

# PIX European Pulp Price Indices



**Methodology and specifications – March 2020**

## Contents

**3 Mission statement**

**3 Introduction**

**4 Price discovery process and methodology**

**9 Methodology and price specification review process**

**9 Price correction policy**

**9 How to become a contributor to the price discovery process**

**11 Price index specifications**

**12 Revision History**

**12 Disclaimer**

**14 Appendix**

## Mission statement

Fastmarkets is a leading commodity price reporting agency (PRA) covering the metals, mining, minerals and forest products industries. Our products include Metal Bulletin, American Metal Market, RISI, FOEX, Random Lengths and Industrial Minerals. For more than 100 years we have been providing commodities price reporting services for use by market participants in their day-to-day commercial activities. These services include assessments and indices of commodity prices as well as news, research and commentary on the underlying markets.

Our mission is to meet the market's data requirements honestly and independently, acting with integrity and care to ensure that the trust and confidence placed in the reliability of our pricing methodologies is maintained. We do not have a vested interest in the markets on which we report.

## Introduction

Fastmarkets FOEX, in Helsinki, Finland, operating under the Finnish law, produces trademarked PIX price indices for selected pulp, paper, recovered paper and packaging grades as well as for wood-based biomass and bioenergy products like pellets, wood chips and wood. The first PIX index was launched in September 1996. Fastmarkets FOEX owns the trade mark rights to PIX Index.

Fastmarkets' staff are required to abide by a code of conduct and clear pricing procedures during their market reporting and pricing activities. Fastmarkets is completely independent and has no vested commercial interest in any of the markets it prices.

We are the world's largest dedicated forest products price reporting team. We have offices in New York, Boston, Oakland, Eugene, Charlottesville, Atlanta, Brussels, Helsinki, Beijing, Shanghai, Singapore and Sao Paulo.

The aim of this document is to provide a clear overview of Fastmarkets methodology and specifications for the PIX European Pulp Indices. If you have any questions, please contact Fastmarkets FOEX director Tytti Inkinen, [tytti@fastmarkets.com](mailto:tytti@fastmarkets.com).

## Price discovery process and methodology

### 1.1 Methodology Rationale

Fastmarkets FOEX produces independent, fair and representative price indices for global market pulp on a weekly basis. Fastmarkets FOEX's rationale is to adopt and develop the price discovery process and the methodology described in the present guide to produce indices that are a consistent and representative indicator of value of the market to which they relate for the trading period they measure, as well as for the change in prices from one week to the next.

The PIX European pulp benchmark indices are calculated and confirmed by FOEX based on confidential price information of actual, physical trades of pulp, collected on a weekly basis by telephone and email from companies trading in pulp. It represents the gross price agreed on contract business for pulp used for paper or paperboard production. The method of index calculation is fixed. The index has a large market coverage and a stable group of price providers from week to week.

The time period, or window, identified to assess a market (eg, daily, weekly, monthly) is determined by Fastmarkets FOEX after considering the number of data points that Fastmarkets FOEX can reasonably expect to collect on a consistent basis over the selected period to support the price assessment process.

### 1.2 Data collection criteria

Fastmarkets FOEX staff aim to canvass a broad sample of market participants specifically involved in the buying and selling of the pulp grade of interest, with a good representation of both sides of the market. Pulp producers, buyers, agents and trading houses, including buyers/sellers acting on behalf of another buyer/seller, qualify as price providers. If a trading house buys and sells on its own account, those prices are not accepted into the index calculation.

Price data is collected weekly from price providers, typically by email or by phone. Possibilities to use other alternative ways will be followed-up whenever deemed useful.

Price data reported to Fastmarkets FOEX by noon Finnish time on Monday (or the last working day preceding publication day) will be included in the index calculations for the publishing on Tuesday (or exceptional working day). Fastmarkets FOEX has the discretionary right to decide whether to include price data received after noon on Monday into the index calculation that week.

Reported price data will be stored at Fastmarkets FOEX for a period of seven years.

Price providers designate a person and a deputy for the price reporting task. Each price provider shall report their prices each week or provide a note of how long the last reported price is valid, or report "no transactions" if a provider has no eligible transactions in a given week.

Price providers agree to report their prices according to the methodology described in this document and based on all transactions meeting the specifications and to consult with Fastmarkets FOEX if they have any doubts as to the validity of a price to be reported.

Fastmarkets FOEX encourages organizations to submit all their pricing data, especially all the concluded transactions. Fastmarkets FOEX welcomes organizations to submit transaction data from authorized back office functions.

Company-specific data received from the price providers is accessible only to personnel employed by Fastmarkets FOEX. Board Members do not have access to this data.

Fastmarkets FOEX' personnel dealing with the confidential price data or other sensitive information received from the price providers for the purpose of PIX index calculations, commit not to disclose the data received, nor the source, outside Fastmarkets FOEX.

Fastmarkets FOEX commits to compile the price data, to calculate the index values and to publish the index values in accordance with the rules and specifications set forth in this document.

### **1.3 What price data providers submit**

Each week, data providers submit their latest eligible transaction prices, to the extent possible with reasonable efforts.

This includes:

1. The final price agreed for delivery of a specific quantity of pulp during the current month and each delivery agreed at that price during the current month;
2. If the price for deliveries in the current month has not yet been finalized, data providers can report the final price agreed for the previous month against current month deliveries.

An “eligible transaction” is a transaction that meets the specifications outlined in the section below marked “Price Specifications.”

Data providers can submit prices in two ways:

1. As separate transaction prices: Providers submit prices reflecting all eligible transactions and additionally submit the share (either tonnage or %) of each transaction in the data provider's total volume of eligible transactions for that week.
2. As a single weighted average price: Providers submit a single price reflecting the weighted average price of all eligible transactions over the previous week.

This weighted average can be calculated based on actual weekly volumes, average weekly volume calculated from the annual contract or from an annual estimate. Whichever method the data provider chooses, it should be used consistently from week to week to the extent possible with reasonable efforts.

Prices reflected in the index are gross prices before customer-specific discounts or rebates. These discounts and rebates are typically agreed upon in long-term agreements. Any additional temporary discounts or rebates which differ from the long-term agreements are to be deducted from the price reported.

### **What not to report**

Data providers should not report the latest final price agreed for the previous month against current month deliveries once a new price has been agreed.

Buyers should not report the price of deliveries of pulp already under the buyer's ownership, i.e. from their own warehouse.

Data providers should only report prices that are finalized i.e. without a retroactive adjustment clause.

Transactions that fix a price for a period of more than one month should not be reported to the index.

If the transaction pricing structure includes a cap and floor, the price should only be reported as long as it remains between the cap and floor. After the price has hit either of the limits, it should no longer be reported.

### **1.4 Price specifications and reference units**

Fastmarkets FOEX has clear specifications for all the price points that it covers. All the reference units, such as currency and volume, are in line with recognized pulp and paper markets trading conventions.

Fastmarkets FOEX specifications detail the material's characteristics or quality, location, incoterm, payment terms and the minimum volume accepted. These specifications are determined in consultation with market participants and following industry convention. Fastmarkets staff ensure that the information they receive matches these specifications.

All Fastmarkets FOEX price specifications define the minimum lot size accepted.

### **1.5 Criteria to discard pricing data**

Transactions are against contract-based business or other recurring business with similar pricing and discounting terms, complying with the General Trade Rules for physical pulp business for paper or paperboard production purposes between companies regularly buying or selling pulp.

Specifically excluded are:

- Spot transactions: One-off transactions whose price is typically at a level from which no further discounts, allowances or performance rebates are given.
- Integrated shipments: shipments between affiliated parties.
- Indexed-price transactions: transactions whose prices are, according to the supply contract, tied to PIX or any other pulp price index.

Index as fall-back mechanism: Some contracts stipulate that prices are negotiated between buyer and seller but that PIX or another index can be used to settle prices if the buyer and seller can't agree on a price. Transactions under these contracts are not considered indexed and thus shall be submitted to the index.

## 1.6 Data validation

Fastmarkets FOEX reviews the incoming price data in order to check its consistency with the reporting rules. If the price data looks questionable, Fastmarkets FOEX contacts the price provider.

## 1.7 Weighting of Data

Weighting between price providers is achieved by assigning more price points to larger buyers/sellers than to smaller ones. The number of price points assigned to each provider is scaled by the annual volume of sales or purchases of market pulp in each main index grade (BSKP excl. fluff, BHKP).

Market pulp includes integrated exports but not company internal volumes within the country of production. Each price provider's weight is kept constant through the year, if no major changes occur in production capacity or purchasing volumes. Volumes are checked at the turn of the year for defining the weighting for the following year.

While input to the index is generally evenly split between buyers and sellers, the share can vary from week to week. To eliminate any volatility caused by a shift in the share of the buyer/seller data, Fastmarkets FOEX ensures that buyer and seller data each represent 50% of the index.

The weighting of any single data provider's data is limited so that it doesn't dominate the index. No single data provider's data will be weighted so that it contributes more than 25% of total number of prices included in the index calculation.

The weighting scales for NBSKP and BHKP (separate scales for sellers and buyers) based on total annual volumes are shown in Appendix 1.

### **1.8 Aggregation of weighted average prices**

If data providers submit a single weighted average price (see Section 1.3 above), that price point is included in the week's collected price points multiple times, according to the number of price points the data provider is allowed. For instance, if a seller of NBSKP is allowed 5 price points and submits a single weighted average price of \$X in a given week, then \$X is included 5 times in that week's collected price points.

### **1.9 Calculation procedure**

The index value is the arithmetic average of the price points included. The highest and lowest 10 % of the number of price points are removed before calculating the PIX index values. This is done to eliminate clerical errors in the price reporting and to dampen any possible attempts to manipulate the PIX index value in one direction or the other.

### **1.10 Validity time of price points**

If a price provider does not report prices in a given week (e.g. a company may not have sales or purchases during that week) Fastmarkets FOEX may use the previous price points received, but only for one additional week.

### **1.11 Fall-back procedure**

Fastmarkets FOEX does not set a minimum number of price points for calculating the index. In the unlikely event that there are not enough eligible price points in a given week, and the lack of price points is threatening to distort the index development, Fastmarkets FOEX reserves the right to roll forward previous price data beyond the limits mentioned above in 1.10. Fastmarkets FOEX may also state that because there are an insufficient number of price points, the previous week's index value will be republished.

### **1.12 Monthly average prices**

The monthly average of any of the PIX indexes is calculated by Fastmarkets FOEX as a straight arithmetic average from the weekly PIX index values of the month in question. The average value is published together with the last weekly index value (included in the monthly average).

### **1.13 Procedure to ensure consistency in the price discovery procedures**



All Fastmarket FOEX price reporters are formally trained in the price discovery process and must abide by a written Code of Conduct and pricing procedures.

On a regular basis, Fastmarkets FOEX staff review markets and methodologies to ensure that assessment methodologies and the assessments they produce are appropriate for the market. Fastmarkets FOEX has also committed to conducting one external audit per year of one key assessment.

## Methodology and specification review process

Fastmarkets FOEX continually develops and revises its methodologies in consultation with industry participants, aiming to adopt product specifications and trading terms and conditions that actually reflect and are representative of typical working practices in the industry. Changes to the methodology and/or price specification are implemented following a consultation process which starts with Fastmarkets FOEX posting on its website an advance pricing notice providing clear details and a timeframe for the change proposed. The objective of the consultation process is to give market participants sufficient time and opportunity to provide feedback about the proposed change.

For more details on the formal review of the methodology and the consultation process to propose changes to the methodology, refer to Fastmarkets FOEX's Methodology Review and Change Consultation Process available on Fastmarkets FOEX's website.

## Price correction policy

Price errors may occasionally happen for reasons that include technical input errors or incorrect application of the methodology. Fastmarkets FOEX will rectify and republish any incorrectly published price as soon as possible; and will send a coverage note to all subscribers informing them of the change.

No prices will be amended due to the emergence of new data or market activity after the initial publication. Retrospective changes to the published values will only be made in cases of administrative or calculation error leading to a material change in price.

## Become a contributor to the price discovery process

Fastmarkets FOEX continually seeks to increase the number of market sources willing to take part in the price discovery process. The main condition Fastmarkets FOEX requires from contributors is for them to be active participants in the market. Fastmarkets' FOEX Data Submitter Policy provides guidelines defining the high level of data quality and integrity that Fastmarkets FOEX expects from contributing organization providing pricing data. Market participants that wish to provide pricing data and be part of the

price discovery process should first read the Data Submitter Policy available on the Fastmarkets FOEX website.

All data sources are subject to review before their data submitted is fully taken into account in the pricing process. The aim is to make sure that submitters are trustworthy and have sufficient visibility and understanding of the market to be able to provide viable price data.

If you want to become a contributor to Fastmarkets FOEX pricing or have questions or comments about the methodology and price specifications, please contact [Fastmarkets FOEX director Tytti Inkinen, tytti@fastmarkets.com](mailto:tytti@fastmarkets.com).

## Price index specifications

Description: **PIX NBSK**

Quantity: min 100 metric tons

Location: Europe

Incoterm: Delivered. Standard delivery and payment terms apply

Timing: Delivery during the current month

Unit: Metric ton

Currency: US Dollar, EUR. Prices reported to the index calculation in other currencies are converted to the index currency with the average ECB exchange rate of the previous week. The same rate is used for the conversion of the index values to EUR/metric ton.

Payment terms: The price is a gross transaction price on standard delivery and payment terms between buyer and seller. Prices with delivery terms ex works at the producing mill shall not be reported to the index.

Price Type: Gross prices before customer-specific discounts or rebates. These discounts and rebates are typically agreed upon in long-term agreements. Any additional temporary discounts or rebates which differ from the long-term agreements are to be deducted from the price reported. Prices reflected only include those with a final agreement for the month, i.e. without a retroactive adjustment clause.

Publication: Weekly, on Tuesdays at noon Helsinki time. If Tuesday falls on a public holiday in Finland, the index will be published on the first working day thereafter.

Notes: Prices are for Prime quality, commodity grade Northern bleached softwood kraft pulp from North American, Nordic and Central European countries.

Technical quality criteria: Standard dryness i.e. 90% air-dry. Standard strength characteristics. Brightness 88 or higher (for standard ECF/TCF).

Description: **PIX BHKP**

Quantity: min 200 metric tons

Location: Europe

Incoterm: Delivered. Standard delivery and payment terms apply.

Timing: Delivery during the current month

Unit: Metric ton

Currency: US Dollar, EUR. Prices reported to the index calculation in other currencies are converted to the index currency with the average ECB exchange rate of the previous week. The same rate is used for the conversion of the index values to EUR/metric ton.

Payment terms: The price is a gross transaction price on standard delivery and payment terms between buyer and seller. Prices with delivery terms ex works at the producing mill shall not be reported to the index.

Price Type: Gross prices before customer-specific discounts or rebates. These discounts and rebates are typically agreed upon in long-term agreements. Any additional temporary discounts or rebates which differ from the long-term agreements are to be deducted from the price reported. Prices reflected only include those with a final agreement for the month, i.e. without a retroactive adjustment clause.

Publication: Weekly, on Tuesdays at noon Helsinki time. If Tuesday falls on a public holiday in Finland, the index will be published on the first working day thereafter.

Notes: Prices are for Prime quality, commodity grade Bleached hardwood kraft pulp, eucalyptus or birch. Technical quality criteria: Standard dryness i.e. 90% airdry. Standard strength characteristics. Brightness 88 or higher (for standard ECF/TCF).

## Revision History

Changes to methodology and specifications will be tracked here.

**March 2020 – Shortens and clarifies wording in 1.3.** in connection with open consultation of PIX Pulp Europe Methodology in Feb/Mar 2020. **Adds a line in 1.11 stating there is no minimum number of price points for index calculation. Changes wording in Price correction policy** to match with Fastmarkets policy. The methodologies were not changed materially.

**December 2019 – Adds 25% weighting cap and changes limit for data retention**

A 25% cap was added to any one contributor's weighting in the index. Storage of price data was changed from five to seven years. The methodology guide was changed accordingly.

**March 2019 – Updating Appendix 1 PIX weighting scale for price points**

**January 2019 – Fastmarkets rebranding**

Fastmarkets FOEX revamped methodology and specifications guides, including PIX European Pulp, in January 2019 as part of a company-wide rebranding. This was done to improve the consistency of content across all Fastmarkets methodology guides and to give them a common look and feel.

The methodologies were not changed materially during this process.

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Your investment actions should be solely based upon your own decisions and research and appropriate independent advice should be obtained from a suitably qualified independent adviser before any such decision is made.

## Appendix 1

PIX weighting scale for price points									
EUROPE									
From March 2019									
		Price points				Price points			
N B S K	S E L L E R S					B H K P	S E L L E R S		
over	2 000 000	tons	16			over	2 800 000	tons	16
up to	2 000 000		14			up to	2 800 000		14
up to	1 500 000		12			up to	2 000 000		12
up to	1 000 000		10			up to	1 500 000		10
up to	800 000		9			up to	1 100 000		9
up to	600 000		8			up to	900 000		8
up to	500 000		7			up to	700 000		7
up to	400 000		6			up to	500 000		6
up to	300 000		5			up to	300 000		5
up to	200 000		4			up to	200 000		4
up to	100 000		3			up to	100 000		3
up to	50 000		2			up to	50 000		2
N B S K	B U Y E R S		Price points			B H K P	B U Y E R S		Price points
over	800 000		12			over	1 000 000		12
up to	800 000		10			up to	1 000 000		10
up to	700 000		9			up to	800 000		9
up to	500 000		8			up to	650 000		8
up to	400 000		7			up to	500 000		7
up to	300 000		6			up to	400 000		6
up to	200 000		5			up to	300 000		5
up to	100 000		4			up to	150 000		4
up to	50 000		3			up to	50 000		3