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Sustainable forests: Quadpack interviews Juan Luis Abian Perruca, Executive Director of the Forest Ownership Centre of Catalonia

Can a commercial forest be 100% sustainable? What is 'certified' wood and why should we care? Juan Luis Abian Perruca, Executive Director of the Forest Ownership Centre of Catalonia, explains. Don't we destroy the planet when we chop down trees?

No, not all! A forest is a sustainable thing; trees grow again, and often very quickly. The trick is to manage the forest effectively. People have this image of what's happening in the Amazon – deforestation doesn't exist everywhere!

What is a managed forest exactly?

The details vary, but here in Catalonia it means implementing a forest management plan. Plans can last for 15 to 30 years and stipulated within are actions that the forest owner must carry out to improve the forest. A common one is 'thinning', which means that they remove some trees in order to make way for others. In other cases, they cannot change the type of tree that is already planted or only harvest half of the plantation. This is a way of guaranteeing that the landscape and soil properties do not change.

What is the impact of managed forests on climate change?

They help ensure a carbon stock. When a forest is managed properly, it grows faster, so carbon stock increases. Anything that is made with certified wood – particularly large pieces such as houses – makes a contribution to the environment by lessening its footprint.

Which countries manage their forests?

Across the EU, all countries manage their forests to some degree. In countries like Finland and Norway, certified wood is a very important part of the economy. Within Spain, Catalonia leads – 33% of private forests are managed here.

There are two leading certifications for sustainable wood: PEFC and FSC. What is the difference between the two?

PEFC is the largest certification framework. FSC, which was started by environmentalists and NGOs, is also growing fast. At the end of the day, it is not important which certificate you have – but it is important to have one.

Doesn't installing a forest management plan incur a huge cost?

Yes, it is expensive, but there are grants. Forests owners need to think in the long term.

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Investments may not pay off for 70 or 80 years.

Consumers are aware of 'organic food' and 'slow fashion', but what about sustainable wood?

Research suggests that some 30-40% of people know what it is – but that doesn't translate to higher demand. As there is no real pressure from consumers, it's up to us, and the industry as a whole, to open up new markets.

The Forest Ownership Centre provides technical and administrative support to the Catalan Association that promotes the PEFC in Catalonia.

Technotraf Wood Packaging, part of Quadpack Group's Manufacturing Division, is certified by both the PEFC and the FSC.

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About Quadpack Industries SA

Quadpack Industries is an international manufacturer and a provider of enhanced packaging solutions for beauty brand owners and contract fillers. With offices and production facilities in Europe, North America, and the Asia Pacific region and a strategic network of manufacturing partners, Quadpack develops bespoke and customised packs for prestige, masstige and mass market customers. For more information, please visit www.quadpack.com.

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