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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
Timber Committee

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
European Forestry Commission

JOINT FAO/UNECE WORKING PARTY ON FOREST ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS
Twenty-seventh session

to be held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva
22 – 24 March 2005, starting at 10.00 hrs on Tuesday, 22 March

Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda
Publications, website, databases: guidance by the Working Party*

This document reviews the background to the information dissemination strategy of the Secretariat and the decisions taken last year by the Working Party. It examines how these were carried out and suggests future directions to take.

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

Introduction

1. One function of the Working Party is to advise on the “dissemination” of the outputs of the UNECE/FAO Integrated programme of work. The dissemination methods used may be classified as publications, websites and data bases. (Meetings and workshops are also major means of communicating, but are not included in this document.)

2. At its last meeting the Working Party, made a number of recommendations concerning the dissemination of outputs(see TIM/EFC/WP.2/2004/2 and TIM/EFC/WP.2/2004/9). The objective of the present document is to report on these measures and to request the Working Party’s guidance on these aspects of the programme.

Publications

3. In 2004 the *Forest Products Annual Market Review* was produced in both hard copy and an extended electronic edition. Eight Discussion Papers were produced in both hard copy and electronically. No Study Papers were released as the European Forest Sector Outlook Study was delayed. The Timber Branch also produced 6 statistical outputs which were produced only in an electronic format, mostly in PDF, to be downloaded from the website. These were Forest Products Statistics [provisional], Price database, Trade Flow, Secondary Products, Trade by Species and the Timber Committee forecasts. The name *Timber Bulletin* was discontinued although this name continues to be used on some elements of the outputs. A list of the 2004 outputs, and those expected for 2005 are shown in the Annex.

5. Through announcements on list servers, direct e-mailings from the Contact Database, use of the Trade Division's Multiplier Point network and publicity in the Branch newsletter, we have reached out to many of our current and potential clients. Significant numbers of downloads were recorded for many of the outputs, particularly the FPAMR (which ranks within the top 10 of UNECE downloads). No requests were received for a printed copy of an electronic publication, an option that was suggested to help those with difficulty in receiving electronic-only publications. A more detailed analysis of website usage statistics will be supplied at the meeting of the Working Party.

6. The actual impact of the decisions of last year's Working Party seem to be difficult to evaluate at this time due to the lag effect of discontinuing hard copies. We do believe that with our emphasis on electronic dissemination we have reached a higher level in disseminating electronic access to our publications and that this is reflected in increased downloads. There have also been economies (not quantified) to the UN publications services

Website

7. The website is the main, fastest, cheapest way of diffusing all the UNECE/FAO outputs. All outputs (publications, databases, meeting announcements and papers etc.) are immediately posted on the website. It is also used for unexpected purposes, such as making available the prepublication version of EFSOS, which had been delayed, or to disseminate information about wind blow in Slovakia or Sweden. Its usefulness is increased when the website itself is linked with announcements by press release or e-mail to mailing lists. However, as the website has grown larger, its fundamental design has been overwhelmed, so that it is now difficult to navigate, and there is a serious risk of users, even experienced ones, being unable to find what they need. The secretariat is preparing a fundamental re-design of the website: the Working Party will be informed of the broad principles of the redesign and of progress achieved, and invited to comment and suggest improvements.

Databases

8. There are a number of databases of differing size and complexity which are used by the secretariat and made available on the website: “Timber” (production and trade of forest products), FRA (forest resources) “H3” (forestry assistance to countries in transition), prices, EFSOS (data used for EFSOS, by country, to be posted shortly). Some, but by no means all, of the components of these datasets are incorporated in the FAO Forestry website. This is the case for the production and trade information, which is incorporated into the FAOSTAT database and the country data on the FAO site, and those parameters of the FRA work which are included in the global FRA, which are also on the FAO Forestry website. The ECE/FAO databases are maintained in Access and Excel form and typically posted on the website with little attempt to make the contents more user-friendly. Thus in effect, they are only usable by well-informed expert users, already aware of the existence and potential of the data set.

9. It is clear that the UNECE/FAO secretariat does not have the resources (personnel or skills) to achieve the full potential of the datasets which it manages, and for which it is responsible, in convenience and accessibility to a wide range of users. The secretariat considers that it does not have a comparative advantage in the domain of making complex data sets more attractive and user friendly. However, there is the potential to improve the usefulness of the data by cooperation with partners who do have such skills. A private concern (www.lignaon.de) has illustrated the power of combining a series of highly detailed databases for the wood industry with national and regional statistics and geographic information. It has used publicly available ECE/FAO data and kept the secretariat informed of how the data are made more attractive. The European Forest Institute (EFI) has invested effort in visualisation of data, and has offered to work with ECE/FAO in improving the presentation of the data, in the context of the ongoing cooperation between ECE/FAO and EFI.

10. The question facing the secretariat, given the very limited resources of which it disposes, is the priority it should attach to improving the presentation and user-friendliness of its data sets, compared to other functions, and within its data sets, which should receive priority attention in this respect .

Decisions

11. *Delegations are invited to review the arrangements for disseminating the outputs of the ECE/FAO work and suggest improvements. They might wish in particular to address the following questions:*

- *How satisfactory is the present system of publishing statistical and other information (FPAMR annually, Discussion Papers, some Study Papers, purely statistical publications only available on-line)?*
- *Is the proposed re-design of the ECE/FAO website satisfactory?*
- *What priority should be attached to improving the user-friendliness and interactive quality of the databases made available?*
- *What other methods should be used to communicate the results of the work (a communication strategy is being developed and will be presented to the working party)*

Annex
(Available in English only)

UNECE Timber Branch Publications for 2005

Title of Publication	Publication Number/URL	Copies Printed
Forest Products Annual Market Review	ECE/TIM/BULL/2005/3	1815 E (est.) 455 F (est.) 255 R (est.)
Forest Products Market Prospects for 2006		Electronically published
Forest Products Statistics		Electronically published
Trade by Species (Roundwood and Sawnwood)		Electronically published
Trade of Secondary Processed Wood and Paper Products		Electronically published
European Forest Sector Outlook Study: Main Report	ECE/TIM/SP/20	2720 E 550 F 250 R
Proceedings from cert workshop	ECE/TIM/DP/45	460 (est.)
Forest and Forest Products Country Profile: Uzbekistan	ECE/TIM/DP/44	460 (est.)
International Forest Sector Institutions and Policy Instruments in Europe	ECE/TIM/DP/43	460 (est.)
Market Effects of Wood Energy Policies	ECE/TIM/DP/42	1260 (est.)
Outlook for the Development of European Forest Resources	ECE/TIM/DP/41	460 (est.)
Forest and Forest Products Country Profile: Serbia and Montenegro	ECE/TIM/DP/40	460
Forest Certification Update for the UNECE Region, 2003	ECE/TIM/DP/39	1260
Forest and Forest Products Country Profile: Republic of Bulgaria	ECE/TIM/DP/38	460
International Forest Fire News for the year 2004	ECE/TIM/IFFN/30	970
International Forest Fire News for the year 2004	ECE/TIM/IFFN/31	970

Timber Branch Publications produced in 2004

Title of Publication	Publication Number/URL	Copies Printed
Forest Products Annual Market Review	ECE/TIM/BULL/2004/3	1815 E 455 F 255 R
Forest Products Annual Market Analysis	ECE/TIM/BULL/2003/3	1885 E 465 F 260 R
Forest Products Market Prospects for 2004	ECE/TIM/BULL/2003/6	1690 E/F 240 R
Forest Products Statistics	ECE/TIM/BULL/2003/2	1705
Forest Products Statistics	ECE/TIM/BULL/2002/2	1705
Forest Products Market Prospects for 2005	http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/mis/tb-6/tb-57-6.pdf	Electronically published

Title of Publication	Publication Number/URL	Copies Printed
Trade by Species (Roundwood and Sawnwood)	www.unece.org/trade/timber/database/species2000-2003.pdf	Electronically published
Trade of Secondary Processed Wood and Paper Products	www.unece.org/trade/timber/database/secondary2000-2003.pdf	Electronically published
International Forest Fire News 29	ECE/TIM/IFFN/29	970
Timber Committee Yearbook 2004	ECE/TIM/INF/11	2085 E 415 F 210 R
Forest Legislation in Europe	ECE/TIM/DP/37	410
Value-Added Wood Products Markets, 2001-2003	ECE/TIM/DP/36	460
Trends in the Tropical Timber Trade, 2002-2003	ECE/TIM/DP/35	460
The Policy Context of the European Forest Sector	ECE/TIM/DP/34	410
Biological Diversity, Tree Species Composition and Environmental Protection in the Regional FRA-2000	ECE/TIM/DP/33	460
Forestry and Forest Products Country Profile: Ukraine	ECE/TIM/DP/32	460
The Development Of European Forest Resources, 1950 To 2000: A Better Information Base	ECE/TIM/DP/31	410
Modelling and Projections of Forest Products Demand, Supply and Trade in Europe	ECE/TIM/DP/30	410
Russian Federation Forest Sector Outlook Study	ECE/TIM/DP/27	410

Timber Branch Databases

Title of Database	URL
Timber Database	www.unece.org/trade/timber/database/timber.zip
Price Database	www.unece.org/trade/timber/mis/price-stats.htm
H-3 Database	www.unece.org/trade/timber/h3/Documents/h3.mdb
FRA Database	http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/fra/pdf/contents.htm