fibreboard; and sleepers and minimal imports of wood flour and wool, hoopwood, split poles, piles, pickets and stakes of wood pointed, wood sticks and the like for the manufacture of walking sticks, umbrellas, tool handles, and the like.

In terms of growth patterns, the categories with the highest average annual growth rate between 1988 and 1991 were:

Prefabricated bldgs.	165.8%
Veneer/plywood sheets	118.0%
Wood products	100.2%
Particle boards	94.5%
Wood in the rough	94.4%
Sawn or chipped wood	93.3%
Fibreboard	70.8%
Poles,wool,flour, sleepers	67.0%
Plywood/veneer panels	59.9%
Wood materials	47.6%
Cont. shaped wood	31.8%

It is interesting to note how high the average growth rate has been in all catgories during this period. Only two categories, wood sleepers and wood planks for the manufacture of pencils showed a negative rate during one year, in response to a fall in an industry-specific demand. Overall, the increase in imports has been very high year after year, in particular those of prefabricated buildings, tropical wood plywood sheets, packing cases and boxes, builder's carpentry, marquetry and inlaid wood, agglomerated panels, treated wood in the rough, fibreboard, sleepers, coniferous and non-coniferous plywood panels, and wood in chips or particles.

The most important supplier of wood and wood products to Mexico is the U.S., with an 86% market share in 1991. Geographical proximity plays a major role in this leadership, since transportation costs can be high. Also, many U.S. firms have established a presence in Mexico through local distributors, representatives or agents or through joint ventures. South and Central American countries, including Guatemala, Belice, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Argentina account for most of the balance, together with France. Canadian products account for only 0.8% of total imports based on official Mexican data.