

European Paper Week lança brochura “Sharing Experiences - Promoting Biodiversity in the European Pulp and Paper Industry”

A CEPI (Confederação Europeia das Indústrias Papeleiras) acaba de lançar, no âmbito da 11ª European Paper Week, a brochura “Sharing Experiences - Promoting Biodiversity in the European Pulp and Paper Industry” produzida pelo grupo de trabalho da Biodiversidade que o gPS integrou.

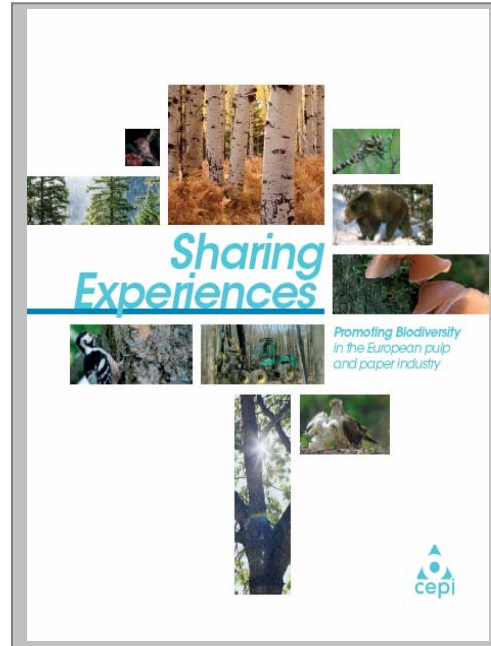
Reforçar o conhecimento sobre biodiversidade e compreender como se pode contribuir para travar a perda de biodiversidade, é um dos maiores desafios que a sociedade actual enfrenta. Foi com este objectivo que a CEPI reuniu um conjunto de especialistas das suas

empresas membros e constituiu, há cerca de dois anos, o Biodiversity Issue Group da CEPI no qual esteve presente o Grupo, através da Engª Paula Guimarães.

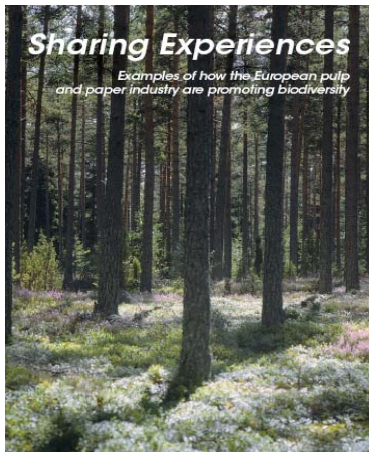
O grupo de trabalho trabalhou em parceria com o Eurosite (uma rede pan-europeia de organizações governamentais e não-governamentais, bem como entidades privadas) com o fim de partilhar as suas experiências e coleccionar exemplos de boas práticas que possam ser usadas como base para alcançar acções concretas no terreno.

No passado dia 18, o produto do trabalho realizado por este grupo – a brochura “Sharing Experiences - Promoting Biodiversity in the European Pulp and Paper Industry” - foi lançado numa sessão que contou com oradores do mais alto nível (Parlamento Europeu, Comissão Europeia, Eurosite e MCPFE) e um conjunto variado de stakeholders na assistência.

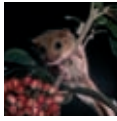
A iniciativa foi alvo dos maiores elogios, tendo a representante do Eurosite realçado a sua surpresa positiva pelo alcance e qualidade de acções e trabalhos em curso pelas empresas em prol da biodiversidade, congratulando-se com a parceria estabelecida e os resultados alcançados.



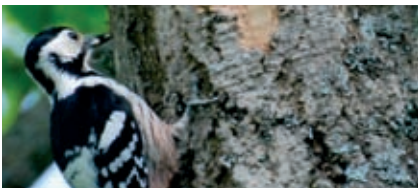
Da brochura fazem parte três exemplos de boas práticas relativas a Portugal, e aplicáveis a várias regiões, que ilustram acções levadas a cabo pelo Grupo Portucel Soporcel na prática. O grupo de trabalho tenciona, agora, dinamizar e potenciar as possibilidades da utilização desta ferramenta, trazendo valor e catapultando positivamente a imagem das indústrias europeias da fileira da pasta e do papel.



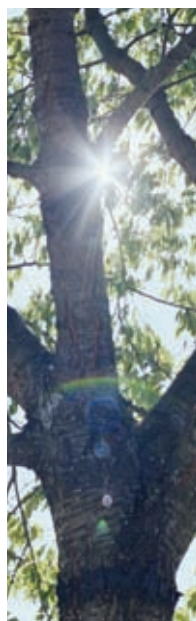
Por fim, importa ainda salientar que a impressão desta brochura foi feita em papel offset, certificado pelo FSC, cedido pelo Grupo.



Sharing Experiences



Promoting Biodiversity in the European pulp and paper industry



Forest plantation design

Case from Portugal / Applicable to all biogeographical regions



Background:

In regions where natural and semi-natural forests are scarce or non-existent, planted forests are often the alternative source of raw wood material for industries. Plantation forests now cover 4% of the global forest area and supply one-third of commercial timber, potentially rising to 50% by 2040. In addition to raw material for industry, plantations provide fuel wood, soil and water protection, habitat for biodiversity, restoration of degraded land, carbon sequestration, recreational opportunities and potential use for other livelihoods.

Description of best practice:

In order to safeguard biodiversity in forest plantations there are several design principles that can be applied which can benefit biodiversity at local and landscape level. Best practices include:

- Matching choice of species to soil type to minimize negative impacts on groundwater levels, nutrient status, and the species dependent on them.
- Use selected genotypes based on long term knowledge of its behaviour and adaptation to avoid causing problems with invasive species in the wider landscape.
- Ecological audit and stakeholder consultation on the potential presence of rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats, so that management actions to preserve them are included in the plantation design and management plan.
- Identification and preservation of existing valuable habitats, including patches of natural or semi-natural vegetation within the forest management unit.
- Preservation and enhancement of connectivity

features e.g. riparian strips, protection areas, rocky outcrops, water points and patches of natural and semi-natural vegetation as wildlife corridors (continuous or stepping stones).

- Creating protective buffer zones around watercourses, valuable habitats and other areas of natural vegetation.
- Planning roads, water crossings and other infrastructure to avoid valuable habitats and sensitive soils.
- Provide structural diversity by creating a mosaic at landscape level of different species and clones, age classes, habitats, a network of connectivity features, artificially created discontinuity strips and natural terrain discontinuity.
- Plan operations according to season in order to preserve the biological cycles of relevant fauna (e.g. nesting) and to avoid the negative impacts on soil and water that could jeopardize biodiversity conservation.
- Control of pests and diseases.

Many plantations are now certified to a forest certification standard, thereby verifying sustainable management practices including biodiversity.

What are the benefits for biodiversity?

Good plantation design provides for a greater diversity of species in the plantation, supports natural biodiversity living in and around the plantation, creates connectivity and provides better ecosystem stability.

Who is implementing the practice?

Forest owners, forest managers and forest planners in cooperation with local stakeholders.

Fire prevention

Case from Portugal / Applicable to the Mediterranean region



Background:

Every year, some 45,000 forest fires covering half a million hectares break out in Europe. Fires cause considerable damage in terms of loss of life and in economic and environmental terms through the destruction of forests and the fauna and flora in them. The European Environment Agency has identified fire prevention as one management measure to improve biodiversity in European forests. The vegetation in the Mediterranean region is adapted to fire and fire cycles can therefore be managed. In managing forest plantations, the choice is between having a small and low intensity fire with little disruption to biodiversity, or a big, intensive fire, with severe consequences for biodiversity. Wise old foresters used to say “using fire as a tool means that you are the boss, instead of being the employee on an inconvenient day”.

Description of the best practice:

Prescribed fire is a tool that is used to reduce the vegetation ‘fuel’ load in specific locations. Good planning and implementation requires application prior to the ‘fire season’. For that purpose it is important to have in place a fire prevention plan that covers:

- Trained personnel prepared and ready to act;
- Equipment functional and ready for fire control;
- Identifying and designing prescribed burn patches/strips in the landscape to reduce fire propagation speed;

- Timing for when the meteorological conditions are suitable for burning vegetation in a cool environment;
- Specialized surveillance and communications tools;
- Planned intervention and water spots;
- Readiness for the unexpected.

If fire prevention fails, fire fighting steps must be initiated, but this can only happen following detection and adequate resources must also be allocated to monitoring.

This practice is to be used by specialists only, under very well controlled conditions, so operators should only use it under a specific programme of the company or the national authorities. Yet, training and raising awareness on fire effects, fire prevention and action on fire detection are very useful as complementary attitudes to avoid severe fire impacts.

What are the benefits for biodiversity?

As summer forest fires, in the Mediterranean region, can be a severe abiotic threat to biodiversity, this practice is put in place to prevent and control fire propagation and reduce the magnitude of its impacts on biodiversity at local and landscape level.

Who is implementing the practice?

Forest owners and managers in cooperation with the national authorities for forestry and conservation.

Bonelli's Eagle

Case from Portugal / Applicable to the Mediterranean region



Background:

In the last few decades, nearly 50% of the Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*) population has been lost in coastal Mediterranean France and Spain, and it has even become locally extinct in other Iberian regions. It is one of the few birds of prey experiencing a marked decline in the EU. Due to this strong decrease in numbers, the Bonelli's Eagle is considered a threatened species in Europe, including in Portugal, and it holds a high priority conservation status.

In the specific case of the Southern Portugal Bonelli's Eagle population, it is absolutely fundamental to ensure its conservation, since not only is it one of the few growing populations in the Mediterranean region, but also because it possesses unique ecological features in Europe, notably the almost exclusive use of trees for nesting, in both forest and semi-steppe habitats.

Description of best practice:

The high priority conservation status of the Bonelli's Eagle and its uniqueness has resulted in an ongoing programme as part of the LIFE/Nature Programme with the main goal of contributing to the conservation of Bonelli's Eagles, at both national and European levels, by acting upon the threats which affect the tree nesting population in Southern Portugal.

This project is being supported by several Portuguese co-sponsors, including this pulp and paper company, and civil society. In addition to co-financing the project,

risk assessments and specific management actions are being integrated into the planning and operations of the company to guarantee that this population continues to increase. Such actions include participating in the identification and protection of nests in the forest plantations, maintaining close contact and exchange of information with the project team and, together with specialists, redesigning and adapting forest harvesting operations to include large buffer zones around nests to avoid disturbance and preserve the favourable nesting conditions.

What are the benefits for biodiversity?

This project is safeguarding the conditions (e.g. nesting) required to protect and promote the increasing population of the Bonelli's Eagle, a species of high priority conservation status. It is also gathering information for population counts in the potential distribution area and provides data to support the confirmation of territories, including the redefinition Special Protection Areas limits or the creation of new ones.

Who is implementing the practice?

Forest owners, forest managers and harvesting contractors under the coordination of specialists and in dialogue with local communities.