BACKGROUND BRIEF

WOOD FROM FINLAND

PURPOSE

This document provides background information to help journalists, stakeholders and international audiences understand the context behind Wood from Finland and the EU Geographical Indication (GI).

It is intended to explain the characteristics of Finnish forests, the Finnish sawmilling industry and the origin of Finnish sawn timber. The document is not intended to promote the programme but to provide factual background information that supports accurate reporting.

FINLAND – A FOREST NATION

Forests cover approximately 75 percent of Finland's land area, making Finland one of the most forested countries in Europe.

Forests have shaped Finland's economy, culture and society for centuries. Today, the forest sector remains one of Finland's most important export industries and provides the renewable raw material for a wide range of wood-based products.

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Finnish forests are managed under national legislation and internationally recognised sustainability standards.

Annual forest growth exceeds annual harvesting, and the total growing stock has increased over the long term.

The objective of Finnish forest management is to balance economic, ecological and social sustainability while ensuring forests remain productive for future generations.

WHY GROWING CONDITIONS MATTER

The story of Wood from Finland begins in the forest.

Finland's northern location creates harsh growing conditions and a growing season of approximately one hundred days each year.

Because trees grow slowly, the wood develops distinctive characteristics. Together with its Finnish origin and reputation, these characteristics form the basis for the EU Geographical Indication.

- Dense wood structure
- Relatively small and fewer knots than many faster-grown softwood species
- High strength-to-weight ratio
- Excellent bending strength

FINNISH SAWN TIMBER INDUSTRY

Finland produces approximately 12 million cubic metres of sawn timber annually.

Around 80 percent of production is exported to more than 70 countries.

Finland is the world's seventh-largest producer of sawn timber and the fourth-largest exporter.

The Finnish sawmilling industry processes only Finnish-grown pine and spruce. Industrial-scale sawmills use exclusively domestic raw material, ensuring transparent and verifiable procurement throughout the supply chain.

WHY THE EU GRANTED GI PROTECTION

The European Union recognised that Finland's growing conditions, together with the characteristics and reputation of Finnish sawn timber, justify protection under the Geographical Indication system.

The GI protects the designation Wood from Finland and ensures that products using the designation comply with the registered product specification.

The GI does not certify product quality.

It verifies origin and protects the registered designation.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Wood from Finland is not:

- a quality certification
- a sustainability certification
- a trademark
- a marketing campaign

Wood from Finland is:

- an EU Geographical Indication
- a protected geographical designation
- a verified indication of Finnish origin
- a designation reserved for products complying with the registered product specification

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FINNISH FORESTS

Who owns Finland's forests?

More than 600,000 Finns own forest, representing more than ten percent of Finland's population of approximately 5.6 million people.

Around 60 percent of Finland's forests are privately owned. The remainder is owned by the State, companies and other organisations.

Private forest ownership has shaped Finnish forestry for generations and contributes to the long-term management of forest resources.

Why are forests harvested?

Harvesting is a normal part of sustainable forest management.

During a forest's life cycle, forests are harvested several times. Thinning removes dead, damaged or suppressed trees, giving healthier trees more space, light and nutrients to grow. Final harvesting is followed by regeneration, ensuring that a new forest begins to grow.

Harvesting also provides renewable raw material for construction, wood products, packaging, paper and other bio-based products.

Are all forest harvests clear-cuts?

Finnish forestry uses several harvesting methods depending on the site, tree species and management objectives.

Clear-cutting is one of the regeneration methods used in even-aged forest management. Each year, clear-cuts account for approximately 0.5–0.7 percent of Finland's total forest area.

Do Finland's forests continue to decrease?

Finland's forest area has remained stable for decades.

Annual forest growth exceeds annual harvesting, and the total growing stock has increased over the long term.

Does using wood increase climate change?

Growing trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere throughout their growth.

When trees stop growing, their ability to absorb additional carbon also ends. The carbon stored in the wood remains stored throughout the product's life cycle.

Using wood in long-life products such as buildings stores carbon for decades and can reduce the use of more carbon-intensive materials.

Is Wood from Finland traceable?

Wood from Finland products are manufactured in Finland from Finnish-grown pine and spruce in accordance with the registered product specification.

Industrial-scale sawmills use exclusively domestic raw material. The wood procurement chain is transparent and verifiable, ensuring that the origin of the raw material can be demonstrated throughout the supply chain.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, please refer to:

- Questions & Answers
- Product Fact Sheet
- Product Specification
- Presentation Materials
- www.woodfromfinland.fi

REFERENCES

The information presented in this document is based on publicly available information from the following organisations and publications:

- European Commission – Geographical Indications
- Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)
- Finnish Forest Centre
- Statistics Finland
- Finnish Sawmills Association
- Wood from Finland Product Specification

WOOD FROM FINLAND

HARSH NORTHERN CONDITIONS → SHORT GROWING SEASON → SLOW GROWTH → DISTINCTIVE WOOD CHARACTERISTICS → EU GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION