



TREE OF LIFE

Holmen is one of Sweden's largest forest owners and produces paperboard, paper, wood products, and renewable energy from water and wind. President and CEO Henrik Sjölund explains why managing forests responsibly is vital in the fight against climate change.

Henrik Sjölund

CEO, President @ Holmen



Holmen's story starts in Sweden's forests – taking care of the forest lies at the core of everything the company does. For every tree it harvests, it plants at least two new ones. These trees bind carbon dioxide as they grow so they're invaluable to the environment. Swedish forests bind almost as much carbon as the total emissions of Sweden. The carbon captured by these trees over the years is locked into the wood products used to build houses, for example, proving that sustainable forestry is key to successfully managing climate change.

Big job

Not only is Henrik Sjölund the President and CEO of Holmen, he's also the Chairman of the Swedish Forest Industries Federation after being elected in April this year. The federation's members were responsible for 10% of Sweden's net export value of wood in 2019. Henrik has his work cut out with many challenges currently facing the industry, but there are also opportunities. "Consumer demand is shrinking and we are presently experiencing a general decline in economic growth affecting the whole business community," he says. "At the same time, the forest-based industries produce products highly essential for people's everyday life rang-

ing from wood for climate smart construction to hygiene products and packaging for pharmaceuticals, food, and transport. We are living in a world with increasing globalisation and urbanisation, and to secure jobs, export, and societal welfare, we need to keep our total forest-based value chains running – this is without any doubt priority number one, both in the short and long term."

Everything Holmen harvests is put to use as wooden products for construction or carpentry, as cardboard or paper for print, or as bio energy. The raw materials used for making pa-

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per and paperboard are the parts that are not used when making other products; treetops or small trees from thinning, which are debarked, washed, and ground into wood chips and fresh fibres. The long spruce fibre is ideal for paper production as it is the reason paper can be manufactured with a light weight and recycled. This makes it possible to significantly cut emissions, distribution, and consumption. Two of Holmen's paper mills, Hallsta and Braviken in Sweden, make paper for magazines, newspapers, books, and other printed products. The third Swedish mill in Iggesund produces a strong and durable paperboard used by many of the world's premium brands for their boxing. The company is always striving to better its work in all that it does, from production and transport to cooperation with its partners. Holmen wants to be more sustainable and efficient, and develop new products that create advantages for its customers around the world.

"One of the most important objectives for the Swedish Forest Industries Federation is to make politicians understand our value-chains and our businesses and to define reasonable terms for sustainable forest management," adds Henrik. "Our sector and the renewable resources we are based on are pre-conditions for the European Union to build a climate neutral so-



Big rollers: Holmen's paper is responsibly sourced

ciety. We need to use our forests more, not less, to be able to achieve sustainable climate change mitigation. This is the most important opportunity but also a challenge for our sector.”

Holmen produces paper and board that makes a difference, from the renewable raw materials in the forests, to smart and efficient papers that save money and emissions that later can be recycled up to seven times before ending up as bio energy. The company is one of Sweden's largest forest owners and believes that “the future grows in the forest,” so much so that it has teamed up with Swedish innovation and technology development company SweTree Technologies. Together, they are creating a pilot plant for automated, large-scale elite forest plants production. Other leading forest companies are also onboard, including Stora Enso, Sveaskog, and Södra. SweTree Technologies is investing \$5.3 million in the project and has been developing the technology based on somatic embryogenesis (an artificial process in which a plant or embryo is derived from a single somatic cell). This leap forward means it is possible to produce more plants originating from the best forest specimens, which is better for the forest economy, bioeconomy, and environment, because such trees grow faster and capture more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The method also boosts development of trees' resistance against diseases and pests.

HOLMEN'S KEY BUSINESS AREAS

- Sustainable forestry is conducted on over a million hectares of productive land owned by Holmen
- The annual harvest amounts to about three million cubic metres
- Paperboard in the premium consumer packaging segment
- Paper for magazines, books and advertising. The two Swedish mills produce a combined total of one million tonnes per year
- Wood products for the joinery and construction industries. The annual production at three sawmills amounts to just under one million cubic metres
- The biproducts are used at Holmen's cardboard and paper mills
- Every year, renewable energy production from hydro and wind power amounts to over one TWh

“We have now started the design of the pilot plant. It will be built in close proximity to SweTree Technologies' existing premises in Umea, Sweden, and completed within a year. The following year, it is envisaged that the pilot plant will run and be used to verify the technology. The goal of the pilot plant is to get a decision basis for a first full-scale commercial plant with capacity of 20 million spruce plants per year,” says Christofer Rhén, CEO of SweTree Technologies.

Courage and commitment

Holmen employs around 3,000 people in 13 countries, with 2,300 based in Sweden. Just as the company is involved in the entire ecosystem from seeding to plank, its workforce spans a range of professional roles, including engineers, hunters, machinery operators, project managers, and sales representatives. Holmen's corporate culture is characterised by courage, commitment, and responsibility, which gives its employees the opportunity to influence and develop. Being a decentralised organisation means Holmen can make quick decisions and shorten the distance from idea to implementation, while it is actively working to increase the proportion of female managers, the number of which has doubled in the last decade.

Holmen's business concept is to add value to the forest. Healthier, more prosperous forests make the world a better place. [🔗](#)

We take on our role as a partner for a sustainable future

Serving the global Paper and Board industry with sustainable and renewable mineral solutions as well as chemical additives has been our core business at Omya for decades.

We innovate to turn headwinds into tailwinds that increase our customers' competitiveness and resource efficiency.

