



**Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry
Economic Commission for Europe**



**European Forestry Commission
Food and Agricultural Organization**

**UNECE/FAO TEAM OF SPECIALISTS ON
SUSTAINABLE FOREST PRODUCTS**

Online meetings

13:15-14:45 PM Wednesday, 24 NOVEMBER 2021 (Item 1-3)

and

16:00-17:45 PM Thursday 09 December 2021 (Item 4-end)



Eoin O’Driscoll, Leader of the Team of Specialists (ToS) on Sustainable Forest Products chaired the meeting and opened the meeting.

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda

The team leader presented the agenda which was adopted without amendments.

Florian Steierer welcomed participants who then introduced themselves.

25 team members attended the meeting on 24 November 2021 and 17 the meeting on 09 December 2021. A list of participants can be found in the Annex at the end of the report.

Sven Walter (Senior Forestry Officer at FAO, Team Leader, Forest Products and Statistics Team and Secretary to the FAO Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries) provided some welcome remarks by FAO and made a short presentation on forest product related work at FAO HQ. In his presentation he highlighted some of the following points of FAOs work on forest products and statistics:

- Launch of the study on “[Non-wood forest products for people, nature and the green economy. Recommendations for policy priorities in Europe](#)” with EFI. This White Paper stresses the urgent need for action and identifies promising policy options to i) secure the conservation and sustainable supply of non-wood forest products (NWFP); ii) build competitive, equitable, and sustainable value chains; iii) improve transparency, data, and information flow on NWFP and; iv) establish enabling conditions in the policy, financial, and innovation terms;
- Scheduled release of a study on the “Contribution of forests to bioeconomy and substitute fossil fuel products”, during COP26 in Glasgow (study will be launched at the International Day of Forests on 21/3/2022);
- Update on the State of the Worlds Forest 2022 report that will be launched next year in South Korea at the [World Forestry Congress](#);
- The new [FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31](#) is valid from the 1st January 2022. It seeks to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind;
- Ongoing work on improving global wood energy statistics, including a systematic country-by-country data search to identify existing information on woodfuel production and consumption, the development of a new model for better estimation and verification of wood energy production and consumption in countries, which are lacking officially reported data;
- Release of FAOSTAT’s forest products data and forthcoming publication of [forest products yearbook](#) in 2022;
- Capacity building on forest products statistics for West and Central African countries, Western Balkan and CIS-Region and wood fuel data and production trends in Africa
- Update on the work undertaken by the [Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries](#);
- Plan to organize a significant event around the [International Day of Forests 2022](#) (“*Forests and sustainable production and consumption*”). It would be very good to align the key messages.

Team members thanked FAO for the comprehensive overview on the activities and products. The ensuing discussion touched upon:

- differences in data between national level, Eurostat, UNECE and FAO (which arises due to the different structure of the databases – bottom-up (FAO and UNECE) vs. top-down (Eurostat), different processing and difficulty of synchronizing databases);
- praising the usefulness of publications and products, such as “*trade flow data*” and the publication on “*Contribution of the Forestry Sector to National Economies, 1990-2011*” and urging an update of these (one member suggested annual updates to GDP study).

Item 2. Short update by the secretariat on forest products markets

The secretariat provided a short overview on the current edition of the FPAMR 2021 as it was published on the website of the Joint Section on 18 November 2021 (<https://unece.org/forests/fpamr2021>) and an outlook of possible changes in 2022.

The team thanked the secretariat and contributors for the work and discussed the various options for the future FPAMRs and provided the following suggestions:

- Continue with the short format of the *Review*;
- Strive for earlier publishing of the Review (currently draft in August, final in November);
- Expand forward-looking aspects in the *Review*;
- Split the chapter on sawnwood and report separately on sawn softwood and sawn hardwood;
- Include more information on wood products in a circular economy (e.g. report more on wood waste – data, legislation, trade, etc.) and expand on other uses of wood fibres – particularly improve on engineered wood products;
- Increase involvement of the ToS – e.g. by asking for specific input or review of current chapters (e.g. CLT in North America, wood waste, modular construction);
- Consider launching a user survey to better understand the audience and use of the publication;

The team discussed that LCA and circularity aspects are not discussed in the FPAMR but are becoming more and more important in the discussion about circularity aspects as well as the discussion on carbon footprint of forest products. The ToS specifically highlighted in this regard:

- Burning of wood waste is prohibited in Norway;
- Landfill of organic matters is prohibited in Europe. However, in many countries (including the United States of America and Canada) this is still the norm. This can deteriorate significantly the carbon footprint in Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) of wood due to methane emissions at the end of the life cycle if landfill is in anaerobic, e.g. water-logged, conditions.

- Logistical aspects of lifecycle matters should be considered for future communication strategies. Suggested a separate meeting in the future to define internal and external paths.
- Future interactions between the carbon market and wood products should be more elaborated.
- Participants suggested that it could be good to have a UNECE-wide standard on how to account for the end of life in LCA for wood products;

Item 3. Market discussions and country market statements

The secretariat provided a short overview on this year's market discussion and emphasized that the secretariat received a wealth of information in the 16 country market statements (<https://unece.org/forests/2021-country-market-statements>) – Two additional country market statements are expected to be submitted in the coming weeks.

The team thanked the secretariat for the work and discussed how to improve the market discussion and how to make better use of the country market statements in the future

Members of the ToS provided the following advice regarding the Market Discussion:

- Market Discussions are a key component of the Committee and the ToS considers one hour far too short to attract participants from industry – namely if the meetings will be held in person in the future. The team advised to organize one day on market related issues in the widest sense (plenary and side events) – which could include circularity aspects/green economy, etc.;
- Members of the ToS expressed their great satisfaction that speakers were able to include Timber Forecast information in their presentations;
- The ToS confirmed that no press release about the Market discussion/market statement was needed – LinkedIn and e-mail distribution lists seems to be highly effective channels to reach the target audiences.

Members of the ToS discussed the following items relate to the Country Market Statements:

- The country market statements are very heterogenous with regards to content, quality, timeliness, structure and layout;
- It would be desirable to further streamline the country market statement, perhaps via a template with required and optional sections, but this may reduce the response rate by member States;
- The big variability in quality and timeliness of market statements hinders an extensive, easy use by the secretariat;
- Consider integrating country market statements during the market discussions which may further improve quality and content of the discussions.

- Consider launching a social media campaign after the Market Discussions for highlighting the outcomes and products (country market statements, but also FPAMR, forecast tables, presentations).

The meeting was suspended at this point and continued on 09 December 2021.

Item 4. Visibility of UNECE data (including but not limited to INForest - <https://forest-data.unece.org>)

At the beginning of the second part of the meeting of the ToS (09 December 2021), the secretariat provided a short introduction to the item on how data are currently used and presented by the secretariat.

Participants highlighted that the secretariat should not only rely on the guidance provided by them, but also to widen the basis for such an assessment to all stakeholders of the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section – specially to determine the composition of the users and their specific needs.

ToS members participating in the discussion stated that they use both mobile appliances, and desktop computer for accessing the information/UNECE website and strongly recommended to keep a broad access possible.

The most important products on the UNECE website were publications, meeting documents and data on production and trade (which are considered as key element for any assessment) for all countries and markets. Data are also used for comparing countries against each other (e.g., ministries who want to benchmark their forests-based sector to other countries sectors...). Participants from academia stated that the information on the website is used in teaching and education

Not all participants were aware of the INForest platform. They stated that it is very easy to use, and it is a great outreach tool for presenting general figures to the broader public and wondered to which extent the detailed information on products, production and trade could be presented. It became clear that the INForest platform will not be able to serve all purposes.

The INForest platform also has its limitations in presenting the entire dataset that is available at the various parts of the Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section. The ToS therefore suggested a two-prong approach with INForest as platform for the general public and a data warehouse tool for easy detailed analytical assessment.

The INForest platform will not be able to be used as online data collection tool which would require something far different. The detailed requirements and functionalities of such a tool will have to be carefully examined.

Members of the ToS stated that it was easy for them to find the information on the website. However, this is basically due to the regular use and the fact that they are well acquainted with the structure and information available. Several members stated that

the website looks a bit “old-fashioned” and the structure is hard to understand. Note that some forest information is available at ECE Statistics web site (https://w3.unece.org/PXWeb2015/pxweb/en/STAT/STAT_26-TMSTAT1/). This will soon have the Pan-European information removed (now at FRA site) while adding INForest data.

Overall, the ToS advised to keep the website content driven and for professional use (detailed data, database, documents, etc.) and avoid trivializing the messages when reaching out to a wider audience.

The ToS proposed the following improvements to the website and the Joint Section’s outreach activities:

Website:

- Improve search capacities on the website and prevent old/outdated pages to show up on google results;
- Add and maintain a page with links to national data provider organizations and to industries

Increase coverage of data and information:

- More data/information on engineered wood products;
- Better information on policy trends;
- Standardized data on forest damages would be highly appreciated;
- Include more products in INForest;
- Widen the products covered – e.g. consider repeating the data collection on Engineered Wood Products (EWPs). Trial EWP questionnaire was conducted in 2019 and 2020 with moderate responses.

Social media:

- Fully embrace social media – they can be useful if used in the right way;
- Facebook and Youtube can be good channels to get a message heard – create and actively manage accounts;
- The ToS has a strong preference to further develop LinkedIn and Twitter;
- Adjust social media platforms based on the preferred sub-regional preferences/availabilities – LinkedIn Facebook, YouTube, Twitter may not be available everywhere (e.g. blocked in Russian Federation and China) – consider subscribing to other platforms, such as Telegram (Russia) or Wechat or Weibo (China);
- ResearchGate may be useful to reach out to science communities.

Improved communication:

- Actively reach out to media;
- Engage more with universities;
- Improve work with youth – IFSA?

- Data for professionals and better visualizations and infographics.

The team advised developing a bigger online survey to obtain a more comprehensive overview on how to further improve the outreach activities and branding of the products prepared by the Joint Section.

Beyond the website, the ToS discussed the following points for improving outreach of the Forestry and Timber Section:

- Communication strategies of the secretariat and the ToS on publications and reports need to be adapted to reflect the ongoing importance of digital media Furthermore, to be framed by pro-active behaviour in public relations to reach audience outside the forest sector;
 - Would it be possible to add participation of the ToS in other Committees to gain new partnerships and synergies effectively (e.g., Housing Committee or Energy Efficiency);
 - More strategical approaches are needed to make connection to the private and public sector to make use of overlaps. Therefore, more time for communication is needed within the ToS. Similar approaches are already made in the housing sector;
 - Suggested regular meetings throughout the year to share knowledge and to discuss topics further. – not necessarily considered as ToS but rather a short catch up on important matters – current or upcoming;
 - Eoin: Underlines that more proactive intentions are needed.
- o Use social media to promote the work on the secretariat. For example, in 2020, LinkedIn was used to successfully promote the ToS webinar on wood in construction. This was focused and cost effective.

Item 5. Data collection (JFSQ/TFQ/EWP/JWEE) and their role for market assessments

The team decided to postpone the item until the next meeting due to lack of meeting time.

Item 6. Other events for team members to attend/meet at/report on (all).

Team members did not highlight any particular events or meetings, but they are invited to inform the secretariat so that this information can be circulated among team members directly.

Item 7. Future meeting(s).

The secretariat will propose the date for the next meeting of the ToS, once the nomination process is finalized (see Item 8 below). The team highlighted that it is important to distinguish between internal meetings of the ToS and actual activities e.g. workshops etc. The team expressed its interest in contributing to the organization of the next IDF and the secretariat informed the Team about the current status of the planning for the International Day of Forests 2022 (IDF2022). The theme of the IDF2022 *“Forests and sustainable production and consumption”*. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber

Section plans to organize two online events on (i) forests for fashion and (ii) forests products for packaging. The secretariat will reach out to the team for consulting with them about possible speaker and highlights.

Item 8. Any other business.

The secretariat informed the Team that the Joint Session of ECE COFFI and FAO EFC approved the Integrated Programme of Work 2022-2025. In the next step that document will be discussed by ECE Executive Committee in January 2022 and the secretariat will start the nomination process after successful approval. Members of the ToS will be invited to confirm their interest staying on the team for the coming two years. The consolidated list of experts who confirm interest will be sent to Heads of Delegations with the invitation to further complete the list of experts by nominating additional experts. At the end of the process, the secretary of each of the Teams will organize a first meeting of the Team – ideally in Q1 of 2022 and an election of Leader and Deputy.

Item 9. The meeting was closed at 17:45 CET on 09 December 2021.

Annex: Attendance list of both meetings:

Full Name	24-Nov-2021	09-Dec-2021
Aasmund Bunkholt	X	X
Achim Schafer	X	
Alex McCusker	X	X
Andrzej Talarczyk	X	X
Annika Hyytiä	X	X
Bastian Stahl	X	
Branko Glavonjic	X	X
Christopher Gaston		X
Delton Alderman		X
Denis Popov	X	
Diego Benedetti	X	X
Eduard Akim		X
Enrico Pompei	X	
Eoin O'Driscoll	X	X
Florian Steierer	X	X
Gregorio Chamorro Garcia	X	
Holger Weimar	X	
Igors Krasavcevs	X	X
Igor Novoselov		X
Isabelle Brose	X	
Jeremy WALL	X	X
Jukka Torvelainen	X	
Mati Valgepea	X	
Rafal Gruszczynski	X	
Sara Piloni	X	
Sven Walter	X	
Sylvain Labbé	X	X
Tobias Stern		X
Tomaž Remic	X	
Zbyněk ŠMÍDA	X	X