



Moving Towards Fossil-Free Plastics – Finland Offers Unique Bio-based Innovations to Replace Traditional Plastic Packaging

WED, JUN 07, 2023 14:00 CET

Consumers are increasingly demanding more sustainable packaging options for the goods they purchase. To meet this shift in consumer demand, the packaging industry is moving away from fossil-based raw materials and increasingly adopting bio-based packaging. Finland offers a wide variety of new and innovative bio- and byproduct-based materials to replace traditional plastic packaging.



With 75% of Finland covered in forest, Finland's wood-based industries have paired long-held forestry traditions with innovative new uses for the timber industry. A functional ecosystem built on close cooperation between businesses and the public sector and including strong R&D programs have created a unique offering in recycling processes and bio-based solutions, such as using wood pulp and fiber to create new materials. Finland's expertise covers the complete value chain from PEFC certified forests to implementation-ready applications as well as recycling and reuse of wood fibers.

Finnish solutions' sustainability is based on certified forest resources, sustainable raw materials, engineering expertise, high product quality requirements, and pioneering legislation and standardization. Advanced new bio-based products and materials ranging from cross-laminated timber to 100% renewable diesel are already produced on a commercial scale. Presently, different fiber-based materials account for 69% of Finland's packaging exports. In Finland, several new factories and mills are under planning, and an increasing number of startups and established global companies with manufacturing sites in key global locations.

People around the world care more than ever about the climate and nature, and there is an increasing sense of feeling personally impacted. Based on Boston Consulting Group's study 67% of consumers find it important that the products they buy are in recyclable packages and 73% of consumers are willing to pay more for eco-friendly packaging. Consumers believe that companies should make commitments to reduce their carbon footprints and provide more sustainable solutions, and many people say those commitments will influence where they buy goods and services.

Companies selling consumer goods want to answer to the demand coming from their customers that the business needs to be run sustainably, but the challenge is that brands find it difficult to source good material to replace plastic in their packaging.

However, the overall trend is moving towards minimizing packaging waste. New regulations at both the regional and national levels are being updated to enforce stricter guidelines for packaging. For example, by 2025 65% of all packaging in the EU must be recyclable, and 70% by 2030. Suppliers must respond by adopting bio-material offerings along with their existing fossil-based packaging to offer the best, and most sustainable solutions for their customers. This applies to multinational companies headquartered in the US but doing business in Europe, and many of the global brands are aiming to have 100% recyclable packaging in the EU by 2025.

"Companies' reputations are on the line here and therefore today's sustainability-driven brands are looking for alternatives to reduce the use of plastic in their packaging. Finland offers packaging solutions, which are mainly based on sustainably produced wood biomass and pulp as well as other fibers and recyclable materials, to replace traditional plastic packaging. Our Finnish companies are known for the high quality and the wide spectrum of products meeting different industry-specific needs and most of these products are already available internationally," explains Heidi Kokki, Sustainable Packaging Lead at Business Finland.

What is innovative and sustainable packaging?

The packaging material is recycled, or it is made of sustainably sourced raw materials or highly innovative, new material sources. The production process is also sustainable. The design secures and maintains product quality and optimizes transport, handling, and storage. The appearance and quality of the material promotes high brand value. Disposal options for packaging materials include recycling, reuse, composting and biodegradation.

ATTACHMENT

Innovative and sustainable packaging solutions from Finland (PDF)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Elina Fahlgren, Senior Advisor, Business Finland, +6505079178, elina.fahlgren@businessfinland.fi (<mailto:elina.fahlgren@businessfinland.fi>)

Salla Salovaara, Head of International PR and Media, Business Finland, +358 40 526 0100, salla.salovaara@businessfinland.fi (<mailto:salla.salovaara@businessfinland.fi>)

ABOUT

Business Finland is the Finnish government organization for innovation funding and trade, travel, and investment promotion. Business Finland's over 760 experts work in over 40 offices globally and in 16 regional offices around Finland. Business Finland is part of the Team Finland network. www.businessfinland.com (<http://www.businessfinland.com/>)

The Sustainable Packaging Export Project (<https://www.businessfinland.fi/en/for-finnish-customers/services/programs/sustainable-packaging>) supports Finnish packaging companies in entering the international markets by providing market advice, export activities, PR support and funding.