

THE IWG ON FOREST SECTOR STATISTICS

E3- Environmental statistics and accounts

Intersecretariat Working Group (IWG) on Forest Sector Statistics brings together Eurostat, the FAO, the UNECE and International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) in collecting forest sector statistics. The Commission's Directorates General Agriculture, Enterprise and Environment, the European Environmental Agency and the OECD are also members.

The role of the IWG is to coordinate activities between the organisations involved in forest sector statistics collection with the aim of reducing duplication of work and improving data quality. The basic objectives adopted are:

- no piece of information should be requested twice from the same country by different international organisations
- there should be the same value for the same transaction in all international data sets.

The primary tool to implement this is the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ) used by all organisations. Each agency collects data from the countries for which it is responsible. The secretariats share the collected data and then use it for their publications. Eurostat sends the questionnaire to EU and EFTA member states, UNECE carries out the same task for the rest of the countries within the ECE region, ITTO for producers of tropical timber and Japan and FAO Rome for the rest of the world. The JFSQ has reduced the workload on countries and also reduced discrepancies in data between the international organisations.

The IWG is a purely informal body and has no decision taking powers or authority. Its members are answerable to their own authorities and statutory bodies, who must make decisions in the normal way.

The IWG on Forest Sector Statistics held its first meeting in December 1994 in Geneva. Since then it has met once or twice a year. The meetings are usually held in connection with meetings of other forest economics and statistics bodies and usually chaired by the representative of the host organisation.