

Report on meeting of ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Products Statistics

As of 30 October 2020

2 September 2020 – 14:00-18:00 (Geneva time) virtual meeting via Teams

Meeting page is <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=53083>

Leader: Branko Glavonjic

Deputy Leader: Graça Louro

1) Welcome and agenda, introductions

The Team was welcomed to the virtual meeting. There were 27 participants with 15 countries represented as well as 4 non-governmental organizations and one inter-governmental organization (list of participants is attached to email). The draft agenda was approved. Participants introduced themselves.

2) Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ)

The Team reviewed the JFSQ 2018 results and preliminary JFSQ 2019 returns.

Several problems were raised. The veneer data should cover total veneer, including that used in plywood. Doublecounting in this case is acceptable (as in pulp/paper relationship). It is not clear to Secretariat what is situation in JFSQ replies. Germany and Estonia pointed out that they do provide this. **Request countries to specifically indicate coverage via a survey.**

Recovered pulp should be better reported. Data have been improving in recent years (France, Germany, US). Germany mentioned study paper on paper balance and offered to lead discussion on estimating recovered pulp. It is important countries can estimate recovered pulp – one rule of thumb is to assign 80% of recovered paper.

JFSQ data on recovered wood seemed to be of good quality. The team concluded that the discussion on definitions, differences and similarities between wood waste and recovered wood should be continued with the wood energy team of specialists. **The next JWEE should include the data from JFSQ on this.** Several people urged use of Eurostat wood waste as a complementary source of data. **The Secretariat will provide a comparison of wood waste with JFSQ.**

The wood balance was reviewed. Most countries are familiar with this. It is meant to assist in determining possible data problems, not to provide a comprehensive view of all possible flows. Conversion factors are left for countries to modify as they wish. **The wood fiber balance should provide net trade in chips with a factor for allocating these to wood energy.** Participants questioned the term “solid wood equivalent” for paper. Tracking stock changes have been considered but these seem too difficult to monitor.

It should be made clear that latest year data are provisional. Normally final data come in second half of year. Correspondents were urged to estimate if the relationship between initial and final data was relatively consistent.

The JFSQ data are processed initially in May-July and distributed by FAOSTAT in August. Additional and updated data are processed in October-November and distributed via FAOSTAT in December.

The questionnaires posted on the website are useful (<https://www.unece.org/forests/forestsfpmonlinedata/jfsq/jq-country.html>). **The latest versions should replace the initial version.**

A proposal to drop sleepers and stained wood in ECE/EU questionnaire to simplify HS codes was tacitly accepted. **This will be discussed at next IWG** along with need for 1.2.C.Other.

3) Timber Forecast Questionnaire (TFQ)

The Secretariat explained the importance of the forecast this year which will appear in the *Forest Products Annual Market Review* (FPAMR). To a question on the deadline, this is normally 5 weeks before the meeting of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) but this time is earlier, as an exception because of importance of 2020 forecasts and their use in published version of FPAMR.

4) Engineered Wood Products questionnaire (EWP)

The draft data tables were shown and data problems discussed. The Team called for **publication of the tables and to continue the inquiry for 2018-2019 later this year**. Data quality should improve over time, particularly with introduction of HS 2022.

Several people commented on new plants being set up in their countries to produce CLT.

A question was raised on whether CLT should include mass plywood panels (MPP). **The definitions should be reviewed and made explicit about this.**

5) Harmonised System

FAO presented the work on HS 2022 and plans for starting HS 2027. It was seen as important and successful work that needed consistent application to succeed.

The problem of poor secondary unit reporting was raised. General conversion factors are available in JFSQ (or latest publication). EPF suggested using both weight to volume conversion factors and unit value to come up with a reasonable volume measure. Germany suggested studying individual transaction level data (if available at Customs).

Also issue of bark being included in mass and volume measures in trade statistics. Germany said this was not the case, following a question from timber trade federation. Roundwood values do not count the bark value. Countries were encouraged to look into this.

Eurostat explained procedures used to request new CN codes. These codes could be requested every year. The request to distinguish bark included in chips was explained and the reasons for this rejection. **The Team wanted to try again,**

perhaps based on chip origin (forest vs industry) or size. Value seemed not feasible in current market. There was discussion about using existing waste wood codes to get chip data; Latvia is helping to look into this.

6) Statistical systems

The Team was updated on results of cooperation between secretariats. The ITTO letter encouraging countries to respect the legal agreements to supply data (per ITTA 2006) was appreciated.

8) Updates on ECE/FAO projects

The Conversion Factor study has been published. Future work could include more analysis at the species level for density and shrinkage based on common standards.

The planned JFSQ correspondents workshop will be organized as a virtual meeting if sufficient interest exists in the target countries.

The ECE presented a project to provide easy data visualizations for selected indicators to provide access to forest data. The Team welcomed this approach.

7) Updates from countries *(see end of report)*

9) Priorities for new developments in statistics and improving synergies

The Secretariat has worked on the chips issues with support from Igors Kravcecs. We would welcome support from other Team members to advance any of the issues here or raise other issues. **Team members should contact the Secretariat.**

The below items are listed in order of interest expressed on the Survey Monkey poll in June.

a) Distinguishing chips used for energy versus chips used for industry. See discussion under item 5. We should continue to pursue this question. A possibility suggested after the meeting was to use JWEE chip consumption to subtract from JFSQ chip availability to see non-energy chips.

b) Survey of removals. We have not devoted time to working on this yet.

c) Doublecounting of production. A survey on sawmilling has been circulated. Not enough responses were received, we will raise issue again.

d) Price Statistics – the ECE/FAO publishes approximately 80 price series, mostly collected from public sources. This is usually updated once per year and uses a small part of our work effort. It is the single most visited part of the website.

We would like to improve scope and presentation of these data.

e) MDF/HDF and hardboard data. We continue to have difficulty in correctly classifying data here. Following rejection of changes to this for the HS 2022 an

immediate solution does not look feasible. In addition, there are concerns about how laminate flooring is classified.

f) Nominal versus actual sizes in sawnwood.

10) Next meeting, topics, timing and location

An evaluation and feedback form was sent after the meeting to the participants.

The Secretariat presented the Strategic Review and the possible reduction in Teams and merging FPS with Wood Energy (maintain a focus on statistics rather than policy). One country immediately expressed its concern that this would be a poor solution. **Team members are encouraged to express their views on this issue, either to secretariat or national delegates to COFFI meeting.**

The Working Party 2021 is tentatively planned for 23-25 March 2021 in Geneva. March 22 is International Day of Forests and we would likely schedule the ToS meeting for that day.

Links and reports of interest

Ireland

A woodflow report, an annual document produced by COFORD, an Agency within the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). Shows all wood fibre in use on the island of Ireland. Based on data provided for JFSQ and JWEE.

<http://www.coford.ie/media/coford/content/publications/2018/00900CCNPP51Woodflow%20-%20We.pdf>