

Embargo for distribution until December 8 - 9.00 (CET)

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How green are bamboo products?

New scientific 'lifecycle assessment' reveals that many bamboo products and their processes are carbon-neutral

PARIS, December 9, 2015. A [new report released today at the COP21 Paris Climate Conference](#), presents a scientifically validated process to assess the green credentials of products made from bamboo. It shows how items made from this versatile plant can be carbon-neutral – or even carbon-negative – over their lifecycle. This is a tool that producers can use to certify their green credentials for the increasing number of bamboo products on the market.

The report uses a Lifecycle and Carbon Footprint Analysis, to demonstrate how evidence can be produced to measure bamboo's environmental impact for the manufacture of durable products. This analysis evaluated bamboo flooring, decking, cladding, panels and beams. It shows that these products have a carbon-neutral footprint – after production and processing in China, transport to consumers in The Netherlands, and incineration at end-of-life for energy production.

Because of its fast growth, sustainable harvesting, and wood-like properties, bamboo is widely perceived as an attractive green alternative to other materials that are used in the building and interior decoration sectors.

But some argue that the environmental cost of production combined with the fact that bamboo resources are located far from Western consumer markets, requiring long-distance transport, mean that environmental costs outweigh these products' green benefits "If bamboo business is to expand to reach its full potential, especially in developing countries, the industry needs to transparently demonstrate its environmental performance. A robust lifecycle assessment provides the evidence that consumers, markets and regulators are asking for," says Hans Friederich, Director General of the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR).

The study was done in partnership between Netherlands-based MOSO International, Europe's leading producer of industrial bamboo products, Delft University in The Netherlands, and INBAR – the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan.

The report's lead author, Dr. Pablo van der Lugt, stresses that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to assessing product lifecycle. Each product requires its own analysis. "Our findings show that the carbon footprint of the bamboo products we surveyed in this scenario can be carbon-neutral. This is due to the significant reforestation and afforestation bamboo in China, that increases the carbon stock in forests, and the substitution of fossil fuels with bamboo at the end of the product's lifecycle, based on waste disposal standards and scenarios in the Netherlands."

Rene Zaal, CEO of MOSO International comments: "For us the Lifecycle Analysis method is an excellent way to continually improve the environmental performance of our production process. The results of this assessment show that we are moving in the right direction, and that bamboo is a fast-growing, environmentally friendly alternative to increasingly scarce tropical hardwood."

The results presented in the report provide a framework to inspire other bamboo producers to use the approach to assess their environmental performance, and reduce the environmental impacts of their products. Lifecycle analysis also informs policymakers about the sustainability of bamboo products and the agroforestry systems that supply them. It informs policy shaping processes to encourage bamboo and rattan to be specified in national and international policies and investment plans.

As major wood-consuming companies are pledging zero deforestation by 2020, many are looking to bamboo as a wood replacement for furniture, fiber and other products. Armed with scientific validation provided by a lifecycle study, they can credibly validate for consumers the green benefits of their use of bamboo.

These findings were presented by the partners today at the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, during the INBAR session for the Global Assessment of Bamboo and Rattan (GABAR) – an initiative to improve knowledge on all aspects of bamboo and rattan for development.

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Notes to editors:

Read the report: [Environmental Impact of Industrial Bamboo Products: Lifecycle Assessment and Carbon Sequestration](#).

Details of the Report

The results of the report were determined through a Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA) and carbon footprint analysis, widely recognized methodologies following international standards to determine the environmental impact of a product over its full life cycle. The LCA was done following International standards ISO 14040 and 14044. The capture and storage (sequestration) of CO₂ has also been taken into account.

The plant also helps mitigate climate change, sequestering carbon at rates similar to - or higher than - many tree species and thrives on problem soils, making it ideal for restoring degraded landscapes. Additionally, it provides livelihoods to communities at risk from climate change – bamboo has some 10,000 documented uses, ranging from charcoal to fiber and cellulose, engineered industrial parts, textiles, furniture, construction materials and household items.

ABOUT INBAR

The International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) is the multilateral organization of 41 Member States for the promotion of bamboo and rattan. INBAR supports its members to include bamboo and rattan in their sustainable development action plans and green economy strategies. It promotes innovative ways of using bamboo and rattan to improve rural livelihoods, protect the environment, address climate change and issues of international bamboo and rattan trade and standards. INBAR connects a global network of partners from government, private and NGO sectors to promote a global agenda for sustainable development using bamboo and rattan. www.inbar.int

ABOUT GABAR

The Global Assessment of Bamboo and Rattan (GABAR) is a partnership of INBAR and its 41 member states with a range of national and international partners. The initiative is planned as a \$100 million programme which will deliver a full range of support to countries, including the global assessment and inventory of bamboo and rattan, knowledge sharing, capacity building, policy shaping and technical advice. www.inbar.int/gabar

ABOUT MOSO

MOSO International is specialised in the development of innovative, sustainable products made from bamboo for indoor and outdoor applications, such as flooring, walls, ceilings, joinery, decking and cladding. MOSO is a global player headquartered in Zwaag (near Amsterdam), with branch offices in China (Hangzhou), Hong Kong and Spain (Barcelona). With its long-time experience and focus on product excellence, innovation and sustainability, MOSO has developed itself to become the global A-brand in industrial bamboo products.

www.moso.eu