no sheet of music when playing your piano and no packaging to protect valuable goods in transit. Not even toilet tissue or kitchen wipes.

How does paper compare with digital media?

Digital media has its place, but paper is still very much part of our daily lives; that's true even for the younger generation. A survey has found that three-quarters of students would

prefer to use physical books over ebooks for their studies. The responses to the Learning Resource Survey 2019-20 conducted by a UK bookseller showed that 76% of respondents preferred printed textbooks, compared with 18.5% who chose ebooks and 5.5% who opted for digital courseware.¹

Perhaps this is because of another survey which shows that digital media can be distracting: *"The reading process and experience of digital text are greatly affected by the fact that we click and scroll, in contrast to the tactilely richer experience when flipping through the pages of a printed book".*²

Did you know?

Through photosynthesis, trees and other plants use water and sunlight to convert carbon dioxide (CO₂) into carbohydrates to provide energy and the building blocks for plant growth. The process releases oxygen as a by-product. The CO₂ removed from the atmosphere is converted and stored in plant material and wood. In other words, trees and the use of forest products – like paper and paper packaging – can act as carbon sinks.

In all regions, our industry has played a significant role in expanding forests and plantations. Harvesting is not equal to deforestation; it is an important part of the cycle of growth, materials manufacture and regrowth.

¹ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/majority-students-still-prefer-physical-books-survey-finds>

² Mangan, Anne Hypertext fiction reading: haptics and immersion. *Journal of Research in Reading*, Vol 31, Issue 4. November 2008.

Fast facts

- Paper is used in thousands of different applications every day, and can be made tough enough to withstand acid or soft enough to use on a baby's skin.
- Paper is made from a sustainable resource, is recyclable, biodegradable and locks up carbon throughout its life.
- It's not print versus digital: It's a balance of both.

Is the woodfibre Sappi uses to make paper responsibly sourced?

Yes, it is. Here's why:

- Each year in South Africa, **harvesting is balanced by replanting**.
- We do not harvest trees from indigenous forests.
- Up to a **third of our landholdings** are responsibly managed as conservation areas to protect and promote biodiversity.
- Our plantations are **dual-certified** by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC-NOO3159) (FSC™) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification™ (PEFC). Forest certification is a well-established tool to ensure that responsible forest management practices are implemented in plantations and forests and also that **woodfibre from certified forests can be identified throughout the supply chain**.
- The story of our non-woodfibre use is even more impressive, incorporating **sugar cane fibre (bagasse); reclaimed fibre (broke)** from our own manufacturing process; as well as collected fibre (**post-consumer waste**) bought in from recycling agents.

Did you know?

In South Africa, we own and lease 399,996 hectares (ha) of plantations, of which 261,605 ha are planted. The remainder is managed by Sappi Forests to conserve the natural habitat and biodiversity found there. Sappi Forests enhances our fibre base in South Africa through leading-edge tree improvement programmes which aim to produce high-quality wood with the required pulping characteristics, increase yield per hectare and mitigate against pests and diseases. We actively pursue this aim, particularly through the genetic improvement of planting stock. An example is enhancing our tree breeding process through the development of DNA marker tools which speed up the tree selection process.

Is paper biodegradable?

Yes. Paper comes from nature and it returns to nature. Not only is it strong, versatile, beautiful, re-usable and recyclable, it is also fully biodegradable.

In seawater conditions – much of the world's garbage ends up in our oceans – paper generally biodegrades fully within four months, returning to nature without leaving any toxic residue. This is in sharp contrast to fossil-fuel based plastics and other non-biodegradable materials which can take hundreds of years to degrade.

Is Sappi's manufacturing environmentally responsible?

Although our manufacturing activities have some impact on the planet, we aim to tread as lightly as possible. We are achieving this by establishing five-year targets under our Thrive25 strategy – and aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals aimed at:



- Reducing specific water usage



- Increasing our share of renewable and clean energy
- Decreasing specific total energy usage



- Launching five products with defined sustainability benefits
- Reducing specific landfilled solid waste
- Promoting sustainable growth in our plantations



- Decreasing specific greenhouse gas emissions and specific purchased fossil energy



- Increasing our share of certified fibre
- Enhancing biodiversity in conservation areas on our land

We report every year on progress – or lack thereof – against these targets in our group sustainability report and our Sappi Southern Africa corporate citizenship report, both available on www.sappi.com

Does Sappi take environmental responsibility for paper and packaging once these enter the marketplace?

Our responsibility to the environment does not end once our papers enter the marketplace.

The name of our secondary fibre division, 'Sappi ReFibre' reflects the broad nature of our commitment to re-use what many people classify as waste. We recycle post-converter and post-consumer waste, procured from homes, offices, wholesalers, retailers and manufacturers, in both the formal and informal sectors, through an extensive network of independent collection agents across the country.

Sappi ReFibre has developed a successful outsourced business model that supports entrepreneurial development and job creation while providing a secure market for recovered paper.