



Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Transport Statistics****Seventieth session**

Geneva, 12-14 June 2019

Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda

Data collection, methodological development and harmonization of transport statistics: Collection of statistics on trade in used vehicles**Data collection on international used vehicle flows****Note by the secretariat****I. Background**

1. Used vehicles often change owner, and sometimes cross borders in doing so. Concerns have been raised over the years that developed countries are exporting older, out-dated, and sometimes failing and/or tampered vehicles to other countries, as they are no longer fit for purpose in their country of origin. A reliance on outdated vehicles in some countries likely has negative consequences as many will lack proper or recently developed safety features and may have higher emissions per kilometer when compared to newer vehicles.¹

2. The latest local regulations on city access and bans for certain vehicle types (e.g. diesel-powered cars), and the constant effort to decrease road accidents and fatalities in developed countries seem to have accelerated the phenomena in recent years. Concerns are being raised about the potential negative impacts for road safety and environment protection in the importing countries.

3. As part of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee meetings held in Geneva in February 2017, a joint UNECE/ITC – UNEP conference on the topic highlighted several issues where international collaborations could help better manage the flow and quality of used vehicles around the world. During this event, seven major areas for further consideration were identified to build a global agenda on safer and cleaner used vehicles, one of which noted the lack of sound data on the topic, specifically relating to “the flow of vehicles, flow of information about vehicles”.²

¹ Remote sensing of motor vehicle emissions in London, The Real Urban Emissions Initiative (see figure 4): www.trueinitiative.org/media/597524/true-london-rs-report-fv-20181214.pdf.

² See annex IX in: www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2017/itc/ECE-TRANS-270-Add1e.pdf.

4. Most of the existing activities on global used vehicles flow had been done at the research level, with no sustained effort to maintain or update any research performed.³

5. The UN Comtrade database⁴ gathers all trade statistics around the globe with all types of goods compiled. Goods are classified using the Harmonized System (HS) codes, up to the 6-digit level. For passenger cars, 6-digit HS codes offers a fuel and engines size split (table).

Table

Commodity code and definition for passenger cars used in the UN Comtrade database

<i>6-digit HS Code</i>	<i>Engine Type</i>	<i>Cylinder Capacity</i>
870321	Spark Ignition	< 1 000 cc
870322	Spark Ignition	between 1 000 and 1 500 cc
870323	Spark Ignition	between 1 500 and 3 000 cc
870324	Spark Ignition	> 3 000 cc
870331	Compression Ignition	< 1 500 cc
870332	Compression Ignition	between 1 500 and 2 500 cc
870333	Compression Ignition	> 2 500 cc

6. Such 6-digit HS codes are not enough to make a split between used and new vehicle trade. There is a further disaggregation that is up to each country to define;⁵ for example, the US are using a 10-digit HS code where used and new vehicle trade are separated.⁶ However this split is the only vehicle age consideration in their system. As a result, it is not possible to determine if a used vehicle traded is 1 year old or 10-years old using these 10-digit codes.

7. On the European side, the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) produces trade data at the Combined Nomenclature 8-digit level, with import/export data in volume and value terms on a country-by-country basis. This again is an expansion upon the HS codes, and like the U.S. system splits new and used vehicles, but has the same problem of not differentiating between the age of used cars at the time of trade.

II. Improving data collection

8. As policies are deployed to improve and monitor used vehicle trade, there is a need to track how the flow of used vehicles is impacted by such policies, to assess their effectiveness and adequacy. To date, such policy impact assessment remains challenging with scarce data availability at a limited level of detail.

9. The ECE secretariat would like to better understand the status of member States with respect to used vehicle export and import data collection and therefore requests member States to present their experience and latest activities on the topic of used vehicle flow statistics collection.

10. It would be particularly important to better understand the level of details to which data are collected, for example:

- How are data on vehicle age collected? Is vehicle age counted from date of first registration in the country, date of manufacture, or some other date?

³ Pelletiere D, Reinert K, 2006, World trade in used automobiles: a gravity analysis of Japanese and US exports. *Asian Econ J* 20:161-172. Fuse Masaaki Fuse et al., 2009, Estimation of world trade for used automobiles, <https://rd.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10163-009-0263-3>.

⁴ www.comtrade.un.org.

⁵ www.trade.gov/td/auto/data/vehicledataintro.html.

⁶ www.census.gov/foreign-trade/schedules/b/2018/c87.html.

- Is information about origin and destination of used vehicles import / export collected? How are data on imports/exports going through transit "hubs" such as Dubai managed?
- Are any technical specifications of the vehicle also collected? Examples could be Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), presence of airbags, presence of catalytic converter, presence of catalytic converter, other or any other safety or emission control features.
- How are used vehicles distinguished from waste/scrapped vehicles or used parts?

III. Proposed future work

11. The Working Party is requested to provide views on the importance of this topic and the feasibility of improving data collection on used vehicle imports/exports.

12. The Working Party may consider requesting the secretariat to send a questionnaire to capture the latest information available from member States and gauge their capabilities to collect used vehicle flow statistics. See annex of this document for some example questions.

13. The questionnaire would include detailed requests on the statistical means in place to collect used vehicle flows, and could also contain a section on the policies in place to monitor/control the trade of used vehicles across borders.

Annex

Draft questionnaire on used vehicle trade, aimed at statistical offices

Statistics

Q1: Do you disaggregate your new* vehicle registration database according to the following criteria?

(a) Vehicle type (e.g. passenger car, light goods vehicle etc., according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Consolidated Resolution on the Construction of Vehicles (R.E.3));

(b) Fuel type (petrol, diesel, plug-in hybrid etc.);

(c) Vehicle age (please specify if age refers to time since vehicle manufacture or time since first registration);

(d) Country of manufacture;

(e) Country of last registration (if applicable).

Q.2: Are there any known or suspected coverage gaps in your new vehicle registrations versus the number of vehicles actually permanently entering in your country? For example, when a car is imported but not registered in your country, are there any alternative data sources to compare the register to? Are any efforts made to quantify this difference? Please give details.

Q.3: Are any physical checks conducted on new registrations? For example, ensuring that the Vehicle Identification Number agrees with the relevant paperwork

Q.4: For older/used vehicles, how are vehicles deregistered from the database? Are registrations continued indefinitely or is it necessary to renew registrations on a regular basis?

Q.5: When vehicles are deregistered, are vehicles exported distinguished from those that are scrapped? How is this done?

Q6: Has your government recently explored these issues? Please share any analyses or reports.

* New means newly registered in the country and not necessarily a newly manufactured vehicle.