

Project *brief*

Thünen Institute of Forestry

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Forestry-related employment: “Much more” than visibly reported in the official statistics

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- Forests generate more jobs than apparently reported in the official statistics because of an invisible part of employment in the forestry sector that by far surpasses the visible one.
- Total employment in the forestry sector amounted to at least 48 million persons FTE (full-time equivalent) in 2015 globally when aggregating estimates on employment numbers not captured in the statistics and recent reported official data.
- Main findings further reveal that at least two-thirds of the entire global employment in the forestry sector is informal or subsistence.

Background and aims

Sound data about employment is crucial for assessing the socio-economic effects of the use of forests worldwide. But how accurate and reliable are employment figures and specifically about informal employment and subsistence workforce presented in literature and statistics? Literature indicates that there is ‘invisible’ employment not reported in statistics that by far surpasses the ‘visible’ officially reported numbers. The aim of this study is therefore to provide improved and updated estimates on the magnitude of the total employment in the forestry sector, building on the coherence of labour productivity and quantity of roundwood removals at the country-level.

Key findings

Using labour productivity as a mean of verification confirms that the number of employed persons in the official statistics are underreported in several countries. Building on upper- and lower-bound labour productivity references and the level of roundwood removal, the extent of underreported employment in the forestry sector range from 36 to 66 million persons FTE in 2015. Total forestry workforce amounts to at least 48 million persons FTE globally when combining our additional estimates with the official employment statistics. We can conclude that

the majority of informal employment and subsistence workforce can be found in emerging and developing countries.

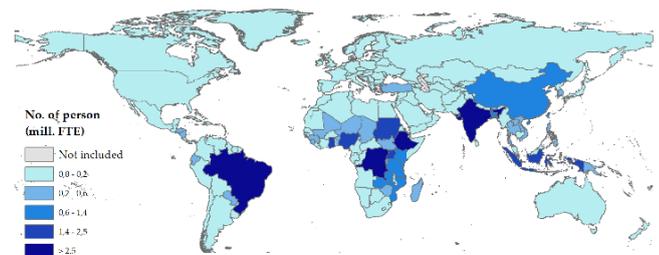


Figure1: Global view of total forestry-related employment.

Notes: The employment figures in this map encompasses the official employment statistics and our lower-bound forestry-related estimates.

Concluding remarks

Consistent and complete employment statistics are crucial factors to enhance the understanding of socio-economic effects derived from forests. Closure of data gaps as well as disaggregated-data on employment status and gender are urgently required to make future estimations of employment in the forestry sector more accurate.

Further Information

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Support

