

UNECE/FAO Timber Section

United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe



Food and Agriculture
Organization

Issue Number 17

www.unece.org/trade/timber

January-March 2008

In this issue

- Special Session on the Strategic Review and Plan
- Harvested Wood Products in the context of Climate Change Policy
- The Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform
- Wooden Supercar "The Splinter"
- Did you know?
- Emma and Paula
- Staff Changes
- Upcoming meetings and updates

Comments and suggestions from the timber and forestry community are most welcome. Please write to us at:

info.timber@unece.org

UNECE/FAO
Timber Section
Trade and Timber Division
Palais des Nations
CH - 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Tel.: +41 22 917 3254

Fax: +41 22 917 0041

Email: info.timber@unece.org
www.unece.org/trade/timber



United Nations

The Special Session on the Strategic Review and Plan of the UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme on Timber and Forestry will take place from 28 to 30 April 2008 at the United Nations Palais des Nations in Geneva.

All interested governments, stakeholders and members of the UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists are invited to participate in this important decision-making meeting, which will determine programme objectives, methods, governance, structures and content for the next five years.

The Session will provide an opportunity to review the outcome of the Strategic Review process, notably the draft Strategic Plan for the programme covering period 2008-13. A draft Plan for presentation during the Session has been prepared by the secretariat on the basis of inputs from member governments and stakeholders, after consultation of the joint bureaux of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission. The Session will also be informed of the results of the self-evaluations conducted by the secretariat and the Teams of Specialists. The results of the self-evaluations, and the responses to the Strategic Review questionnaire by all 8 Teams of Specialists, 24 governments and 11 stakeholders, containing their views on priorities and needs, and programme activities and performance are available on the Strategic Review website.

http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/strategic_review/2007-2008/strategic-review.htm

Agenda items on the cooperation with MCPFE and on the new FAO Strategy for Forestry have been included in the provisional agenda of the Special Session.

With regard to any questions on the Special Session, please do not hesitate to contact Kit Prins (christopher.prins@unece.org, tel: +41 22 917 28 74), or Franziska Hirsch (franziska.hirsch@unece.org tel: +41 22 917 24 80).

Forthcoming Workshop on Harvested Wood Products in the Context of Climate Change Policy from 9 to 10 September 2008 in Geneva

Wood products can contribute to climate mitigation: Long-lived wood products form a storage pool of wood-based carbon, and as raw material and energy source, wood can substitute for more energy-intensive materials and fossil fuels. So far, however, international climate policies have only provided the possibility to account for carbon sinks in forests through the Kyoto Protocol. This concept is not supportive of sustainable forest management, as forest carbon sinks give incentives to increase the carbon stock of forests, increasing the risk of forest instability and thus of becoming a CO₂ source. In contrast, accounting for harvested wood products (HWP) could help encourage silvicultural measures without losing the value of the forest carbon sink. While the value of HWP is recognized by many countries, the diverging effects of the suggested accounting methods on national Greenhouse Gas inventories have postponed the inclusion of wood products in the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Ongoing negotiations on the second commitment period open the way for possible inclusion of HWP.

The UNECE/FAO Timber Section will organize, jointly with the Swiss Confederation Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and other partners a workshop on "Harvested Wood Products in the context of climate change policy". The workshop will take place on 9-10 September 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland. The focus will be to provide high-level information for policy makers and other stakeholders on the role of wood products in fighting climate change. Measures and policies to increase the role of forest products in climate change mitigation will be discussed, and options and consequences of different choices for policy makers in the context of international negotiations will be reviewed.

Further information is available at:
www.unece.org/trade/timber/workshops/2008/hwp/concept_note_HWP.pdf

The Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform – An Introduction

When the European Council met in Lisbon, Portugal, in March 2000, EU leaders adopted a ten-year programme aimed at revitalising growth and sustainable development across the European Union. There was recognition that, if Europe was to remain competitive in a world in which globalization was spreading rapidly, innovation was a key element that would need to be fostered. The objective was to make Europe the most dynamic economy in the world by 2020. To achieve this, EU leaders adopted a 10-point Lisbon Strategy, which rested on three pillars: economic, social and environmental. For those working in forestry, this will have a familiar ring because these are the same pillars on which sustainable forest management has long been based.

A strong emphasis on innovation implies a strong focus on research, coupled with significant investment and the development of strong links between science and business. To achieve these, the EU has set up a number of **European Technology Platforms (ETP)**, including one for forestry, the **Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform (FTP)**. In essence, an ETP is a means of bringing together all interested stakeholders to develop a long-term vision to address specific challenges, create a coherent, dynamic strategy to achieve that vision and steer the implementation of an action plan to deliver agreed programmes of activities and optimise the benefits for all parties. Technology Platforms are industry-driven.

The FTP has as primary objectives, the definition of a **Strategic Research Agenda (SRA)** for the medium to long-term and the establishment of effective public-private partnerships to implement this agenda. The basis of the SRA was the document "Vision 2030", published in February 2005, which presents a comprehensive assessment of the key factors, challenges and opportunities that will drive the forest-based sector in Europe.

In February 2006, the FTP produced its SRA based on proposals from across Europe, encompassing the full range of complexity and variety that the sector represents; from paper to packaging, from building with wood to bio-energy from wood, from trees to new trends. The SRA contains five strategic objectives:

- *Strategic Objective 1: Development of innovative products for changing markets and customer needs;*
- *Strategic Objective 2: Development of intelligent and efficient manufacturing processes, including reduced energy consumption;*
- *Strategic Objective 3: Enhancing availability and use of forest biomass for products and energy;*
- *Strategic Objective 4: Meeting the multifunctional demands on forest resources and their sustainable management;*
- *Strategic Objective 5: The sector in a societal perspective.*

These strategic objectives have been specified into research areas under five so-called "**forest-based**

value chains", i.e. a string of institutions working together to satisfy market demands for a specific set of products and services. **The five value chains recognised within the FTP are: Forestry; Wood Products; Pulp & Paper Products; Bio-energy; and New businesses/Specialities.**

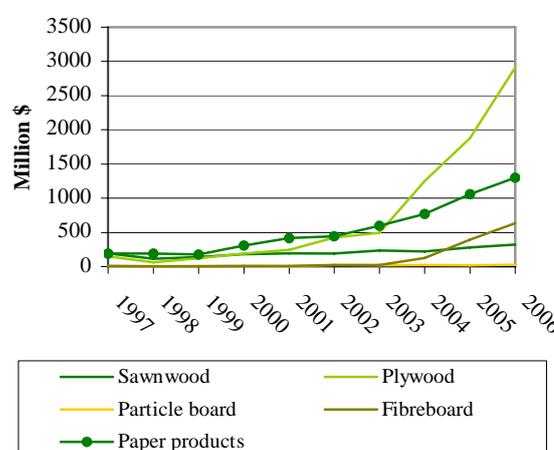
The platform itself does not provide funding for research, but it acts as a facilitator, bringing industry and the research community together, and a disseminator of information, for example about funding opportunities. Other important tasks of the FTP are to promote forest-based sector research, for example within the European Commission, and to raise awareness of the innovative character of the sector to policy makers.

The National Support Groups (NSG) play a very important role within this organisation, as they implement the platform's vision and research agenda at country level. NSGs bring together the entire forest-based sector in a specific country, including researchers and representatives of industry, national financing bodies and governmental organisations. At the time, there are 24 NSGs, which is unique for a Technology Platform. See at: www.forestplatform.org

China is both an importer of wood raw materials from the UNECE region as well as increasingly an exporter of finished and semi-finished products to UNECE region markets.

The Chinese Government has successfully attracted foreign investment through generous promotional policies. Importing countries are frequently divided on the benefits and detriments of the new trade channels. For example, in the US, half of imported wooden furniture imports came from China in 2006, mainly from US joint ventures. More information on this and other facets of forest products can be found in the UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2006-2007. To download a free copy go to: <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/tc-publ.htm>

Chinese forest products exports, 1997-2006



Source: Tan, X. et al., 2007.

Wooden Supercar “The Splinter”

Designer Joe Harmon, 27, has embarked on a project, along with other students at North Carolina State University, to discover the potential of wood as a car-building material – with the aim of building a supercar. In approaching the task, Joe wanted to challenge the widespread prejudice that the wood will burn or crack or splinter and instead simply to see wood as just another material that has its advantages and disadvantages. The end result is stunning, with wood in one form or another - plywood, laminated veneer lumber - having been used for almost everything except the engine and driving parts. In a recent interview, Joe Harmon the designer, commented, "Wood is a truly amazing material to work with. It has a higher strength-to-weight ratio than aluminium or steel, and it possesses a versatility that makes many different types of construction techniques possible. The look, feel, and smell of a natural material like wood are not seen elsewhere and cannot be faked, and the satisfaction involved in making something from a piece of wood is awesome."

During the project, the designers have worked with coating specialists and others to produce new materials to increase the durability, water-resistance and UV stability of the plywood, for example. Thus, even though it is unlikely that a wooden supercar will go into regular production, many of the new materials and lessons learned could find wider application.



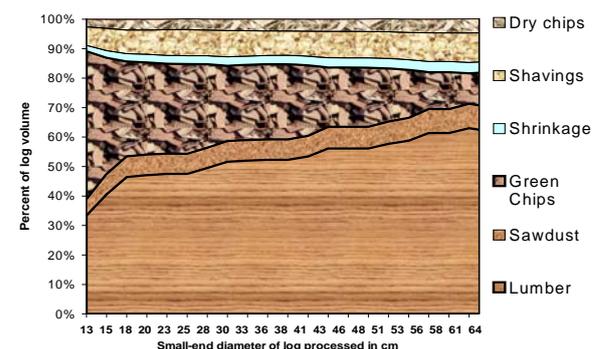
As for the design - take a look for yourself!

You will find much more information on Joe Harmon's website: <http://www.joeharmondesign.com/>

Did You Know ...

That a typical cubic metre (m³) of logs (1.12 m³ over bark) delivered to a sawmill from the forest, produces the following:

- 0.12 m³ of bark, which is commonly used as boiler fuel (energy) or mulch/decorative ground cover;
- 0.34 m³ of chips which can be used for paper, fibreboard, wood energy;
- 0.07 m³ of sawdust that can be used for fibreboard, particleboard, wood pellets (energy), low grade paper;
- 0.59 m³ of rough green sawnwood (lumber), which if dried and planed will result in:
 - 0.47 m³ of dry-finished sawnwood;
 - 0.03 m³ of volume loss due to shrinkage;
 - and 0.09 m³ in planer shavings (used for the same purposes as sawdust and often used as animal bedding).
- Recovery of sawnwood generally increases with log diameter (see the graph below).



Emma and Paula strike parts of Central Europe's Forest.

Two heavy storms have devastated parts of Central Europe's forests in the first quarter of this year. Storm "Paula" (27 - 28 January), and just four weeks later storm "Emma" (29 February – 2 March) hit Central Europe.

Paula caused most damage to forests in Austria, about 6.2 million cubic metres in total were blown down, mostly in Styria 4 million cubic metres and Carinthia 1.7 million cubic metres.

Only four weeks later "Emma" hit Europe. Emma killed 14 people in Europe and estimates of damage range from 750 to 1,400 million Euros.

Emma felled 3.55 million cubic metres of wood in Germany, 1.6 million cubic metres in Austria and about 1.7 million cubic metres in the state forests of the Czech Republic. In Slovakia about 70 thousand cubic metres wood was felled by the storm.

In Poland the most significant damage occurred in the State Forests in Wroclaw and Katowice. The damage in Poland amounts to about 300 thousand cubic metres.

In February 2008, the UNECE/FAO Timber Section once again welcomed a group of Environmental Governance Master students from the University of Freiburg

This annual event is one of the highlights of a young and ambitious course and this year's group consisted of 22 students from 16 different countries, representing all continents.

The students visited the UNECE, ILO, UNCTAD, UNEP, WTO and IUCN, had lively exchanges with the experts and were able to establish contacts with the different departments. At the same time it was a great opportunity for the organizations to share their knowledge.



As one of the participating students, I gained awareness of the different approaches to environmental issues and how perceptions differ. We all appreciated the direct discussions which allowed us to explore the topics in depth, and we look forward to future close cooperation.

Jana Wendler, MEG Program

Staff Changes

Helena Guarin

Has taken a job with the European Commission in Brussels more consistent with her excellent qualifications. We are grateful for her excellent support to the Forest Resource Assessment and Joint Committee work during the last five years as an FAO staff member and previously as a consultant. In addition she wrote several Discussion Papers including one on Forest Sector Institutions in Europe. We will miss her and wish her and her family all the best in this new opportunity.

Friderike Beyer

As our Carlo Schmid Programme intern for 2007-2008, Friderike worked on wood mobilization and potential wood supply. Despite our entreaties, she has returned to Germany to pursue her Ph.D studies at Göttingen.

Karen Taylor

Has joined the section to replace Cynthia de Castro. We welcome her to the team and look forward to improving our work practices while we educate her on forestry! Karen, from Bruges, has worked with the UNECE for several years and we are happy to have such a qualified person for the job. As she deals with administrative issues and the areas of policy and the Timber Committee, many of our readers will come in contact with her in the future.

*** In remembrance of ***

Dr. Walter Bitterlich (1908–2008), who gave us “variable plot sampling”, the relascope and countless tools and techniques for measuring the forest, passed away in Reutte Austria on 9 February 2008, just ten days shy of his 100th birthday. No doubt the accuracy and ease of collecting forest inventory data, which so many of us use in our day to day work in producing forest statistics and forest planning, would not be the same had it not been for this brilliant man.

Jean Pardé (1919-2008) was a leading French silviculturalist, specialised in tree measurement, who played an important role in the scientific world in France, but also internationally through IUFRO (he was made member of honour of IUFRO in 1982). He was also a prolific writer and editor, notably through the Revue forestière française.

Current and upcoming meetings in 2008

- Geneva, 28-30 April, Special Session of the Timber Committee on the Strategic Review of the Integrated UNECE/FAO Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry
- Vienna, 26-27 May, Fourth Meeting of the Team of Specialists Monitoring Forest Resources for Sustainable Forest Management
- Timisoara, Romania, 10-11 June, Workshop on Modern Wood Energy Systems Markets – an opportunity for South-East Europe
- Geneva, 9-10 September, Harvested wood products in the context of climate change policy
- Brussels and Rome, 20-24 October, European Forest Week

The UNECE/FAO Timber Section held a two-day workshop on National Wood Resource Balances from 31 March to 1 April 2008

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. At the same time increasing demands for woody raw material by the wood-processing industries has led to an acute need for up-to-date, reliable statistical information on wood sources and uses. This information is either not available, or weak in many countries.

The speakers and participants at the workshop highlighted the usefulness of wood resource balances as a tool to comprehensively assess sources and uses of wood, stressed the importance of empirical research in this field and underlined the need for additional resources to carry out such exercises.

Over 100 participants from 30 countries and various stakeholder groups attended the meeting. The presentations, as well as the conclusions and recommendations are available online:

www.unece.org/trade/timber/workshops/2008/wood-balance/documents.htm