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Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party
on Forest Economics and Statistics

Thirtieth session
Geneva, 2-3 April 2008
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

NATIONAL WOOD BALANCES WORKSHOP RESULTS

Workshop Context and Related Activities

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

This report aims to inform the participants of the thirtieth session of the Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics about the activities on wood availability and demand carried out since the last session in March 2007, including the workshop on national wood resource balances (31 March – 1 April 2008).

Major activities on wood availability and demand were:

- Study on wood availability and demand, presented at the Policy Forum 2007 and its update;
- UNECE/FAO Policy Forum on “Opportunities and impacts of bioenergy policies and targets on the forest and other sectors”;
- Workshop on national wood resource balances.

During the workshop on national wood resource balances, discussion will include how to continue the work to further improve the quality and availability of information on wood availability and demand, as well as wood energy.

National wood balances are suggested as an approach to cross-check and validate data. Empirical research at the national level is crucial to obtain and improve data in countries where data is missing or weak. Coordination of research on international level is suggested.

The delegates of the Working Party are invited to review and discuss the results and conclusions of the workshop. In relation to the work on improving conversion factors, as well as conducting and coordination empirical research on national level, the Working Party can discuss and endorse relevant action, if needed.

1. This document is produced in accordance with the programme of work as approved by the Timber Committee in ECE/TIM/2007/9, paragraphs 27 and 28, saying “The Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics at its session in 2008 should review and guide this work”.

I. BACKGROUND: THE TIMBER SECTION’S ACTIVITIES IN WOOD ENERGY AND WOOD AVAILABILITY AND DEMAND

2. Wood is currently the major source for renewable energy in Europe. With increasing global prices for fossil fuels, concerns over security of energy supply and new commitments to reduce CO₂ emissions, wood energy continues to increase in importance. Facing these challenges, and also the wood-processing industries’ increasing need for wood raw material, has led to an acute need for up-to-date, reliable information on wood sources and uses. This information is either not available or weak in many countries.

3. The Joint UNECE/FAO/IEA/EC Wood Energy Enquiry conducted in 2006 has started a process to collect improved information on sources and uses for wood energy on a comparable Europe-wide basis.

4. At the workshop "mobilizing wood resources" in January 2007 in Geneva, recommendations on how to increase wood mobilization were elaborated with over one hundred stakeholders from different sectors.

5. These previous activities have permitted the creation of national and European-level wood resource balances (study on “wood resources availability and demands”). The study assesses 2005 figures for sources of wood supply and use by using the approach of a wood resource balance. The balance enables comparison of sources of wood supply with actual wood uses, and thus cross-checking the data, which helps in identifying weaknesses and gaps in data. Further, an analysis of renewable energy policies was conducted, and their significance in terms of wood requirement was estimated. For more details on the wood balance please see the background paper, ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2008/4.

6. The study was launched in early 2007 by the UNECE/FAO Timber Section and the University of Hamburg together with other partners of the task force on “wood availability and demand” (European Commission (DG Enterprise), Confederation of European Paper Industry - CEPI, European Panel Federation - EPF, Swedish Forest Agency, Metsäteho Oy, Finland). Major sources of information for the study were the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry and the Joint Forest Sector questionnaire. Existing outlook studies for the forest sector (EFSOS) and policy objectives for renewable energy and bioenergy were used to build scenarios for wood demand and supply in 2010 and 2020. The results of the study were presented at the UNECE/FAO Policy Forum on "Impacts and opportunities of bioenergy policies on the forest and other sectors" (10 October 2007). Following the Policy Forum, the results of the study were reviewed and revised by national correspondents and experts. The final output will be presented at the workshop on national wood resource balance on 31 March – 1 April 2008.

7. The analytical work resulting from the study on wood availability and demands has identified data gaps and inconsistencies which need to be resolved. In many countries crucial data on wood supply (in particular for currently unrecorded removals from the forest, post-consumer recovered wood, and woody biomass from outside the forest) and wood use (for energy use in households and small biomass power plants) have never been collected. This

information is indispensable in assessing the current and future availability and use of wood, both for bioenergy and for the wood and paper industry.

8. Empirical research, such as household and industry surveys, is the main tool to gather basic data on wood sources. Knowing the current sources (from forests and other sources) and uses of wood is the main basis for assessing the future potential for wood, which is crucial for planning and decision-making related not only to the forest-based sector as a whole but also for the renewable energy sector.

Table 1: Past and proposed activities on monitoring and forecasting wood resources and demands

Phase	Type of activity	Description / Title	Date	Status
I	Enquiry	The Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE): Improving data on wood energy:	2005 - 2007	done
II	Workshop	Mobilising wood resources (workshop in Geneva)	January 2007	done
III	Study and Conference	Wood resources availability and demands: Overview based on existing data (study presented at the UNECE/FAO Policy Forum, 10 October)	Mar – Oct 2007	done
IV	Data review	Review of the data and information presented in the study (phase III) by national correspondents	Nov 07- Apr 08	ongoing
	Workshop	Workshop on national wood resource balances	Mar/Apr 2008	
V	Study	Empirical study on national level in several European countries to gather new and improve existing data on energy use of wood and sources of wood	2008 - 2010	proposed
VI	Study / Process	Incorporating wood supply and demand into sector outlook study	2008 - 2009	proposed

II. WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL WOOD RESOURCE BALANCES

9. The main objective of the workshop is to outline a framework for empirical research to improve data on wood sources and uses, including on wood energy.

10. The workshop will start by reviewing the results of the study on “Wood resources availability and demands”, and discuss its conclusions and findings on data gaps and weaknesses. Based on the findings of the study, a framework for research will be discussed. This framework should consider priorities regarding research areas, best practices, and knowledge transfer. Also important are the questions of the time-scale and resources for empirical research.

11. In the course of the workshop, different methodologies for empirical research on wood sources and uses, including on wood energy, will be introduced and discussed. Different countries will introduce their respective approaches and share their experiences. The "wood

resource balance" will be presented as a tool to compare wood supply and use, and thereby highlight possible data gaps.

III. CONVERSION FACTORS (material input / product output)

12. A special topic of the workshop is conversion factors, describing the amount (in cubic meter) of raw wood equivalent to produce a certain amount of wood product (e.g. sawn wood, panels or pulp).

13. Wood resource balances depend on accurate conversion of wood input to product output and vice versa, since the "overall unit" used in the wood resource balance is cubic meter roundwood equivalent. Conversion factors are crucial for wood balances, but also for many other analyses of wood flows on national, regional and international level.

14. During the workshop, an overview of existing conversion factors will be presented. Weaknesses and problems with existing conversion factors will be pointed out and discussed. This could be a basis to set up a plan to improve and update the conversion factor and obtain a set of conversion factors for countries in the UNECE region.

IV. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE WORKSHOP AT THE WORKING PARTY

15. A summary and conclusions of the Workshop will be prepared for the Working Party.
