

## China is sinner and saint of paper industry

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'Could do better' seems a harsh verdict on a country that has single-handedly revitalised the paper recycling industry. But when that country is as large as China is, even a small improvement could have a global benefit.

A report by Forest Trends identifies China as an unlikely force for environmental good. Since 2002, the country has recycled 65 million tonnes of the world's waste paper, and in 2006 alone it saved 54.3 million tonnes of trees from being pulped.

The 2006 Stern Report noted that "the loss of natural forests contributes more to annual global emissions than the transport sector".

"Before China became interested in using waste paper as a fibre source, the market was really flat and hadn't changed for years," says Luke Bailey of Forest Trends.

### ***Unsustainable imports***

But the report also highlights a new trend in China's paper industry. Not content with being the world's wastepaper basket, China also imports wood pulp to produce high-quality printing paper.

Although around two-thirds of that wood pulp is sourced from sustainable forests in the Americas and Europe, the rest comes from unsustainable sources in Indonesia and Eastern Russia.

Forest Trends wants to see an end to that practice, and believes that pressurising China, rather than Indonesia or Russia, can lead to change.

"Because it's in a central position, it can influence the countries that supply it, as well as being sensitive to the markets it supplies," Bailey says. "Targeting Indonesia would simply raise the price [of wood pulp] and make it cheaper for another country to import illegally to China. By going for the nexus, we're hoping to affect the broader market."

The report recommends that Chinese paper companies should adopt systems, such as the one used by the [Forest Stewardship Council \(FSC\)](#), to track pulp and pulpwood all along the supply chain in order to verify it comes from legal and sustainable forests.