

Agro / Paper and Cardboard



Why invest in Argentina?

Argentina is the third largest economy in Latin America, with a GDP of USD 445 billion, and the third largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the region. With a population of 45 million people, 60% of which is under 35 years old, it has preferential access to the main South American markets, which altogether have about 295 million inhabitants.

At the global level, it is the eighth largest country, with over 50% of arable land. It has the second largest unconventional gas reserve and the fourth largest unconventional oil reserve in the world, as well as an extensive maritime platform of over 1.78 million km², which is rich in energy and fishing resources.

In terms of renewable resources, it is among the six countries with the highest wind consistency, with an annual average capacity factor of 20%. It also has great potential for the development of solar energy, especially in the Andean and sub-Andean regions, where global horizontal irradiation (GHI) ranges between 2,400 and 2,700 kWh/m².

Moreover, it has great potential for mining development due to its over 705,000 km² of promising mining areas, its long tradition in the production of gold, silver, lead, aluminium and copper, and its positioning as a new global leader in the exploitation of lithium—the country has the third largest global lithium reserve and is the fourth largest global producer.

Argentina is characterised by a diversified economy that produces and exports agrifood, manufactured products, minerals and energy, knowledge-based services, culture and art, among others. Throughout the country, multiple activities with a high potential for investment and growth have been developed.

The country is internationally renowned for its leadership in the production and export of products such as soybean oil, yerba mate, utility vehicles, maize and wheat grains, raw peanuts, insecticides, powdered milk, beef, lemon essential oils, black tea, shrimp, pears, sunflower oil and combed wool.

Argentina does not only stand out for its natural resources. With a dynamic scientific community, its human talent has shown its capacity in a wide range of sectors. Among Latin American countries, it ranks third in the number of academic articles published, third in patent applications and first in the Global Skills Index¹ ranking for Data Science.

¹ The Global Skills Index (GSI) 2019 is the first index conducted by Coursera, an online education platform with a large skills database of 38 million students and over 3,000 courses, specialisations and undergraduate courses of the main universities available. For each country, Coursera calculates a GSI that measures the average skills expertise of the platform's students.

Economic activities by region

NOA •

- Sugar
- Tobacco
- Viticulture
- Bovine meat
- Mining
- Petroleum and refinery
- Textile and metal-mechanic industry
- Automotive and trucks industry
- Inbound tourism

NEW CUYO •

- Viticulture
- Stone fruits peach, plum and, to a lower extent, pome fruits
- Olive
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- University education
- Inbound tourism
- Domestic tourism

PATAGONIA •

- Pome fruit, apples, and pears
- Viticulture, Alto Valle del Río Negro
- Fine fruits
- Ovine, wool, and meat
- Mining
- Textile, aluminum, and other industries
- Oil and gas, mainly
- Alternative energies
- Inbound tourism

NEA •

- Yerba mate and tea
- Citrus fruit
- Bovine meat
- Forestry and paper industry
- Oil and gas (weak)
- Inbound and domestic

AMBA

- Food industry
- Textile industry
- Automotive, metalworking
- Refinery
- Petrochemical, chemical and plastic
- Financial services
- Business services
- Logistics trading
- Software
- University education
- Inbound and domestic tourism

CENTRO •

- Cereals and oilseeds
- Beef, poultry, and pork
- Citrus fruit
- Iron and steel, automotive, metal-mechanic industries
- Refinery, petrochemical, chemical and plastic industries
- Software
- University education
- Biotechnology
- Business services
- Logistics trading

Infrastructure

 Railway network	 Maritime container traffic	 Flight departures	 Airports and ports	 National and provincial routes	 Ducts
17,866 km N.º 2 in LATAM N.º 13 in the world	~2 M TEU N.º 6 in LATAM	163,000 flights all over the world . N.º 4 in LATAM	Airports: 55 Ports: 101	500,000 km National routes: 37,500 km	Gas pipeline: 16,000 km Oil pipeline: 1,200 km

With longstanding policies of universal access to education and local scientific development, Argentina is the second country in the region with the highest public spending on Education (6% of GDP) and Science & Technology (0.6%). It should also be noted that Argentina is the second country in Latin America with the most unicorns (a total of 11) and the region's leading software exporter (50% of the sector's exports are destined to the USA).

The country offers benefits in terms of human resources and cultural and gender diversity policies for investors:

- The Knowledge Economy Act promotes activity in the sector through income tax reliefs (60% for micro and small companies, 40% for medium-sized companies and 20% for large companies).
- Every year, more than 150,000 professionals graduate from college.
- It is the Latin American country with the highest English language proficiency, which represents a comparative advantage in terms of service exports.
- It ranks ninth in the World Economic Forum's global ranking for leading efforts to encourage inclusiveness, equity and creativity in firms.
- It has the lowest gender gap in South America, and it ranks fifth in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Moreover, Argentina is a member of the selected group of countries that harness atomic energy for peaceful ends, building small and medium-sized modular reactors.

Thanks to these developments, Argentina can export to 170 countries around the world, achieving strong brand recognition for the quality of its products (meat, wine, oil, etc.), technology (satellites, turbines, reactors, etc.) and services (software, professionals, etc.). The country is also the main tourist destination in South America, with 7.4 million international arrivals in 2019.

Lastly, the development of maritime, aerial, rail and road infrastructure offer advantages that allow the country to access any part of the world as a competitive economy.

The AAICI has prepared these sectoral reports in order to facilitate access to essential information as well as to advantages, benefits and opportunities for those investing in Argentina—one of the countries with the greatest potential to attract FDI in the world.

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ADt	Air Dry Metric Tonne
CERFOAR - PEFC	Argentina System of Forest Certification - Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
COPSI	Compañía Papelera Sinsacate
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GHI	Global Horizontal Irradiance
GPV	Gross Production Value
GVA	Gross Value Added
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
IERAL	National Institute of Argentine and Latin American Affairs
INDEC	National Institute of Statistics and Censuses
INTI	National Institute of Industrial Technology
IRAM	Argentine Standardization and Certification Institute
LATAM	Latin America
MTEySS	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security
OEDE	Employment and Business Dynamics Observatory
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USD	United States Dollars

The natural competitive advantages, the wide forest cultivable areas, the long productive tradition and a national and international demanding market give Argentina the necessary conditions to attract investments in the paper and cardboard sector.

The paper and cardboard sector has many natural forest resources at competitive prices, which is a great advantage for the expansion of the sector. The expansion of e-commerce has increased demand in the paper and cardboard sector, which will continue to grow even more in the upcoming years.

The cellulose, paper and cardboard complex comprises 849 companies generating over 32,500 job positions, a number that represents 2.8% of total employment in the manufacturing industry. Additionally, this complex represents 1.4% of the total gross production value (GPV) and the gross value added (GVA) of the manufacturing industry. The sector is mainly oriented towards the domestic market, with exports barely over 10% of the GPV.

Argentina's paper production capacity is around 1.8 million annual tonnes, with an average apparent consumption rate of around 2.4 million tonnes (2018). This means that local net production does not cover total demand, making imports necessary—particularly in the container supply market.

The complex has a number of advantages associated with agroecological conditions, which allow for a quick and voluminous development of plantations within a sustainable management. There is a long productive tradition in the country, focused on manufacturing with renewable resources from biodegradable, recyclable and environment-friendly products. There are also opportunities to move forward with import substitution and in terms of exports, mainly in the packaging paper sector, where there is also a growing domestic and international demand.

The cellulose, paper and cardboard complex offers investment opportunities that will allow its contribution in regional and economic development, as well as the sectoral commercial deficit balance, complying with the highest environmental care standards.

Long productive tradition

Large-scale production in the cellulose, paper and cardboard complex in Argentina originated in the 1960s as a response to the import substitution policies.

The country is home to world-class international companies that have favoured both the development of technical and human capacities, and the spreading of better cellulose and paper manufacturing practices, comparable to those followed in traditionally manufacturing countries.

Competitive advantages

Argentina has agroecological characteristics that provide comparative advantages in forest production, due to the availability of suitable land for forest production as well as the rapid growth of forests. This advantage is equivalent to that of other countries in the region, such as Chile, Brazil and Uruguay, but it is superior to that of the traditionally forested countries in the northern hemisphere.

Demand of packaging products

Packaging products have the potential to keep growing and replace other materials, such as glass, plastic and metal, given the innovations that allow for higher competitiveness due its cost reduction, recycling capacity, lower weight, durability and simpler handling.



Vegetal raw material availability



This province holds Argentina's largest forested area, with almost 530,000 hectares of pine and eucalyptus, and it is the district with the highest growth potential in that segment, with a 3 million hectare area readily available for forest implantation that does not compete against other productions.

Argentina has pine plantations for cellulose long fibre production and eucalyptus plantations for cellulose short fibre production, which are affordable in terms of quantity and cost, especially in the province of Corrientes.

Import substitution

In Argentina, the annual consumption of paper products amounts to around 2.4 million tonnes. However, with a production capacity of 1.8 million tonnes, the local industry is unable to meet demand, which needs to be covered by imports.

For that reason, the country has the possibility to resort to import substitution, mainly of Kraft paper liners for containers and heavyweight Kraft paper for packaging lamination.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SECTOR

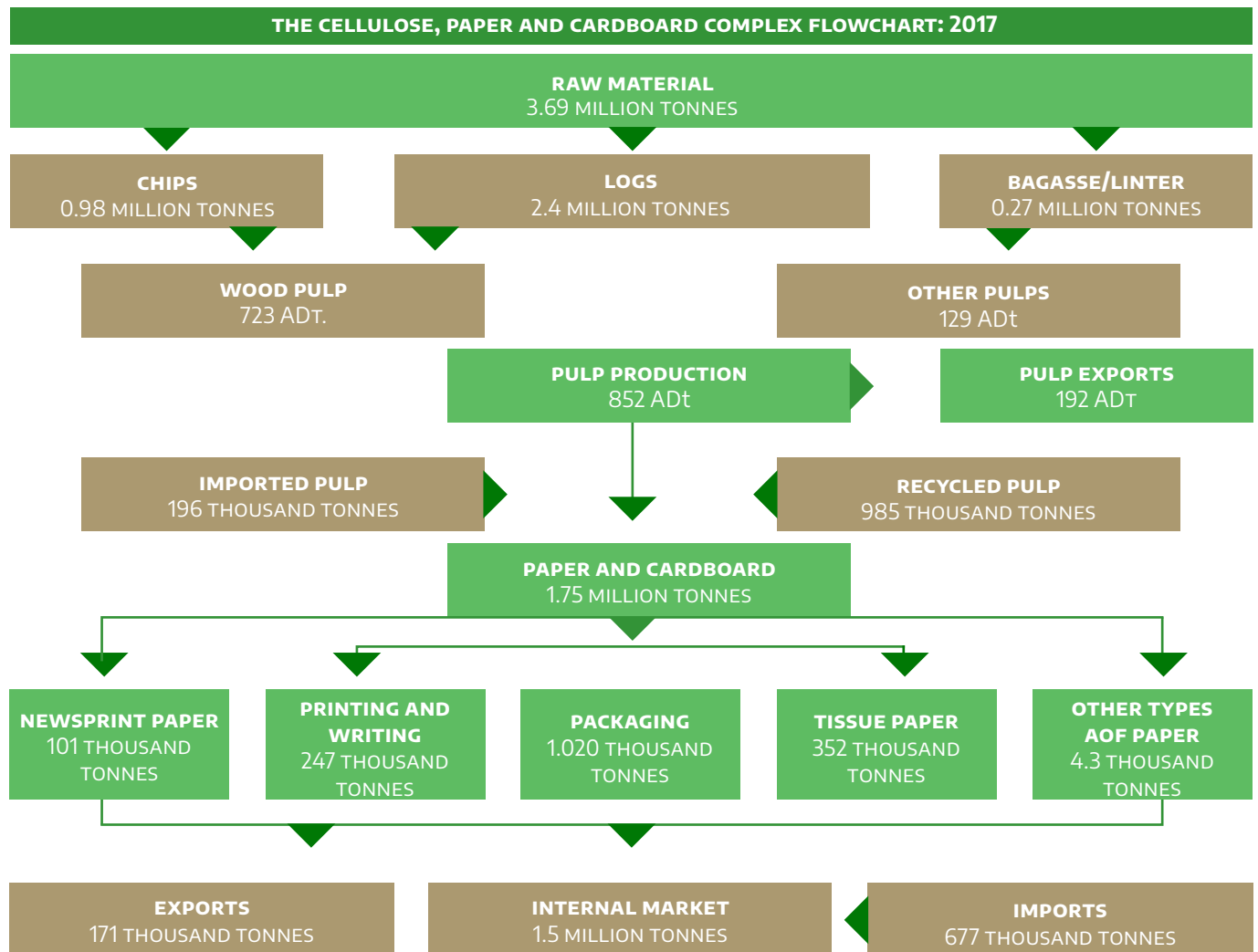
The cellulose, paper and cardboard complex comprises 849 companies generating over 32,653 job positions, a number that represents 2.8% of total employment in the manufacturing industry (OEDE-MTEySS, 2021).

* Data was based on current values in Argentine pesos using the average nominal exchange rate of 2021 found in BCRA's Communication "A" 3,500 (ARS 95.1 to USD 1).

The complex's gross production value (GPV) is close to USD 4.7 billion, which represents almost 1.4% of the global GPV. The gross value added (GVA) is at USD 2.24 billion, which accounts for 3% of the manufacturing activities' VAB (National Accounts – INDEC, 2021*).

The sector is mainly oriented towards the domestic market, with exports barely over 10% of the GPV. Of the USD 430 million exported in 2021, 60% corresponded to the cellulose, paper and cardboard manufacturing sector.

The sector in figures



Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries / Note: ADt stands for Air Dry Metric Tonne.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SECTOR

The cellulose industry uses a variety of raw materials, mainly logs, chips, and other fibres (sugar cane bagasse and cotton linter). Argentina's cellulose production has been stable over the last decades at about 810,000 annual tonnes—approximately 20% of which are exported.

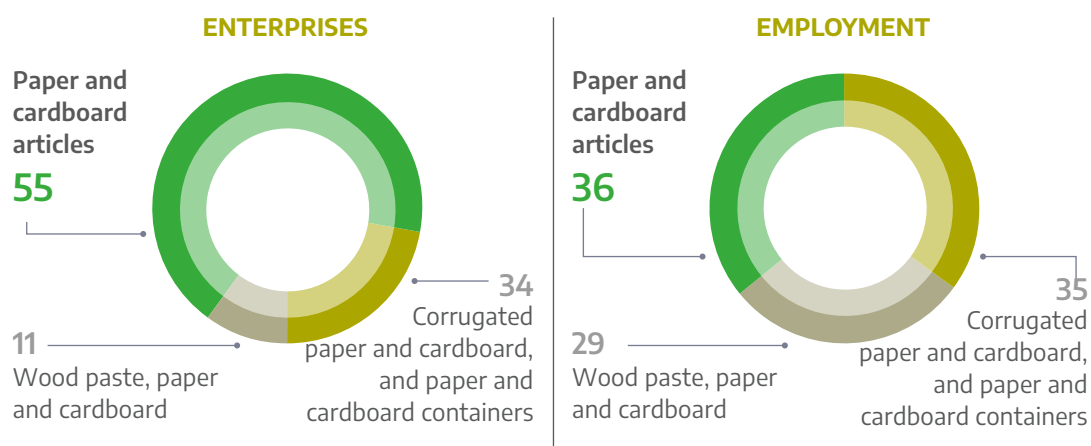
The Chilean capital company Arauco is the only one in the country producing cellulose to supply other companies with this product, with a production capacity of 350.000 tonnes of long fibre. There are 7 other vertically integrated companies that produce cellulose to manufacture their own paper or cardboard.

Argentina's paper production capacity is around 1.8 million annual tonnes, with an average apparent consumption rate of around 2.4 million tonnes. Thus, the exports local net production—around 10%—represents between 60% and 70% of the local demand. The rest is covered by imports, especially of Kraft paper liner used in the container market, and heavyweight Kraft paper for packaging lamination.

The raw material for paper production in the country is forest fibre (chips and logs), bagasse and recycled material. Recycled paper represents, on average, almost 60% of the raw material used in paper production, but it is over 75% in the cardboard, posterboard, corrugated cardboard and pulp-moulded trays. The percentage of paper recycled in the country is in line with the world average and it keeps growing year after year.

Enterprises and employment in the cellulose, paper and cardboard complex by sector

Figures in percentage.



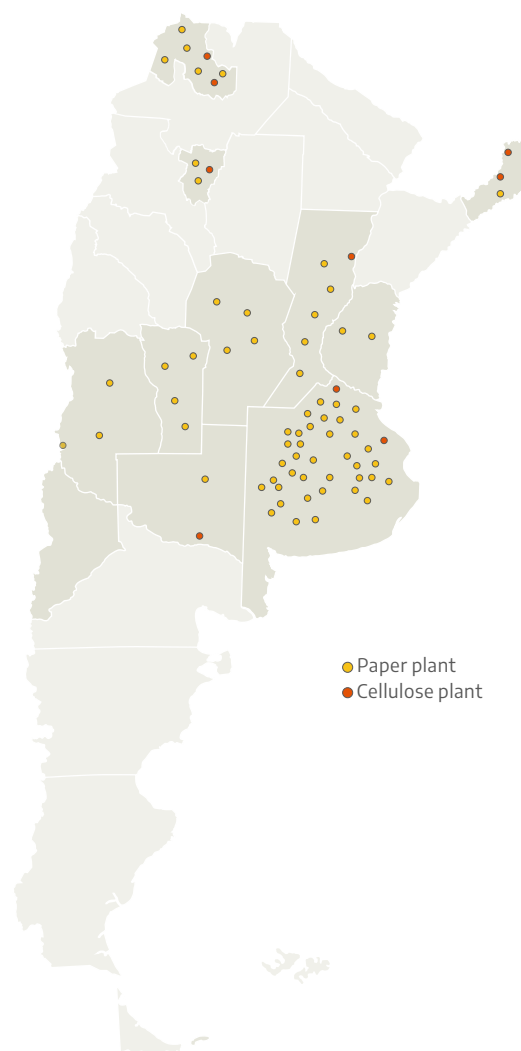
Source: Own elaboration based on data from the OEDE (MTEySS).

Companies and employment configuration

Out of all the companies that make up the cellulose, paper and cardboard complex, slightly over a half belong to the paper and cardboard manufacturing sector, especially of corrugated cardboard and cardboard containers, and other paper and cardboard products that do not have domestic or sanitary uses. In terms of employment, job positions are distributed fairly evenly across the three segments. Given the techno-productive capacities within the different sectors that make up the complex, larger companies belong to the cellulose complex, where over a half are medium-sized and large enterprises. In the rest of the sector, micro and small enterprises make up between 80% and 90% of the sector.

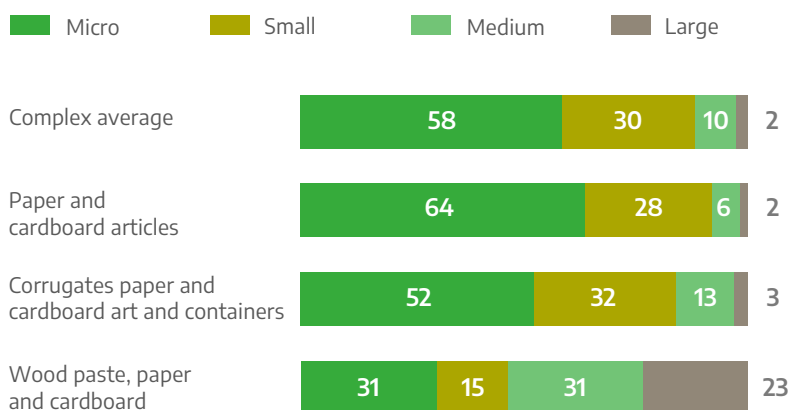
The location of cellulose plants is determined by the proximity to forests and cellulose transportation waterways to paper plants and export centres. For that reason, some companies are located by the Paraná River, creating productive hubs in Misiones and the delta of this river (in the provinces of Buenos Aires and Entre Ríos). The proximity to poplar plantations in Río Negro and eucalyptus plantations in Santa Fe and Entre Ríos explains the location of moulded pulp products and cellulose plants in Santa Fe. Lastly, paper plants are located near consumption centres, such as the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (AMBA) and the provinces of Córdoba and San Luis. Regarding human resources, the industry has shown significant improvements in qualifications of company management and product and process engineering, and in workers' competencies, which has improved product design and innovation, favouring local competitiveness of the complex.

Location of cellulose and paper plants



Morphology of enterprises in the cellulose, paper and cardboard complex

Figures in percentage.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from the OEDE (MTEySS).

Source: National Institute of Argentine and Latin American Affairs (IERAL) and Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.

Competitive and market conditions

The paper market is segmented by type of paper and use. In general, the different segments are relatively concentrated due to the high capital requirements necessary for the techno-productive sector.

The packaging paper sector includes three subsegments:

- The segment that uses virgin or Kraft corrugating paper, in which the companies Cartocor and Zucamor, both part of the Arcor group, and the Irish-owned Smurfit Kappa stand out. All of them are vertically integrated, that is, they produce their own corrugating paper and, in the case of Zucamor, Kraft paper, too.
- The segment that uses pulp for egg cartons and fruit trays, among other products. The top companies are Celulosa Moldeada, Moldeados Argentinos, Pulpak, Moldear and Sanovo Greenpack Argentina.
- The segment that produces cartons for alcoholic and soft drink beverages, biscuits and frozen food boxes, among other products, as well as different sorts of boxes, such as shoe boxes. It is the most competitive packaging paper market, where companies such as Corupel, Interpack and Mercal stand out, among others.

Regarding newsprint paper, the main company is Papel Prensa. Currently, as the newsprint paper market plummeted, the company is progressively reconverting newsprint paper production to corrugated paper.

In terms of printing and writing paper, the market is divided between three companies: Celulosa Argentina, Ledesma and Papelera Tucumán.

In terms of sanitary paper, there are seven producers representing 90% of the market: Papelera del Plata, Kimberly Clark Argentina, Papelera Samseng, Celupaper, Celulosa Campana, Papelera Rosato and Papelera San Andrés de Giles.

Regarding corrugated cardboard for secondary or tertiary packaging of individual products, as well as for its transportation, conservation and exhibition, the market is made up of around 160 companies—three fourths of which are small companies. The top three companies are Cartocor, Zucamor and Smurfit Kappa, which together represent 45% of the total production of corrugated cardboard in the country.

Investment

In the last few years, investments were oriented towards modernising and incorporating technology to expand productive capacity and product quality.

According to data from the Ministry of Economy, between 2019 and 2021, there were investment announcements for over USD 100 million. The main investment is attributed to the Chilean company Arauco, in the province of Misiones, and it consisted of equipment purchases and facility updates. Other relevant investments came from the companies Ledesma—which was focused on machinery and equipment acquisition to improve natural coloured paper produced from sugarcane bagasse with no tree fibre nor bleach—and Compañía Papelera Sinsacate (COPSI)—which consisted in the acquisition of a new power line to expand production in the Córdoba plant.

Foreign trade

The sector had a negative commercial balance of about USD 600 million in the 2015-2021 period, during which exports and imports remained stable, with values over USD 400 million and USD 1 billion, respectively.

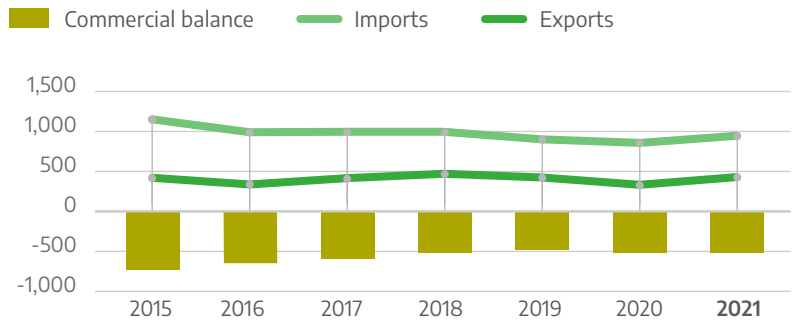
The deficit is mainly explained by import of cardboard and Kraft paper, and of coated paper and cardboard. On the other hand, the main exported products are chemical wood paste and coated paper and cardboard, which, additionally, account for slightly over half of international shipments, even though Argentina is a net importer of both products.

The main destination of exports are Mercosur countries—as well as Chile and Bolivia—and China, where wood paste is exported. Mercosur countries—except Paraguay—and Chile are relevant in terms of imports, together with other countries, such as Germany, China and the US.

The paper and cardboard complex has a number of advantages associated with the agroecological conditions, which allow for a quick and voluminous development of plantations with sustainable management and a long productive tradition that provide opportunities to move forward with import substitution and a larger external insertion, considering the growing local and international demand for packaging paper. Thus, there are tax benefits associated with the law for investments in cultivated forests.

The evolution of foreign trade in the cellulose, paper and cardboard complex

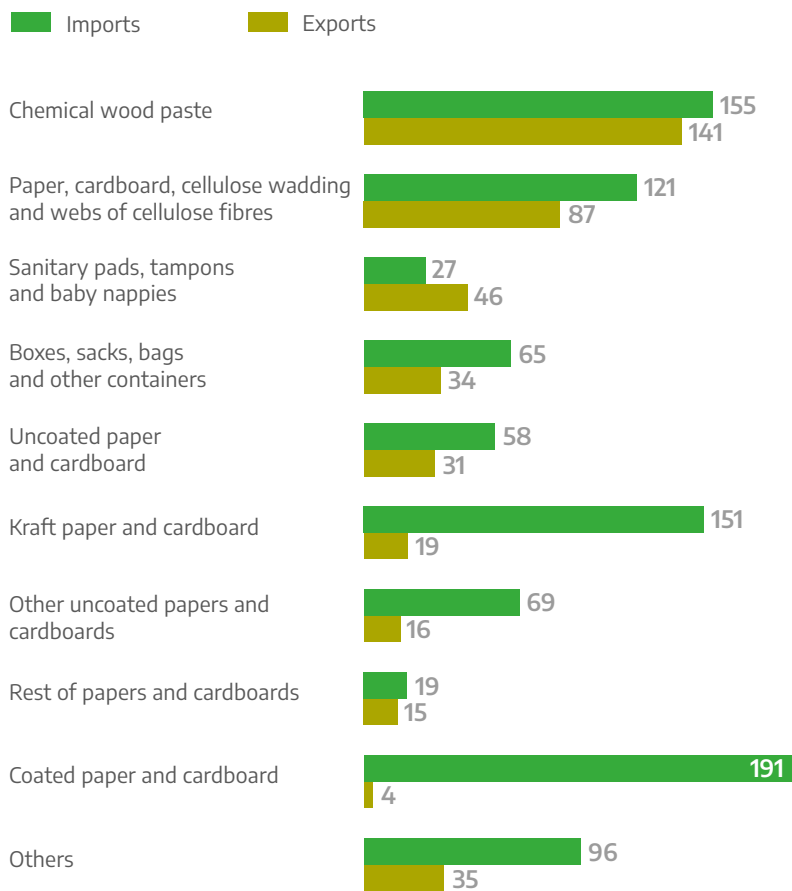
Figures in USD million. Period 2015-2021.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from INDEC.

Main exported and imported products in the cellulose, paper and cardboard complex

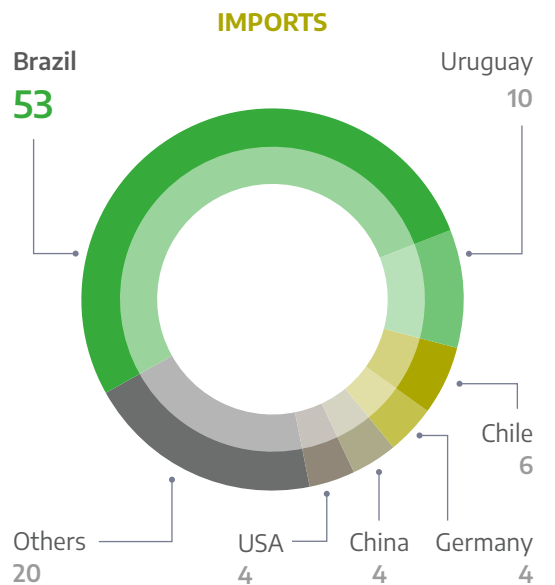
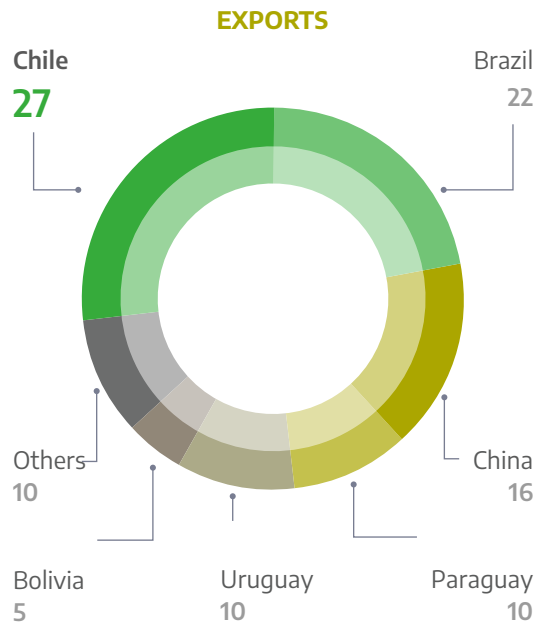
Figures in USD million. Year 2021.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from INDEC.

Main destinations and origins of the cellulose, paper and cardboard complex

Figures in percentage. Year 2021.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from INDEC.

Benefits

The Act for Cultivated Forest Investment (No. 25,080) offers tax benefits in the different levels of government (national, provincial and municipal) for 30 years from the approval date of the project, extendable to a maximum of 50 years. In 2019, this Act was extended until 2029 with the aim of expanding afforestation to 2 million hectares by 2030.

Some of the tax benefits are:

- Return of tax credits arising from the purchase of goods, leasing or provision of services, or imports destined for forestry investment under the conditions established in the Value Added Tax (VAT) Act.
- Income tax: early amortisation of expenses incurred for accounting purposes.
- Tax exemption levied on assets or wealth affected by enterprises (Minimum Presumptive Income).
- By annual appraisals, the value of forestry can be increased for accounting purposes.
- Stamp duty exemption for approval of articles of association, contracts, amendments, issuance of shares, etc.

Advantages

The main advantages the complex offers are:

Vegetal raw material availability: Argentina has pine plantations for cellulose long fibre production and eucalyptus plantations for cellulose short fibre production, which are affordable in terms of quantity and cost, especially in the province of Corrientes. This province holds Argentina's largest forested area, with almost 530,000 hectares of pine and eucalyptus, and it is the district with the highest growth potential in that segment, with a 3 million hectare area readily available for forest implantation that does not compete against other productions.

Competitive advantages: Argentina has agroecological characteristics that provide comparative advantages in forest production, due to the availability of suitable land for forest production as well as the rapid growth of forests. This advantage is equivalent to that of other countries in the region, such as Chile, Brazil and Uruguay.

Sustainability certification in the sector: In Argentina, several companies have forest certifications that guarantee that a forest or plantation management complies with sustainability criteria (CEFROAR - PEFC - FSC). Additionally, paper made from alternative fibres originated from sugarcane bagasse have the Producto Yungas certification (FCA).

Long productive tradition: Large-scale production in the cellulose, paper and cardboard complex in Argentina originated in the 1960s as a response to the import substitution policies. The country is home to world-class international companies that have favoured both the development of technical and human capacities, and the spreading of better cellulose and paper manufacturing practices, comparable to those followed in traditionally manufacturing countries.

Import substitution: In Argentina, the annual consumption of paper products amounts to around 2.4 million tonnes. However, with a production capacity of 1.8 million tonnes, the local industry is unable to meet demand, which needs to be covered by imports. For that reason, the country has the possibility to resort to import substitution, mainly of Kraft paper liners for containers and heavyweight Kraft paper for packaging lamination

Growing demand for packaging products: Packaging products have the potential to keep growing and replace other materials, such as glass, plastic and metal, given the innovations that allow for higher competitiveness due its cost reduction, recycling capacity, lower weight, durability and simpler handling.

Main public policies and strategic lines

Argentina has a vast normative framework focused mainly on promoting sustainable development in the forest sector. Similarly, there are national and provincial legislations on cellulose paste.

In this sense, the two most relevant laws are the Act on Cultivated Forest Investments (No. 25,080, as amended by Act 26,432) and the Act on Minimum Budgets for Environmental Protection of Native Forests (No. 26,331).

Regarding the cellulose, paper and cardboard complex, Act. 26,736 is applicable at the national level. It declares public interest in cellulose and newsprint paper manufacturing, commercialisation and distribution. The act establishes the progressive implementation of the best techniques available, considering the employment factor and the implementation of those environmental practices that ensure preservation and protection of the environment with a sustainable development.

At the sub-national level, the province of Corrientes passed, in 2019, Act No. 6,495, declaring interest in the installation of cellulose paste manufacturing plants and establishing that it will have to be carried out within an environment and with technology that reduces

the possibility of environmental impact to the minimum, complying with current environmental protection norms, especially in terms of dumping and gas emissions.

There are also specific programmes or plans for the forest-industrial chain, such as the Forest and Forest-Industrial Strategic Plan 2030, the Forest-Industrial Competitiveness Table and ForestAr 2030.

- **Forest and Forest-Industrial Strategic Plan 2030:** It is the product of the articulation between the public sector, the civil society and the private sector, accomplished within the Forest-Industrial Competitiveness Table and ForestAr 2030 framework.
- **Forest-Industrial Competitiveness Table:** It is a public-private articulation space integrated by the most representative federations, chambers and private associations of the country and national and provincial public organisms. This interaction space aims to answer the sectoral issues considered a priority according to the following topics: forestation, logistics and infrastructure, wood construction, cellulose and paper, dendroenergy, wood and furniture, native forests, fire management, innovation and 2030 strategic vision.
- **ForestAr 2030:** It is a multisectorial platform that aims at the conservation and expansion of the Argentine forest patrimony and the activation of a forest economy which drives social, economic and environmental development. The platform is led by the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development in articulation with the Ministries of Economy, Labour, Health, Social Development, Education, Culture, and Science and Technology, with the collaboration of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Argentina. This initiative also includes different private and non-governmental organisations.

Regarding commercial policies, there is a current aliquot scale for the export rights and returns, based on the value added of the products. Recycling paper and cardboard are the only exceptions (heading 4,707 of the Mercosur Common Nomenclature), in order to prioritise the supply to the internal market of a product that requires imports to meet local demand.

Lastly, the complex has many technical regulations, some of which are applicable at the Mercosur level and others at the national level. In the Mercosur, the following technical regulations—later incorporated to the national legal framework—are in force:

- i) filtering papers for cooking and hot filtering (Mercosur/GMC/Resolution No. 47/98);

- ii) recycled cellulose material (Mercosur/GMC/Resolution No. 52/99);
- iii) the indication of nominal content in paper napkins, towels and tissues (Mercosur/GMC/Resolution No. 02/01);
- iv) paper and cardboard containers and equipment used in contact with food for cooking or heating in the oven (Mercosur/XLVII SGT No. 3/ P. Res No. 3/12).

At the national level, there are technical regulations for packaged paper (Resolutions SICyM No. 653/99 and SC No. 155/2016), which established that producers and importers must certify the veracity of the information provided in terms of quality, purity or mixture, and that those responsible for distribution and commercialisation must require that certification. To that end, Argentina has certification organisms, such as the Argentine Certification and Standardization Institute (IRAM) and the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI). The latter has a laboratory for physical-mechanical tests for cellulose-paper materials (humidity and temperature conditions according to national and international standards).

The cellulose, paper and cardboard complex offers investment opportunities that will allow its contribution to regional and economic development, as well as the sectoral commercial deficit balance, complying with the highest environmental care standards.

Currently, there is a growing global demand for Kraft paper, linked both to the packaging markets and the tissue paper market. In the case of packaging, investment opportunities are associated, in particular, with the production of cellulose long fibre (mainly pine), an area where Argentina shows the highest competitive advantage and oversupply of raw material. The market's growing demand is linked to the higher requirements of the food and drink, agricultural, and electronic sectors, among others, driven by online commerce, fast food and food delivery. Regarding tissue paper, the high transportation costs push production to take place near the consumption market.

In both cases, there is an opportunity for Argentina to substitute imports and move forward towards a greater external insertion. According to the Forest and Forest-Industrial Strategic Plan Argentina 2030, investments for a total of USD 5 billion oriented towards the following would be required:

- The installation of a cellulose and long fibre Kraft paper (pine) plant with an annual capacity of 2 million tonnes.
- The installation of a cellulose and long-fibre Kraft paper (pine) plant with an annual capacity of 500,000 million tonnes, integrated with the cellulose plant.
- The installation of a bleached short fibre plant (eucalyptus) with an annual capacity of 1.5 million tonnes.
- Biomass-based power generation within the same cellulose plants.

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Agro / Paper and Cardboard

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