

THE MYTH

“Paper is **BAD** for the **ENVIRONMENT**”

THE REALITY

- Paper is one of the few sustainable products.
- The paper industry has reduced its environmental impact greatly over the last 10 years.
- Paper products store CO₂.

Paper boasts exceptional environmental credentials: it's natural, biodegradable, recyclable, comes from an infinitely renewable resource and is produced in a sustainable manner. It all starts with what we learned in school: through nature's own process – the photosynthesis – trees capture and store billions of tonnes of carbon, day after day. The carbon sequestered in forests is subsequently stored in products made of wood, such as paper, and the carbon storage is further prolonged by recycling paper. According to calculations, the carbon that remains bound to a printed paper product such as a book reduces after five years the carbon footprint caused by the production stage by approximately 5%. After 100 years, the drop is approximately 75%¹.

92,2% of the paper mills in Europe are certified by an environmental management system². While paper production has increased steadily in the last years (46% increase between 1991 and 2010), environmental impacts have decreased. The

European Paper Industry decreased its specific emission of CO₂ per tonne of paper produced by 42% since 1990. Although paper making is energy intensive, 54% of the energy used in European paper mills is renewable, therefore carbon neutral.

The European paper industry is also the highest user of cogeneration, a system that produces at the same time electrical and thermal energy for industrial consumption, with high level efficiency, therefore saving primary energy and reducing emissions. 94% of its on-site electricity is produced through co-generation. In fact, if it were not for the pulp and paper industry operating world-wide for the last 150 years the CO₂ levels in the atmosphere would be 5% higher (about half a degree in Celsius) than they are at present³.

1. Article: Print products only account for approximately 1% of the climate impacts of consumption by households, 2011

2. Cepi sustainability report 2011

3. Shredding the myths, Paper Manufacturers Association of South Africa, March 2012