



Responsible fiber procurement

COMPANY IN BRIEF

Based in the United States, International Paper (IP) produces and markets packaging and pulp. It has operations in 10 countries and employs 38,000 people. IP sources its fiber from more than 88,000 suppliers, ranging from small, family-owned forests to large forest management investment companies.

CHALLENGE

In the US, forests provide habitats for thousands of plant and animal species. Identifying, protecting and managing areas of significant biodiversity value are critical to ensuring the survival and restoration of these species. While forest certification offers some level of assurance, it can be difficult for small-forest owners to obtain.

INITIATIVE

To guide responsible fiber procurement on uncertified forestlands, IP has developed its own geographic information system (GIS)-based mapping and due diligence process. It allows IP to assess the ecological attributes in forests prior to harvest, such as rare or endangered species, areas of significant biodiversity value and landscape connectivity. Based on this information, using ForSite technology, IP has identified more than 9 million hectares where it can apply due diligence prior to harvest to ensure that the companies IP buys the fiber from source it responsibly and that its actions have a positive impact on nature. Since 2020, IP has made on-the-ground improvements to over 10,000 hectares of forestland.

PARTNERSHIPS

The initiative brings together internal fiber supply teams and foresters, external wood suppliers and landowners, and strategic environmental NGO partners such as the American Bird Conservancy and the Avian Research and Conservation Institute.

IMPERATIVES

IP's initiative improves habitat conditions. Its targeted site-specific forest management measures strengthen forest health and resilience against climate change-induced pressures and, in some cases, maximize carbon storage. The data gathered through the due diligence process also helps to educate landowners and customers on the benefits of sustainable forest management practices.

BUSINESS CASE

IP purchases approximately 50 million tons of wood fiber annually, so responsible sourcing and credible assurance mechanisms are essential to mitigating business risks and strengthening its social license to operate.

ADVOCACY

Domestically and internationally, IP engages in advocacy on topics related to deforestation, illegal logging and the importance of supporting private forestland owners.

NEXT STEPS

As part of IP's Vision 2030, the company aims to source 100% of fiber from sustainably managed forests or recovered fiber while safeguarding forests, watersheds and biodiversity. To do so, IP is committed to measuring and reporting on nature-related impacts in the coming years, once credible conservation data becomes accessible and can feed into its GIS-based mapping and due diligence system to amplify the impact.

MORE INFORMATION

- [The future of forests](#)
- [IP's 2021 Sustainability Report](#)

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WBCSD's [Forest Solutions Group](#) is the global platform where leading business in the forest products sector build and share solutions to sustainable development.

