

International Transport Forum

Statistics meeting

SUMMARY RECORD
1-2 April 2015 OECD, Paris

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

Item 1. Welcome and objectives of the meeting

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. She opened the session by emphasising the importance of transport data, including infrastructure spending data, for policy making. She also recalled attendees that at the last ITF statistical meeting (April 2014) participants requested that the ITF continues to organise on an annual basis such meetings with a main focus on “Transport infrastructure statistical questions” but also to dedicate one item of the agenda to discuss a new topic each year. This year the theme discussed was “Innovation in transport measurement”.

Item 2 - Approval of last meeting’s minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Item 3 - Transport infrastructure investment and maintenance

3.1 Follow up to the previous meeting conclusions

Mr Mario Barreto presented a list of recommendations decided at the last meeting further to the Task Force conclusions and he up-dated the Group on their current implementation. He explained that to collect data on Capital Stock the ITF is exploring suggestions made by the OECD National Accounts Committee and this will be described on the next point of the agenda. He stressed the fact that very few countries provided answers to the ITF “complementary questionnaire” meant to collect information on the coverage and definitions used for infrastructure spending data in member countries. ITF will continue to work on better metadata in cooperation with countries. The revised definitions will be updated into the fifth edition of the Transport Glossary. Additional work will also be required to finalise both the list of deflators used by the ITF as well as the set of metadata related to each country. The ITF will continue to collect and compile all relevant information.

3.2 Up-date on the OECD National Account Committee

At the last meeting Mr Peter Van De Ven, Head of the OECD National Accounts, suggested to bring to the attention of the OECD National Accounts Committee the difficulties that Transport statistics has in trying to complete the targeted data requirements set by the ITF investment Task Force. The NA committee met last 6-7 November and agreed to send additional questionnaires to countries to study the availability of more detailed data to serve transport statistics needs. A Questionnaire was sent to 52 UNECE countries calling for data on buildings and structures (excluding residential) as well as on transport equipment by modes of transport. Information was requested by economic activity from 1995 onwards in current prices as well as in % of previous year. By 31 March, the OECD has received a total of 21 responses, however only 6 of them provided effectively additional detailed data. The OECD will continue to track countries but the process will require more resources and will therefore take more time.

In order to improve the data collection, Ms Heike Link from DIW suggested that in addition to Statistical offices we also contact Transport Ministries since they very often hold that information.

Mr Timo Valila from EIB also explain that in most projects built through Public-Private Partnership we have, no information on these are included in the data provided to ITF. Ms. Roman-Enescu from Eurostat said she will investigate whether or not they are carrying out a study on how to identify if PPP data are included in a project.

3.3 Status of the ITF 2013 data collection

Mr Mario Barreto presented the status of the latest ITF data collection on investment in transport infrastructure as well as the response rates to the additional questionnaires on deflators and definitions. The first analysis of the data collected for 32 countries suggests that when expressed as a % of GDP, investments in inland transport infrastructures continues to fall in most countries.

Mr Nicodeme from ERF suggested having a reflection on how to evaluate the performance of the infrastructure, the effects of the impact of the general downward trends that is currently observed.

3.4 Next steps

Data on infrastructure spending is the most requested data at the ITF. The Secretariat will continue collecting data from the missing countries and produce a statistics brief on latest trends in June 2015. In this respect, the ITF informed that if countries did not suggested a specific deflator, the ITF will use preferably cost indices for land and water construction or civil engineering, or alternatively manufacturing price indices or GDP deflators.

As far as definitions are concerned, the ITF will continue to collect “complementary information”. We need to compile around 20 answers before we can suggest some detailed definitions and methodologies.

ITF will continue working with the OECD to benchmark results obtained from the national accounts with data collected by ITF and to complement other data.

Item 4 – Innovation in transport measurement

4.1 Direct Monitoring and Measuring of Vehicle Utilization and Efficiency

Ms Lucie Gilbert from Transport Canada presented the Canadian vehicle use study (CVUS) whose goal is to inform policy makers on different transport related areas i.e. road safety, congestions, fuel

efficiency, emissions, infrastructure planning... Results are accessible on the following web site: www.tc.gc.ca/cvus

4.2 Mobile phone as a data source

Mr Christophe Demunter from Eurostat presented the main outcomes of a feasibility study carried out by Eurostat on the use of mobile positioning data for tourism statistics. The aim of the project was to explore the possibilities and the limits of this data source. The study concluded that for the time being, such a data source can complement but cannot replace current statistics. However, statisticians should be prepared to reassess user needs and data sources and foresee drastic changes in their data collection and processing methods to integrate opportunities offered by new technologies. The outline of a subsequent project (2016-2018) covering several areas (including tourism and transport) was also presented.

4.3 Big data for transport

Mr Paulo Humanes from PTV AG presented the changes and opportunities newly available mobility data can offer to policy makers and day to day operations. Big data is providing new insights, new opportunities but also new threats. He also draw the attention on the fact that Big data has not done away with the need for statistical rigor since big data is not only prone to many of the same errors and biases existing in smaller datasets, it also creates new ones.

4.4 Big data opportunities and challenges

Mr Philippe Crist from ITF informed on the opportunities and challenges offered by big data and he touched upon new perspectives linked to data use and privacy issues. He also explained that because machine to machine data transmission and passive data collection are transparent to individuals, they raise privacy and awareness issues which are complicate to solve.

4.5 Tourism and transport statistics

Mr Christophe Demunter from Eurostat presented the potential of tourism data for transport statistics. Mr Paolo Bolsi from DGMOVE introduced to the group a methodology to estimate passenger mobility on the basis of tourism statistics. If the methodology offers a first attempt to estimate passenger activity by distance classes from tourist trips performed within Europe, many assumptions and estimates are necessary to convert tourism data into transport activity indicators.

4.6 National experiences

This item is meant to share mutual information between participants on their latest transport innovations own experiences.

Ms Patricia Hu informed the group on a partnership BTS has with the Bureau of Census on how to use big data for commodity flow surveys where they do not follow the trucks but the commodities.

Mr Paolo Humanes mentioned a system based on GIS that helps truck drivers to find an available place to park.

Mr Peter Ottosen from Denmark informed on the use of tachygraphs electronic devices installed in Danish trucks that provide various information on trips. The information is collected for about 10% of the Danish trucks but they are still missing international trucks trips so far.

Ms Roman Enescu informed that Eurostat has a Task Force working on big data use for statistics aiming at building an inventory of countries' experiences and "transport" is a good candidate Eurostat is also looking for a booking system for aviation based on origin/destination flights.

The ITF Secretariat informed the Group that ITF/OECD Joint Transport Research Committee (JTRC) has in its agenda for 2016 a research program on “Big Data”. Understanding the statistics perspective on Big Data is important and ITF will send a call for participants for the working group later in the year. .

Item 5 – Data quality improvements of other ITF projects

5.1 to 5.3 ITF data collections

Mr Mario Barreto informed the group on the status of the other ITF data collections what is the latest available information and what is it used for. He also indicated that the ITF will extend the Common Questionnaire data collection to all its non-European member states by the end of this year.

Ms. Roman Enescu informed that Eurostat has preview a budget to finance the updating of the current fifth edition of the Eurostat/UNECE/ITF Glossary for transport statistics.

5.4 Transport satellite accounts

Mr Jari Kauppila recalled the group about past discussions we had on developing Transport Satellite Accounts (TrSA). He briefly described their potential to answer to some key transport policy questions but also to address issues on various topics such as productivity, consumption and employment. Several countries expressed their interest in developing TrSA but they were all confronted to a number of difficulties and challenges in compiling comparable TrSA. The examples of the tourism satellite accounts was brought into the discussion to say that not only it is costly to develop and maintain but also complicate to produce and use since it requires understanding the concepts of national accounts.

ITF secretariat suggested carrying out the same survey as a few years ago to evaluate the interest and availability of countries to work on this topic. The secretariat will produce a summary document to help understand the benefits of TrSA and eventually call a Task Force (with OECD and NA experts) that would aim at providing guide lines to build comparable TrSA if enough interest exists among member countries. Eurostat will investigate if any work was already done at the Commission. Sweden informed that Statistics Sweden was not the competent authority for these questions and that Transport Analysis should be contacted instead.

5.5 Logistics observatory

Mr Kauppila presented the latest developments of the ITF on creating logistics in cooperation with Chile and Mexico. High quality logistics is a key for the economic performance of any country. A sound and comprehensive set of national-level performance indicators is critical to constructive high-level policy dialogue and effective implementation of strategies to improve logistics. ITF has worked in cooperation with Chile and Mexico to identify key policy areas, building on basic statistical system and transforming it into a more complete, goal-oriented set of data and indicators of performance together with research and analysis of the logistics sector.

5.6 Data quality improvements: suggested next steps

Mr Kauppila indicated that the above examples are possible cases of capacity building that could be put in place to serve ITF member countries’ needs. ITF can play the role of a central platform, where countries could come and express their needs for improving transport statistics and to share experience. Depending on countries’ requests the ITF could then define priorities, provide a network of contacts, add a point in next agendas, create a specific Task Force on targeted topics or bring experts to countries and help identifying data coverage issues, methodologies and overcome joint difficulties.

Secretariat invited countries to share their experiences and challenges in order to assess the appropriate solutions that could be provided.

Item 6. Dissemination of ITF statistical activities

6.1 ITF Transport Outlook

Mr Kauppila presented the ITF Transport Outlook 2015 edition, launched in January. The Outlook is a scenario tool to examine transport development. It contains historical series and projections of transport volumes and related CO2 emissions and health impacts up to 2050. The presentation was well received and it came out from the discussion that one of the next steps should be to integrate network capacity in the model to identify bottlenecks. It would also be useful to include safety in the model although the setting of causalities seems very difficult to integrate. Further, it was also suggested to include noise in the model if possible.

6.2 ITF Statistics Brief on Global trade and Transport

Mr Kauppila presented the latest issue of the ITF statistics brief on Global Trade and Transport. The brief aims at analysing economic trends by monitoring freight movements and to identify turning points at the global and regional level. Air freight data series are used as a leading indicator of the economy. The brief shows complete data series for USA, EU, Brazil, New Zealand, Japan and China and can be downloaded from the following website: <http://internationaltransportforum.org/statistics/statbriefs.html>. Participants will be added to the ITF distribution list.

6.3 International benchmarking data

At the last ITF statistics meeting, countries requested the ITF to produce indicators allowing for a better comparison of transport statistics between countries. Mr Barreto presented a proposal for possible benchmark indicators. He suggested a non-exhaustive list of relevant themes with examples of indicators for each one and invited the Group to comment. The discussion generated many proposals:

- Mr Airy Magnien from UIC suggested to focus on blind spots in the themes, to include accessibility to the network, and when measuring transport to get into market segments to identify how population and industries are served.
- Mr Timo Valila from EIB drew the attention on the risk of misusing composed indicators. He also suggested complementing it with quality information data such as whether CBA is used in decision making which means that quality is taken into account.
- Mr Paolo Bolsi from DG Move recommend to have emissions according to the activity to avoid misleading interpretation.
- Mr Stefan Gerwens from ProMobilitet suggested to attaching emissions to the vehicles and not to the country because of emissions from transit transport.
- Ms Patricia Hu from the US BTS indicated that we need to know what are the bottlenecks and for that a congestion indicator is needed.
- Mr Peter Ottosen from Denmark draw the attention on the fact that quantitative indicators are most of the time available but qualitative one are more difficult to get.
- Mr Wolfram Krick from Germany also suggest to have the share of population near transport railway stations, and airports.

The ITF will send around a list of suggested themes and related indicators for remarks, suggestions and comments on the availability of each indicator. The list will also include a ranking system to know the meaningfulness of each indicator and how important they are for each country. The ITF secretariat

informed that a new staff member will start in June with one of his/her tasks will be the compilation of the indicators.

6.4 Web Developments

The ITF web mission is to facilitate, create, use and find knowledge for transport policies. Mr Ronan Mac Erlaine presented a study run by the ITF to identify who are the ITF web users, what do they look for and how do they operate. The aim of the study is to design a web page that better suits our user needs, integrates their research methods and help them in their queries.

Mr Mario Barreto also informed the Group about three possible ways to access ITF statistics through the web and what are the main differences for the user:

- OECD Dotstat - <http://stats.oecd.org/>: this browser gives access to all ITF data. It contains all the statistical information the ITF collects. The user can built its own extraction according to his needs. It is accessible from the ITF statistics web page as well.
- OECD data portal – <http://data.oecd.org/>: this browser offers a list of pre-selected tables for easy and quick access. Only most popular tables are available here.
- OECD ilibrary - <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/>: here the user can not only access to all our publications but he can also download parts of them including individual tables and graphs to access directly to the data in excel format.

Item 7 – International cooperation

International organisations presented their current transport statistics developments

7.1 Eurostat

Ms Roman Enescu presented Eurostat's annual work program. The main priority is the production of transport statistics in compliance with legal acts. There are also important development projects like improving V-km statistics until 2018 or carrying out a task Force on passenger mobility. Work is also undergoing on intermodal, distance matrices, emissions, safety ...

7.2 EU DG Regio

Mr Hugo Poelman presented an analysis done by the Commission to develop comparable indicators in urban public transport. The study takes into account access, frequency and speed of public transport but also tries to standardise data sources and harmonise concepts.

7.3 South-East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO)

Ms. Lijana Cela and Ms. Ana Simecki presented the activities at SEETO. They have main projects such as RCC 2020, on-going cooperation with the OECD, regional transport studies and they also develop key performance indicators and collect statistics on infrastructure, traffic, road safety, border crossing ... Given the synergies in their activities, Seeto and the ITF are planning to cooperate on their statistical activities.

7.4 International Union of Railways (UIC)

Ms. Snejana Markovic-Chenais and Airy Magnien informed the group on latest UIC statistical activities. They announced that both their year book 2013 and the synopsis 2014 are available on their web site. Also their on-line statistics is reborn and will be accessible to all soon.

Item 8 – Next steps and conclusions

To identify the value of this working Group and to list priority topics for the next one Ms. Patricia HU invited participants to express their views and expectations.

Participants congratulated the secretariat for the meeting, considering it very useful and valuable. They also appreciated the possibility to learn from new initiatives and ideas for new data use, appreciated the good balance between presentations on data collection and country experiences, found very beneficial the mix of participants (data provider, data users, international organisations, stakeholders), and noted their satisfaction by the amount of statistical activities ITF carries out. At the same time, participants missed presentations from member countries and would like to have more representatives from statistical offices.

From the discussion, the following topics came up as possible focus for our next statistical meeting: “big data to meet freight needs”, “intermodal transport”, “transport costs and financing”, “acquiring private sector data”, “data fusion”.

The Chair concluded that:

- The ITF should continue to organise this meeting on an annual basis, next meeting to take place in 2016. A special attention will be given to keep the same audience while trying to add more country representatives;
- Several practical follow-ups were agreed:
 - 1) Investment:
 - ITF and OECD national accounts will work together to compare data on infrastructure spending and provide a methodology note for the use of national accounts data to understand transport infrastructure spending;
 - ITF will send a reminder for 2013 data collection and produce statistics brief in June 2015 summarising results.
 - 2) Big data
 - ITF will send an invitation to join the JTRC working group on big data in 2016. The participants would help in preparing a Terms of Reference for the working group from the statistical perspective.
 - ITF and Eurostat will produce a short document setting a framework for using Big Data for statistical purposes based on the work carried out in the two organisations.
 - 3) Transport Satellite Accounts
 - ITF secretariat will carry out a survey to evaluate the interest and availability of countries to work on this topic. The secretariat will also produce a summary document to help understand the benefits of TrSA and eventually call a Task Force (with OECD and NA experts)
 - 4) Benchmarking transport performance
 - ITF will send a first proposal for global benchmark indicators for comments by fall 2015.
 - 5) Innovations in transport statistics
 - Next meeting will focus on following themes: big data for freight, intermodal transport, transport costs, and financing transport.
- Countries are invited to indicate to the ITF Secretariat any possible case where the ITF could help them or any capacity building situation they would like to develop.
- All documents related to the meeting will be available from the ITF web site at the following address: <http://internationaltransportforum.org/statistics/StatsgroupApril2015/index.html>

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