

International Transport Forum

Statistics meeting

SUMMARY RECORD

10-11 April 2014 OECD, Paris

Chair: Ms Patricia Hu, Director, US Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Item 1. Welcome

Mr Jari Kauppila, Head of ITF Statistics, welcomed all participants and introduced the meeting background and expected outcomes. The meeting was design to provide an opportunity to maintain and develop regular contacts with a wide range of transport actors to share views, experiences and to join forces to develop efficiently international transport statistics. The goal of the meeting was to suggest common solutions to a series of issues relevant to transport statistics. The aim was also to contribute to the development of a more consistent and efficient international framework for transport statistics, by promoting exchange between transport experts from different countries and suggesting solutions

The Chair, Ms Patricia Hu, also welcomed all participants and opened the session by emphasising the importance of transport data, including infrastructure spending data, for policy making.

Item 2. ITF Task Force on “Measuring infrastructure investment and maintenance”

Mr Jari Kauppila presented the background of the ITF Task Force on “Measuring infrastructure investment and maintenance” and briefly introduced the Task Force recommendation (presentation attached). The participants discussed the recommendations and implementation at the national level and agreed on the next steps summarized below:

Recommendation 1. Minimum data requirements

Participants approved the recommendation with few clarifications, but raised some concerns about the coverage and the scope of the data and made the following suggestions:

- Change the wording from “minimum data requirements” to “targeted data requirements”;
- ITF will provide a better definition of the network meant in the recommendation, i.e. urban - non-urban, central government - local government, public - private etc.
- ITF will add a check-list to the next investment questionnaire to help data providers to assess what parts of the network their data refer to.
- Countries will also be asked to provide an estimate on the coverage of these data, in terms of share of total traffic, network length or total spending, in order to establish the coverage of the data provided.
- ITF will collaborate with the OECD National Accounts Committee to see if they could provide transport infrastructure spending in the detail transport statistics need (broken down by transport mode and asset type). This, and several other items, will be included in the agenda of the next OECD National Accounts Committee, which will take place in Paris 3-7 November.

[Recommendation 2. Capital stock by asset type](#)

Transport infrastructure represents one of the biggest assets Governments hold but lack information on its value as Statistical offices and Transport Ministries struggle to collect capital stock data. The Task Force proposed to utilize information provided by the National Accounts to overcome these data gaps.

Mr Peter Van De Ven, Head of the OECD National Accounts, briefly described the potential of the SNA and more specifically the Perpetual Inventory Method (PIM) used to calculate capital stock (presentation attached). Further to the discussion participants decided:

- There is a need for more/better information in order to justifying capital stock data collection, i.e. what kind of policy relevant questions can be answered with these data;
- Not to launch new data collection on capital stock, since it would likely lead to low response rates;
- To collaborate with National Accounts Committee to assess what data would be readily available from national accounts with a classification useful for the transport policy. ITF secretariat will work together with the OECD National Accounts Committee to define next steps.

[Recommendation 3. Definitions of used terms](#)

Internationally accepted definitions are the basis for any data collection common to different countries. The Task Force report suggests definitions and data coverage but still the distinction between major repair and maintenance operation is not a clear cut. Participants generally agreed on definitions and decided that:

- ITF will clarify further the definitions between regular maintenance and for example major renovations;
- ITF will further clarify what is intended to be included in some wordings (operations, renewal, upgrade etc.);
- ITF secretariat will have an additional round of written consultation for additional comments
- ITF secretariat will include additional definitions to the Glossary for Transport Statistics.

[Recommendation 4. Classification by asset type](#)

Harmonised classification by asset type is key to meaningful data benchmarking. The group concluded that:

- Classifications need still further verification, especially for sea ports and airports
- ITF will send a list of current classification to countries for any additional classifications that they might use, especially for airports and ports;
- ITF will further clarify the scope which varies from one mode to another (for example airports terminals are included while for railways stations are not).

[Recommendation 5. Cost index](#)

Various cost indices are currently used to calculate transport infrastructure spending in constant values. Transport infrastructure construction specific indices are recommended. The participants agreed that:

- The ITF will circulate a list of deflators currently used and invites countries to suggest other ones if not appropriate;
- ITF secretariat, in collaboration with the OECD national accounts, will set a stepwise approach for using cost indices for deflating transport infrastructure spending data by proposing the first best, second best etc. approach. These results will be sent to countries for information and for use.

[Recommendation 6. Purchasing Power Parities](#)

Specific PPPs related to civil engineering would improve international comparability and analytical use of infrastructure spending data. The group agreed on the need and recommended that the ITF secretariat works with the OECD National Accounts Committee to improve available data.

Recommendation 7. Metadata

Countries agreed on the importance of providing more metadata. To help them in this process the ITF will provide a metadata template (a check list) of the different points that need to be covered in the next questionnaire.

Item 3.3. Quality improvements of other ITF questionnaires

Mr Mario Barreto presented results from the quality reviewed of two other data surveys, namely the 'Annual trends data' and the 'Quarterly data', focusing on their relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, interpretability and cost efficiency (presentation attached). Countries appreciate these longstanding ITF data collections and the effort to improve the data quality. Participants made several suggestions for data improvements:

- To further improve relevance, it was suggested that ITF secretariat further improves the dissemination of statistics and develops more indicators for international benchmarking.
- Participants asked for plans to collect data on air and maritime transport, transport of dangerous goods and safety for other modes than road transport. The ITF is developing different partnerships with air and maritime data producers to gather these figures without overloading its current questionnaires. ITF secretariat will explore possibilities to include safety data for other modes and transport of dangerous good to future data collections.
- ITF secretariat will explore possibilities for working more in cooperation with Eurostat to see if ITF could use data already sent by EU member countries to Eurostat. This is an ITF on-going concern and cooperation with Eurostat and UNECE will continue to improve the efficiency of data collection.
- Participants noted that the ITF secretariat could further improve the promotion of statistics and demonstrate users the added value of ITF data collection. It was also suggested to have a public data compendium with policy relevant indicators.

Item 4. Dissemination of ITF statistical activities

Mr Kauppila presented the ITF Transport Outlook 2013 (presentation attached). The work on Transport Outlook was very well received and the publication was much appreciated. The ITF also pointed out the existence of Statlinks on every table and graph of the publication. This is a significant improvement to data accessibility and potentially helpful for making national comparisons.

Mr Edouard Chong presented the Statistics Brief on Global Trade and Transport. This product has proven to be a very useful early indicator and was appreciated by participants. It was suggested to expand the database further and make data accessible through the OECD.Stat.

Mr Barreto demonstrated the use of the new dissemination portal (OECD.Stat) for ITF statistics. All ITF data will be gradually moved to this portal. Participants found the portal very interesting and it received a lot of positive feedback. The data can be accessed directly at <http://dotstat.oecd.org/>

The presentation on ITF report on Taxes and Charges for Heavy Goods Vehicles, which contains many policy relevant indicators, was found very useful (presentation attached). ITF also informed that next update of the database will take place within two years. Participants provided several suggestions for the update, including expansion of database to the United States, Canada, Australia and Korea; impact of city tolls on charges; indication of the total income from road taxation.

Item 5. Innovation in transport measurement

Supply chain performance

Mr Louis Paul Tardif from Transport Canada made an excellent presentation via WEbex transmission, on “Measuring performance and resiliency of trade corridors” (presentation attached). The development of partnership with many industry actors proved to be key in this exercise. M. Tardif also informed the group that it is possible to apply the same approach to other countries.

Transport satellite accounts (TrSA)

France has a long experience in developing TrSA and M. Herbet from the French Transport Ministry presented their methodology, use and the latest update (presentation attached). He also indicated that their resources for this activity are one person full time during 6 months each year. There was a wide interest for the topic not only from the audience but also from some countries that have contacted the ITF to explore opportunities to develop TrSA (NZE and AUS).

It was decided to reactivate the ITF TrSA informal group and possibly create a Task Force to share national experiences. The ITF will take the lead on this by distributing information to member countries and updating the ITF TrSA web page.

National experiences

This item generated a very active discussion with several interesting developments, summarized briefly below:

- Czech has a project to calculate vehicle-km data using annual vehicle inspections sources
- Canada carries out a study on vehicle use by collecting information from embarked data loggers. They will expand the experience to heavy duty vehicles.
- France is starting a quality measurement of public transport (panel data on seats offered, opening hours etc.).
- UK is using data from embarked GPS to measure travel time. They also combine multiple sources to measure reliability and connectivity and creating heat maps for connectivity in cities (accessibility), they also improved their data visualization by posting a film on YouTube. – https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=rvonRslUv1Y-. They have also improved the visualization of their annual data publications to attract public and media interest.
- Switzerland is measuring social cost of transport
- Sweden is working closer with industry to minimize the burden of their data collection by accessing directly company data
- DG Move mentioned the difficulties to have definition on urban area, a domain where the ITF could help with their work on urban mobility.

Item 6. International cooperation

International organisations presented their current transport statistics developments (all presentations attached).

ITF secretariat also informed participants on the streamlining of the Common Questionnaire to remove incomplete variables that are not used for analytical purposes but also to add new variables to reflect market evolution needs (alternative fuel vehicles)

Conclusions:

Countries congratulated the secretariat for the meeting which was considered useful. They also appreciated the good balance of items on the agenda.

Participants appreciated the deep discussions during the meeting and the opportunity to exchange with countries, international organisations and stakeholders

Countries also requested to have this meeting on an annual basis with eventually a focus on a different main topic each time (ICT for data collection, dissemination, Transport Satellite Accounts etc.).

The Chair concluded the meeting:

- The meeting should be organized on an annual basis. Potential topics for future meetings include new technologies for data collection, Transport Satellite Accounts, dissemination tools, new indicators and benchmarking;
- ITF secretariat will follow-up with several agreed practical points on investment statistics. Overall, investment should remain on the agenda of future meetings;
- Many useful improvements were proposed for ITF data collection and the secretariat will follow-up with these, reporting to the countries of the developments;
- All presentations will be made available to participants.

The ITF Secretariat thanked all participants for the very fruitful discussion during the meeting.