

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2006/8  
8 March 2006

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE  
Timber Committee

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
European Forestry Commission

Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party On Forest  
Economics And Statistics

Twenty-eighth session  
Geneva, 2-4 May 2006  
Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**SPECIAL TOPIC: INFORMATION ON CERTIFIED FOREST PRODUCTS (\*)**

Note by the Secretariat

This note provides the background for a discussion on certified forest products statistics and information, including:

1. Request by the UNECE Timber Committee to the Working Party to consider how to improve the quality of data on the production, consumption and trade of certified forest products;
2. Different types and needs of certification-related statistics and information;
3. Current and potential sources of certification-related statistics and information;
4. Improving systems of collecting and dissemination, and
5. Determining whether UNECE/FAO has a comparative advantage to provide timely, reliable, objective certification-related statistics and information.

Country and organization delegations at Working Party should be prepared to respond to specific and general questions posed in this note, including:

1. Are the potential statistics in the annex list useful, if they could be collected, for policy makers, market analysts and for certification systems?
2. Should an international effort be undertaken to improve the information base for markets for certified forest products, with the participation of all relevant organisations and stakeholders?
3. Does UNECE/FAO have a comparative advantage to provide timely, reliable, objective certification-related statistics and information?

---

\*This document was submitted late for document processing as clearances from relevant parties were received late.

## Introduction

1. One of the goals of certification of sustainable forest management is to produce wood and paper products which can be identified throughout the production chain, and to intermediate and final consumers, as originating from sustainably managed forests. The area of certified forests has grown rapidly in the UNECE region, however there is a lack of statistical information on the volume and value of certified forest products (CFPs) produced and consumed.

2. In conjunction with its annual Market Discussions in September 2005, the UNECE Timber Committee (TC) together with the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) held a policy forum on "Forest Certification - Do Governments Have A Role?" The Market Discussions had the theme of "Forest certification policies' influence on forest products markets in the UNECE region". One important conclusion of the policy forum was "the lack of information on the production, consumption and trade of certified forest products hampers policy makers, analysts and market actors." The Committee "asked the Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, with FAO, ITTO and other partners to consider how to improve the quality of data on the production, consumption and trade of certified forest products." (ECE/TIM/2005/2).

3. Currently the UNECE/FAO Timber Section uses a variety of primary and secondary information, but few statistics, in its annual certification-related work, which includes:

- (a) a chapter in the *Forest Products Annual Market Review*,
- (b) a CFP market sector discussion at the annual TC Market Discussions and
- (c) a CFP site on the TC/EFC website.

4. This discussion at the Working Party provides several opportunities by bringing together key stakeholders to present their opinions and experience on:

- (a) Defining the different types and needs of certification-related statistics and information
- (b) Identifying current and potential sources of and collection systems for certification-related statistics and information
- (c) Identifying potential roles for UNECE/FAO and its partners
- (d) Determining whether UNECE/FAO has a comparative advantage to provide timely, reliable, objective certification-related statistics and information

5. This note is structured accordingly.

### **(a) Types and needs for certified forest products statistics and information**

6. For most forest products there are lists of internationally agreed terms and definitions. However, for certified forest products no such list exists. Some common definitions have evolved, for example the unofficial definition of a CFP as used in the UNECE/FAO *Forest Products Annual Market Review*, "CFPs bear labels demonstrating, in a manner verifiable by independent bodies, that they come from forests that meet standards for sustainable forest management."

7. In the *Forest Products Annual Market Review* there is a need to analyze demand and supply, however there is a lack of statistical information. From the market demand side, a key statistic would be the value of CFPs exported. From the supply side, not simply the area of forests certified, but rather important statistics would be volume and value of certified roundwood produced from those forests. In the *Forest Products Annual Market Review* the analysis of the evolution of the geographical location of certified forests and markets for CFPs has proven valuable, for example to show increases in the sub-regions of the UNECE, as well as to compare the UNECE region to the rest of the world. The developments in certification systems' certified area and markets is regularly analyzed too.

8. To stimulate discussion, a table of potential statistics and information is annexed to this document (Annex 1). In considering the various kinds of information as a basis of policy decisions, the focus should be on the need for each type of information, and priority given to the most important statistics for analysis of forest and market developments as a result of certification of sustainable forest management. Some parameters on the annexed list for discussion may either be of minimal value for analysis and policy decisions, or could be difficult and expensive to collect and validate.

9. Furthermore, some information on the annex list may be unavailable if held by private companies and considered confidential. Certification systems have different levels of information, of which some is publicly available, such as number of chains of custody and forest area certified, but other information remains confidential. The secretariat considers that sufficient information, in terms of quality, comprehensibility and timeliness, should be publicly available to monitor forest certification and market trends as a basis for policy decisions. Reviewers of this note from certification systems expressed concern for the quality of data, and the need for unambiguous standards for definitions, collection and compilation.

**10. *The Working Party is invited to consider the types of, and needs for, certified forest products statistics and information, and to consider the following questions:***

- (a) Are the potential statistics in the annex list useful, if they could be collected, for policy makers, market analysts and for certification systems?*
- (b) Are there other statistics and information available and desirable or should any of the parameters be removed from the list?*

**(b) Sources of certification-related statistics and information**

11. Currently a number of certification systems operate in the UNECE region, either by certifying forests and issuing certificates of chain-of-custody, or by marketing certified wood and paper products, including the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), Canada's National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (CSA), Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC), Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). These systems provide information about themselves and the forestlands they certify, for example area certified in hectares. Some also provide the number of chain-of-custody certificates under their system. They each offer information on their standards and developments.

12. In 2001, the TC and the EFC established a Network of Officially Nominated National Correspondents on Certification and Certified Forest Products Markets (the Certification Network). The Certification Network has been surveyed annually for information for the chapter in the *Forest Products Annual Market Review*, and the former certification updates (Annex 2). They have provided both primary information, for example their opinions on certification drivers, and secondary information, for example area of forests certified according to national certification systems. Members of the network do not produce primary statistics. (The Working Party will be informed of the status of an upcoming survey of the Certification Network in preparation for the CFP market analysis in the 2006 *Forest Products Annual Market Review*.)

13. In order to expand on the availability of certification-related information, other organizations and groups, in addition to the systems and the network mentioned above, would have to play an active role. Potential sources include industry associations, forest owners' associations, retailers and wholesalers associations and wood and paper promotion groups.

14. The Working Party has previously stated that it was not possible, due to lack of Harmonized System codes, for official statistical correspondents to give statistics on CFPs, but has this, or could this change?

**15. *The Working Party is invited to consider the current and potential sources of certified forest products statistics and information.***

**(c) Potential roles for UNECE/FAO and its partners**

16. Currently through the sources above, plus CFP market experts, the UNECE/FAO collects some certification-related statistics and information for its *Forest Products Annual Market Review*. Formerly the statistics and information analyses were published in annual certification updates in UNECE/FAO *Geneva Timber and Forest Discussion Papers*.

17. Based on the discussion of the points above, the Working Party may identify additional statistics and information. If certification-related statistics exist, but are not collected, a role for UNECE/FAO could be neutral source for their collection. Collection alone is not sufficient—the data must be validated. UNECE/FAO's strategic advantage has been the analysis of statistics collected, for example the TIMBER database analysed in the *Forest Products Annual Market Review*. If these new statistics were collected, they should also be published regularly on the TC/EFC website.

18. In all cases the UNECE/FAO works directly with partners, both government and non-government, including national statistical correspondents, the network of national experts on certification and CFPs, certification schemes, intergovernmental organizations, international experts and other stakeholders. Information is often considered a public good, so it would be expected that the task of providing reliable information in a sector where information at present is inadequate would be a cooperative effort.

19. In the secretariat's view, the comparative advantage of UNECE/FAO in its current statistics and marketing work includes:

- (a) Long experience and active networks, including government officials and other stakeholders, in the field of forest sector information
- (b) Annual data collection, validation, analysis and distribution
- (c) Ability to carry out intergovernmental and inter-organizational activities
- (d) Links between information and policy
- (d) Perceived as neutral and objective

**20. *The Working Party is invited to consider whether an international effort to improve the information base for markets for certified forest products should be undertaken, with the participation of all relevant organisations and stakeholders. Does the UNECE/FAO, with partners, have a comparative advantage to provide timely, reliable, objective certification-related statistics and information?***

**(d) Possible strategies available within UNECE/FAO to expand collection, validation, analysis and distribution of certified forest products statistics and information**

21. Regardless of the types and sources of CFP statistics and information, there would be a number of preparatory steps, for example to agree on definitions, and methods and channels of reporting. The Working Party needs to also consider the demands on the limited resources of the UNECE/FAO Timber Section. Currently there is one statistical assistant whose main tasks include the collection, validation and internet publishing of the national statistics from the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire in the Timber Database, and the country market forecasts from the TC Questionnaire. Prior questionnaires to the

Certification Network of national correspondents were done by student consultants under guidance from the market analyst for the UNECE/FAO for certification status updates. The statistical assistant has other duties too, and collection and validation of new statistics and auxiliary information would necessitate reprioritization of the current work. Nevertheless, the secretariat has expanded its certification-related work, thanks to in-kind contributions and small, but valuable, consultancies.

22. If statistics were available via national statistical correspondents, then ideally collection could be included with the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire. If the current channel through questionnaires to national statistical correspondents would not work in the near term, then alternative channels would be necessary.

23. The Network of Officially Nominated National Correspondents on Certification and Certified Forest Products Markets has proven to be a valuable source of information, including estimations in lieu of statistics, and opinions on developments. Strengthening and maintaining the Certification Network is a joint responsibility of the secretariat and heads of the Committee and the Commission delegations. This channel of information has minor resource demands on the secretariat.

24. Alternatively, is a new channel of information necessary? If so, this would mean a major undertaking and require an investment in resources. The means to create the new channel could require either a team of specialists approach or, if topic considered important enough, a loaned expert from a country. The process would involve wide agreement on definitions and methods before beginning regular collection. The steps following collection necessitate new resources for validation, analysis and dissemination. The Working Party must consider whether a new system could be maintained by UNECE/FAO in the long term.

25. A further option would be for the Working Party and secretariat to lend its support to efforts by other organizations to produce such information. At the time of writing this note, the secretariat is not aware of any systematic efforts to collect all of the information on the annex list, although some of the parameters are available from the certification systems and the Certification Network.

26. One short-term option, if the Working Party considers the activity of sufficient priority, would be to set up an informal group of interested organisations and stakeholders to explore these questions in more detail, and make proposals to the Working Party's next session. However, the leadership of such a group would have to be provided either by a national expert, or by an expert seconded to the secretariat for this task.

***27. The Working Party is invited to discuss possible strategies to expand collection, validation, analysis and distribution of certified forest products statistics and information by the UNECE/FAO, possibly by in-kind contribution of short-term resources from countries and organizations.***

## Annex 1

## CERTIFIED FOREST PRODUCTS STATISTICS AND INFORMATION

Parameter	Units	Potential sources	Possible partners	Available now <sup>1</sup>	Comments
Certified forest area	Hectares	Certification schemes	National correspondents	Yes	Used in <i>Forest Products Annual Market Review</i> (FPAMR) chapter. Include geographical location and by which scheme.
Chain of custody certificates	Number	Schemes	National correspondents	Yes	Used in FPAMR chapter. Include geographical location and by which scheme.
Harvest (fellings) from certified forest	Cubic metres	Schemes, certifying bodies, <sup>2</sup> owners	Schemes, national correspondents	No	Includes all certified wood harvested, even if not identified/labelled as certified
Harvest (removals) of certified roundwood	Cubic metres	Schemes, certifying bodies, owners	Schemes, certifying bodies, owners	No	Not the same as fellings—only covers wood <i>sold</i> with labels indicating that it is certified
Production of certified sawnwood, panels, pulp & paper	Cubic metres, tons	Schemes, industry associations, certifiers	National correspondents	No	Could be used to estimate harvest of certified wood, assuming negligible or measurable trade in certified roundwood
Production of value-added goods from certified sawnwood, panels, paper	Value in national currency	Schemes, industry associations, certifiers	National correspondents	No	Furniture, mouldings and toys are now sold with labels
Trade in certified sawnwood, panels, pulp, paper, value-added goods, firewood	Cubic metres, tons, value in national currency	Traders	National correspondents	No	No trade stats from the Harmonized System are available as the HS requires a physical basis
Sales of certified goods	National currency	Retailers, promotion groups	National correspondents	No	From value -added wood products, down to wood fuels
Price of certified products	National currency	Retailers, schemes	National correspondents, official price monitoring services	No	Any price premium is a key element for a forest owner or trader to decide whether or not to produce certified forest products

<sup>1</sup> “Available” here means publicly available, regularly, on the international level.

<sup>2</sup> Certifying bodies carry out the certification in forests, and check chains of custody for the certification schemes.

## Annex 2

**COUNTRIES REPRESENTED ON THE UNECE/FAO NETWORK OF  
OFFICIALLY NOMINATED NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS ON CERTIFICATION  
OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND  
CERTIFIED FOREST PRODUCTS MARKETS**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Responded to query</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Responded to query</b>
Albania	Yes	Luxemburg	Yes
Austria	Yes	Netherlands	Yes
Belgium	Yes	Norway	Yes
Canada	Yes	Portugal	Yes
Cyprus	Yes	Romania	Yes
Czech Republic	Yes	Russia	No
Denmark	Yes	Serbia	Yes
Finland	Yes	Slovakia	Yes
France	Yes	Spain	Yes
Germany	Yes	Sweden	Yes
Greece	No	Switzerland	Yes
Hungary	Yes	The fYR of Macedonia	Yes
Ireland	Yes	Turkey	Yes
Italy	Yes	Ukraine	No
Kyrgyzstan	No	United Kingdom	Yes
Latvia	Yes	United States	Yes
Liechtenstein	Yes		
Lithuania	Yes		

**Note:** Representation of all countries in the UNECE region would be desirable to monitor forest certification-related information. Even replies from official correspondents indicating that in their country there is at the present time, no production or trade of CFPs, is valuable information as the situation may change over time. For many of the 55 countries within the UNECE region there is no other source of information on certification and CFPs than the correspondents in this Certification Network. In 2005 the response rate to a survey was high, however some important countries did not participate as indicated above. The secretariat requests heads of TC or EFC delegations to contact us to update correspondents, especially where there are missing responses, via e-mail at [info.timber@unece.org](mailto:info.timber@unece.org)