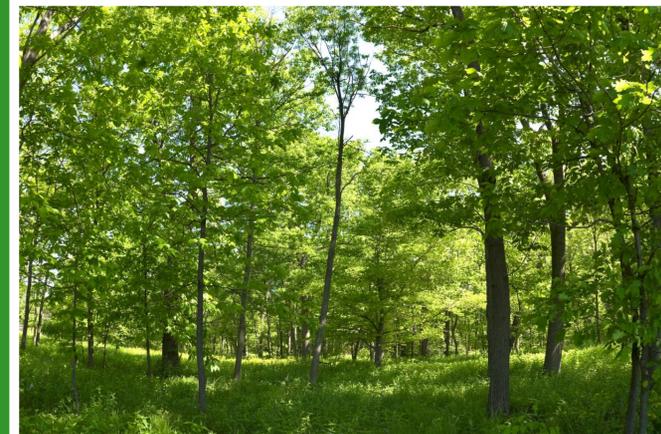


BACKGROUND



Wood is considered humankind's very **first source of energy**. Today, it still is the **most important single source of renewable energy**, providing over 9% of the global total primary energy supply.

Woodfuels come from multiple sources – not only forests: trees in forests and outside forests, co-products from wood processing, post-consumer recovered wood and wood pellets and briquettes.

Globally **more than two billion people** depend on wood energy for cooking and heating, particularly in developing countries, where it represents **the only domestically available and affordable source of energy**. Woodfuel use for cooking and heating in private households accounts for one third of global renewable energy consumption.

Global production of **fuelwood exceeds the production of industrial roundwood** in terms of volume.

In the UNECE region, the use of wood for energy **continues to grow at almost a 5% rate annually** (2011 - 2013) and currently accounts for about **half of all renewable energy**. Overall, wood energy accounts for 2.3% of all energy in North America, 5.1% in Europe and 1.0% in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Wood energy is also an **important emergency backup fuel**. Societies at any socio-economic level can use wood energy when disruption of regular energy sources or economic difficulties .



OUR WORK



The **UNECE region is rich in forest resources** with a forest area of 1.89 billion ha – 41.4% of the global total. It is also the region with the **highest concentration of wood-based industries**.

As a result of this intensive use of the forest in the UNECE region, the forest industry and other **stakeholders are concerned** with changes in market prices, supply and demand patterns, production processes, investment in the sector, rural livelihoods, climate change and biodiversity.

The joint **UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section monitors the state of forests in the region**, helps in developing evidence-based policies for sustainable forest management and communicates information on the many products and ecosystem services provided by forests to society.

The Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section works with countries of the region, as well as stakeholders. This is done through the organization of **meetings and events to raise awareness on specific forest-related issues**, gathering experts to advise on these issues, agreeing on appropriate actions. To provide a foundation for the above the section **compiles and analyses data and disseminates this knowledge** through publications and other communication material.

Wood energy is addressed in many aspects of the section's work and specifically through the advisory work of the **Team of Specialists on Wood Energy**, and publication of wood energy **market information** in the Forest Products Annual Market Review.



HOW WE RELATE TO WOOD ENERGY



Wood energy in the UNECE region is being **perceived very differently**. While its merits are appreciated and utilized for heating in economically advanced countries, it is still considered by many as a low-tech, messy and labor-intensive fuel of the poor in countries in economic transition.

There is **great potential to improve the efficient use of wood for cooking and heating**, particularly in countries in the western Balkan and central Asia. This, in turn, can **reduce the pressure on forest resources**, which is especially crucial in regions with limited forest resources.

Despite wood's role as the most important renewable energy in the UNECE region, **data is often scattered and incomplete**. The Joint Wood Energy Enquiry has made tremendous strides in improving data quality from member states and in assisting correspondents with data collection.

Capacity building workshops are used to assist member states in collecting, analyzing and sharing this information. **Cross-sectoral cooperation** and communication with the energy sector **is key** at all levels of this process.

Policies encouraging the reduction of carbon emissions lead the growth in wood energy markets and wood pellets lead the dynamic growth of wood-based fuels. **We monitor and report on these developments regularly** in the Forest Products Annual Market Review.

