

New sustainability report reveals forestry's positive impact on global environment

The International Council of Forest & Paper Associations (ICFPA) has released its 2023 Sustainability Progress Report. The report highlights the progress the forest sector has made in seven key areas of sustainability, comprising sustainable forest management, renewable energy, greenhouse gas emissions, water use, health and safety and recycling.



Source: Supplied

The report also emphasises the role the forest sector can play in helping meet global climate goals. By continuing to make progress in these areas, the forest sector can help to create a more sustainable future for all.

"Forestry workers and consumers of forest products are in the unique position to drive our move to a world with less dependence on fossil energy and fossil-based materials. They are doing this through sustainable forest management, advancing the forest bioeconomy, and recovering more and more paper and paper-based products and packaging for recycling," notes Jori Ringman, ICFPA president and director general of Cepi (the Confederation of European Pulp and Paper Industry).

"I am proud of the work and leadership ICFPA has built over nearly 20 years. This report demonstrates the global impact of associations working together on a common set of commitments."

The [ICFPA Sustainability Progress Report](#) tracks progress achieved in 2020-2021. The overall trend is positive – a reflection that the industry continues to improve in key sustainability areas from our baseline years. In addition to quantitative metrics that demonstrate our industry's progress towards sustainability commitments, the report includes case studies to provide a more robust and qualitative reflection of our industry's sustainability performance.

ICFPA's sustainability performance indicators:

- 50% of procured wood fibre came from third-party certified sustainably managed forests, a 38-percentage point increase from the 2000 baseline year.
- Greenhouse gas emission intensity decreased 23.5% from the 2004/2005 baseline year.
- The energy share of biomass and other renewable energy increased to 63.7%, a nearly 11 percentage point increase since 2004/2005.
- Sulphur dioxide emission intensity from on-site combustion sources decreased 74% from the 2004/2005 baseline year.
- Water use intensity decreased 9.5% from the baseline year.
- Investment in health and safety interventions yielded a 30% reduction in the global recordable incident rate from the 2006/2007 baseline with the number of recordable incidents falling to 2.81 per 100 employees annually.
- In 2021, 59.9% of paper and paperboard consumed globally was reprocessed by mills to make new products, marking a 13.4 percentage point increase in the global recycling rate since the year 2000.

The 2023 ICFPA Sustainability Progress Report also includes the 2023 International Finalists for the prestigious ICFPA Blue Sky Young Researchers and Innovation Award. The theme for the 2022-2023 Blue Sky Awards was *Building a Lower Carbon Economy with Climate Positive Forestry and Forest Products*.

Representing South Africa among the top three finalists in this year's awards was Leane Naude, a Master of Science (chemical engineering) student at North West University, [presented a more cost-effective purification method of lignosulphonate](#), an abundant and versatile alternative to fossil-based fuels.

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