



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 March 2018

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Transport Statistics

Sixty-ninth session

Geneva, 12-14 June 2018

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Workshop on Data Quality in Inland Waterway Statistics

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Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. At its sixty-eighth session, the Working Party on Transport Statistics started its meeting with a half-day workshop dedicated to data sources in rail statistics. Four member States and two international organizations presented their work, which provoked discussions on innovative data sources and uses of the data. The secretariat wrote a report of the workshop which is available on the UNECE website¹.

2. The Working Party welcomed the initiative of the Workshop and decided to continue the practice. Topics for the next session were proposed that included the environmental and safety impacts of all modes of transport, road or rail safety statistics, and statistics concerning inland waterways. After consultations with the chair and vice-chair of the Working Party, the topic of inland waterway statistics was decided upon for the sixty-ninth session.

II. Purpose of workshop

3. The purpose of this workshop is to share information on how data on inland waterway statistics are collected and/or calculated. Participants are invited to present their own experiences in this area and to comment on the methods used in other countries. Best practices and areas for improvement across countries could also be discussed during the workshop.

¹ www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2017/sc2/Workshop_on_Rail_Statistics_article.pdf

4. One potential focus of the workshop could be on collecting inland waterway transport data within the context of intermodality. Recent efforts to improve the environmental performance of transport have focussed on shifting the movement of goods to rail or waterways where possible. Having adequate data that allows users to measure trends and identify future areas for modal shifts would be a positive.

III. Proposed discussion points

5. The Working Party may recall that UNECE currently disseminates inland waterway data on infrastructure, vehicle fleets and traffic (in both tonnes and tonne-km). The workshop could explore data collection in areas that are not currently collected, such as:

- Inland waterway safety
- Intermodal transport
- Energy consumption, employment and economic performance
- Traffic data on a port-to-port basis
- Inland waterway passenger transport.

6. Among other issues raised by participants, the Working Party may wish to consider the following questions regarding data sources for inland waterway statistics:

- What are the biggest challenges faced by statistics offices when collecting inland waterway statistics? How can statistics offices address or work around such challenges?
- What agreements are in place with shipping companies, port authorities and waterway management companies (both private and public) to share data on infrastructure, vessel information and waterway movements?
- How are surveys used in the collection of data? Are these legally mandated or based on goodwill?
- Do member States have any policy for increasing goods traffic by inland waterway transport at the expense of other transport modes? How is this measured?
- What measures are in place to account for uncertainties in measuring passenger and freight activity (e.g., passenger-kilometres and tonne-kilometres)?
- What innovative methods do you use to impute data? For example, the use of administrative data sources such as Automatic Identification Systems to track vessels.

IV. Future Work

7. The Working Party is invited to propose any future work on data sources for inland waterway statistics and agree on a topic for a similar workshop as part of its seventieth session. One possibility could be a focus on data sources for another transport mode such as road or inland waterways. Alternatively, the Working Group may wish to focus on specific methodological issues or on broader issues affecting the collection of transport statistics. The secretariat also welcomes any suggestions on improving the structure of future workshops.