

## 5. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS



### 5.1 General

The wood-based panel manufacturing industry has been confronted with a number of challenges, in both technical and public relations forms, to demonstrate the environmental credentials of its products and their basic constituent materials, wood and the various binders used in some types of products. Both professional designers and industrial users of wood are aware, at least in general terms, of the environmentally sustainable nature of this uniquely renewable raw material : this awareness extends to different phases of the wood life-cycle, in particular:

- the **sustainable management of forests** and other sources of virgin wood as a prime input to wood-based product manufacture, and
- the **post-forest life-cycle characteristics** of wood as it progresses through processing to the finished product, including the nature and environmental suitability of reclaimed post-consumer wood as a **recycled** and reprocessed raw material.

Each of these phases impacts environmentally on the community and on the individual consumer, so that the control of wood in manufacture is essential for the purposes of:

- optimising the standards of environmentally sustainable management and
- eliminating environmentally or ecologically undesirable features from processed wood materials and products.

These aims of course overlap with other objectives, notably the protection of **health and safety** and achievement of the product's **fitness for purpose**. The tools of control in all these respects are pre-normative research, physical analysis, regulations, standards and management systems based on recognised environmental and quality control policies.