

**Notes for 2nd meeting of UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists
on Forest Products Statistics**

Geneva, 16 March 2015

(As of March 30, 2015)

Leader: Branko Glavonjic

Vice-Leader: Sheila Ward

1) Welcome and agenda

The Leader welcomed the team. The team members introduced themselves. One member encouraged discussion focused on the mid-term future and avoiding duplication, prioritizing actions for the future.

17 people attended the meeting from Poland, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Ireland, UK, Serbia, Finland, Sweden, Turkey, France and the European Panel Federation.

2) Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire

a) Prefilling with past data / prefilling with forecasts. The consensus was that TFQ should continue to be prefilled while for JFSQ this was not necessary. Secretariat said they could offer data to correspondents who wanted to see it.

b) Fibreboard data – review current definitions, possible new structure. Ireland and EPF presented their experience and possible methods of splitting fibreboard. The basic distinction seems to be between processes of production and measurement based on thickness (MDF/HDF) and density.

Current HS 2012

- Medium density fibreboard (MDF) :

4411.12 - - Of a thickness not exceeding 5 mm

4411.13 - - Of a thickness exceeding 5 mm but not exceeding 9 mm

4411.14 - - Of a thickness exceeding 9 mm

- Other :

4411.92 - - Of a density exceeding 0.8 g/cm³

4411.93 - - Of a density exceeding 0.5 g/cm³ but not exceeding 0.8 g/cm³

4411.94 - - Of a density not exceeding 0.5 g/cm³

EPF is uncertain about creating a distinction between MDF and HDF and suggested a wider consultation with the concerned manufacturers. EPF had obtained an explicit distinction between MDF/HDF and other types of fiberboards in the 2007 revision of the Harmonised System, differentiating MDF by thickness instead of by density and, consequently, offering a clearer

picture of the international trade in MDF/HDF, since the system was mixing wet and dry process fiberboards previously.

Distinction between wet and dry process is relevant.

EPF is not supporting an aggregation of all fiberboards (MDF/HDF, HB, SB incl. insulation board) in one category.

FAO pointed most global production and trade (about 80%) was in dry process MDF/HDF and this could easily be split into further categories, at least for trade (HS-2022). All other forms of fibreboard were significantly less.

We should ask for more information and feedback with a view to altering HS to better fit market trends and analysis needs in the future.

No member seemed to wish to simplify the current JFSQ breakdown.

c) Continued collection of ECE/EU Species Trade. Opinions in the Team were split, some suggested that it was complicated to provide and energy would be better spent on other things. Some said data should be provided as is with no attempt to reconcile with JQ2 source. Conclusion was that secretariat should publish as quickly and simply as possible with aggregate item from JQ2 and no "other" category to make balance problems less evident.

d) Options on confidential data. Confidential data are not being provided to international level and are often not available at national level.

e) Using Global Trade Atlas figures. The Team consensus was that these should be treated as non-official figures in light of the private access, other competing sources and uncertainty of revision.

Austria proposed, in the interests of transparency, that original questionnaires be published directly on website. This was welcomed and it was suggested to link these directly from the "data and statistics" of ECE. Correspondents would be asked if they wished this to be done.

Secretariat raised question of post-consumer wood in wood residues. This became a more extended discussion of the chips, particles and residues category. Some members wished to see a separate line item under group 3 for post-consumer wood (item 3.3?). A different possible location would be at end, after secondary products (item 13?). Another suggestion was to combine the current 3.1 and 3.2 and make post-consumer wood a new item 3.2. Where to locate post-consumer wood was left open, however it does seem to be a separate category. JFSQ definition should stay as is and possible location of post-consumer item and effect of combining 3.1 / 3.2 investigated. The poor quality of data for this item argues for reducing distinctions. This topic should be discussed further.

3) Statistical systems. Sharing and exchanging data.

Secretariat explained some of the difficulties in exchanging data between the various organizations and attempts made to ensure data were the same. Incomplete data were a continuing issue and options for addressing this were discussed. The Team encouraged countries to provide complete data, making estimates if possible. Secretariat will investigate options further during this year's processing with a view to making data as clear as possible for users and discuss at future meetings.

4) Study updates

a) Round wood balance. This was presented by secretariat. In general the balance was a satisfactory approach and was seen as a useful tool. Some effort should be made to make methodology clearer, perhaps in graphical form. Secretariat will circulate to entire Team and then to correspondents with a request to comment. A publication would be prepared, hopefully prior to July. (<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/meetings/20150318/IRW-balance-check-all-countries-update-2015-03.xlsx>)

Holger Weimar made a presentation on calculating a wood fibre balance which the team welcomed. The model revealed a known shortage of available roundwood in Germany (compared to use), which had been confirmed independently by the national forest inventory.

b) Conversion factor study. The secretariat provided an update on this proposed study. Members reviewed the questionnaire and suggested making it more accessible, to identify most important items, to rapidly coordinate needs with wood energy and outlook teams. An expanded wood energy conversion in energy units should be added.

c) Non-wood forest products, game meat focus. FAO explained the current concept for this information collection exercise and the need to increase visibility of forests in food. The Team accepted a test survey which UNECE and FAO would prepare and circulate.

5) Classifications update

a) HS 2017 update (for information). The secretariat provided information on the current status of the HS2017 proposal. The Team appreciated the work done by FAO and other organizations. One member suggested that tropical items could become less significant in the future given FLEGT requirements.

b) Initial proposals for HS 2022 were presented and it was agreed to consult with countries in 2016/2017 for their further ideas.

c) Update of FAO Classification and definition of forest products (1982, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/ap410m/ap410m00.pdf>). The Team was shown this current classification and the secretariat suggested modernizing it to fit JFSQ and other classifications including HS2012 and CPC. This was not seen as a priority at the current time, it could be updated with introduction of HS 2017.

6) Possible workshop for forest products statistics users (consultants, industry). FAO explained the idea of the meeting to endorse forest products data collection and determine which items were of greatest interest. A survey of current users was proposed by the Team as an initial step. An online survey of current users was proposed by the Team as an initial step. The last survey of users was carried out in 2005/06, results are available at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/statistics/80939/en/>.

7) Timber Forecast Questionnaire (TFQ)

a) Adding pellets. The Team recommended adding pellets to the TFQ.

b) Dropping other industrial roundwood (poles, fencing, pitprops). After some discussion it was agreed to leave this as is on the TFQ. The Team felt that other industrial roundwood should be discussed further as some countries were including it under sawlogs.

8) Underreported official data. Given the importance of this issue, the Team felt it should be discussed with more time and background information available. One member pointed out the high probability of overreporting as well.

10) Next meeting, topics, timing and location. The Team agreed that meeting at the same time as the Working Party or other Teams was a good solution. One possibility was to combine the meeting with those of outside groups, such as the panel association or sawmilling meetings. The Leader and secretary will explore this possibility.