

Agenda for UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Products Statistics

As of March 12, 2015

Tuesday, 17 March 2015, Palais des Nations, Geneva (room S4),
9 a.m. - 1 p.m, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Leader: Branko Glavonjic

Vice-Leader: Sheila Ward

There is a brief explanation of each point to help clarify the issues involved. Essentially the Team should provide input from their experience to come up with solutions or practices that could be implemented to resolve these issues in a way supportive of the programme of work.

This version of the agenda has been rearranged to put the more important issues (as indicated by members of the Team) earlier in the meeting. Some items that seem to be of lesser importance are indicated in dark grey.

1) Welcome and agenda

2) Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire

a) Prefilling with past data / prefilling with forecasts. We have debated this several times. It makes the questionnaire more complex for us to prepare and send. It may be helpful for people who are not familiar with the data and to accurately reflect what we have so errors can be more easily picked up. Would there be an interest in doing so?

b) Fibreboard data – review current definitions, possible new structure. Would you favor one or the other of these options?

i) Increase products - MDF split into MDF and HDF, distinct from hardboard. Are these markets different enough to try to distinguish them at the international level. Changes should fit within structure of Harmonised System (or try to revise future structure).

ii) Reduce the products – MDF and other fibreboard (hardboard and insulating) or just total fibreboard. This simplifies reporting and data handling at cost of weakening analysis

Eoin O'Driscoll and Isabelle Brose will speak on this point.

c) Continued collection of ECE/EU Species Trade. This questionnaire (roundwood and sawnwood divided into major species) seems to have some interest judging by our download statistics, however we have systematically failed to validate the data or disseminate it since 2005. Should we continue to collect this information?

d) Options on confidential data. Would data flow improve if we provided a consistent way to include confidential data? Ways of including it are to group

countries, group products or set up items to be counted in total while not being displayed. In the past the conclusion was that countries would not supply confidential data.

e) Using Global Trade Atlas figures - official or not? Currently, figures supplied through COMTRADE or COMEXT are considered, at ECE and FAO, as official. Data from the Global Trade Atlas, a private organization which is essentially reproducing official national customs statistics, are counted as official by FAO and as unofficial (estimates) by ECE. How should such figures be treated?

f) Increasing ease of use and comprehension. Some correspondents continue to have difficulty with the relationship between aggregates and subitems, with the HS codes and with the units. How can we make the questionnaire easier to use and increase comprehension of it?

3) Statistical systems

a) Use of code to indicate "estimate based on aggregate". We currently have (in ECE) 9 status codes, including "repeat" (a repeated figure from previous year), "analyst estimate" (based on actual knowledge of the market) and "technical estimate" (based on no actual knowledge of the market). In cases where we have an actual aggregate figure that we break down to produce subitems, which we do in order to meet the requirements for completing the database, we have been calling this a "technical estimate" also. Would it be useful to distinguish such an estimate based on real data and to identify it as such when disseminating the figure?

b) Sharing and exchanging data - difficulties in integrating data and options to improve the situation. We continue to have problems in smoothly exchanging data between the different organizations working on the JFSQ and ensuring the data accurately reflect the underlying figures. Options will be presented to meeting.

4) Study updates

a) Round wood balance. Please see file
<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/meetings/20150318/IRW-balance-check-all-countries-update-2015-03.xlsx>

Presentation by Holger Weimar on calculating a wood fibre balance

b) Conversion factor study. An update on where we are with this study. We will review the current version of the questionnaire to see whether other items should be added.

c) Non-wood forest products, game meat focus. Brief from FAO on current status and plans

5) Classifications update

- a) HS 2017 update (for information)
- b) proposals for HS 2022 (for ideas on items to revise / add)
- c) Update of FAO Classification and definition of forest products (1982). To determine the interest in revising it.
(<http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/ap410m/ap410m00.pdf>)

6) Possible workshop for forest products statistics users (consultants, industry). This would be a follow up to a workshop in the 1990s and would seek to see what information is of the most interest to users, as well as discuss with them some of the difficulties in collecting this information.

7) Pellets – non-wood and non-energy use. How large is this and is it affecting production or trade statistics.

8) Timber Forecast Questionnaire (TFQ)

- a) Adding pellets. Pellets are now an integral part of JFSQ. Since 2003 we have tried to make the TFQ follow the JFSQ. There is certainly interest in the topic. It may be the source of such forecasts may be more outside the normal range of contacts and thus become an additional contact for correspondents to manage. Should pellets be added?
- b) Dropping other industrial roundwood (poles, fencing, pitprops). This would lower the reporting burden and is an item that is hard to forecast. It forms a small part of total removals. The counterpart to this is that we won't have a total roundwood forecast. Should we drop this item and what are ways to continue to have a roundwood forecast?
- c) Use in JFSQ series. We have generally avoided feeding the TFQ data back into the JFSQ part of the database, partly to avoid the extra work, partly to enable the series to be independent and partly because the numbers do not match, sometimes due to different sources. This year we did try to integrate some of the TFQ data. Should we continue to do so?

9) Underreported official data. This is likely due to small companies or integrated mills with furniture or unrecorded wood fuel use and non-commercial use. We suspect large amounts of data are not being recorded due to the above reasons. How significant is the problem and can we find solutions or ways to work around it.

10) Next meeting, topics, timing and location. Should we organize at same time as Working Party or do something else. Are there topics (particularly on forest economics) that we should discuss.