



International Workshop on Tourism Statistics

Jointly organized by UNWTO and UNSD
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Report of the Workshop

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I. Purpose

1. The workshop is seen as a major event in the context of a worldwide consultation on the revision of the *Recommendations on Tourism Statistics* approved by the 27th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1993 and issued jointly by the UN and the UNWTO in 1994. The revised *Recommendations* will be submitted to the 39th session of the Commission (March 2008) for approval. It is expected that at the same session, the Commission will have before it the updated text of *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework*. This implies that both sets of recommendations should be revised simultaneously and in a harmonized manner to ensure that improved basic tourism statistics better serve the needs of policy makers, industry managers, and, at the same time, provide a valuable input to the compilers of the Tourism Satellite Account.
2. Representatives from national tourism organizations, national statistical offices and international/regional organizations were invited and asked to indicate areas of the 1993 *Recommendations* where revision is needed and to make concrete proposals regarding already available proposed revisions of specific recommendations. The main tasks of the workshop included:
 - (i) to review current country practices in the compilation of the basic variables of tourism statistics;
 - (ii) to review the existing 1993 *Recommendations* and to advise on the areas where they need to be revised or updated;
 - (iii) to create a network of tourism statisticians working in different institutional environments in order to foster the exchange of experiences and the formulation of good practices in the compilation of such statistics; and
 - (iv) to advise on institutional arrangements between different national agencies active in tourism statistics.
3. The workshop was attended by 79 participants representing 33 countries and 7 international and regional organisations.

II. Opening session

4. The Deputy Secretary General of the UNWTO, Mr. Taleb Rifai welcomed participants of the Workshop and made clear references to key elements of UNWTO Statistical Programme such as:
 - the role of UNWTO in the UN System and the importance of the presence of both Members and Non-members in general initiatives as is the case of this Workshop;
 - the focus of the Workshop on the revision of the 1993 International Standard on tourism statistics (the basis of the System of Tourism

Statistics) but also its purpose as a platform for raising awareness of the need for a strategic alliance between NTAs and NSOs;

- the present efforts of UNWTO over the past years in order to enlarge the international comparability of tourism statistics;
- the wish for the Workshop to be an important contribution in this perspective.

5. In his opening statement Mr. Paul Cheung, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division welcomed the participants and thanked the World Tourism Organization, for the excellent cooperation in co-organizing the workshop. He briefly described the history of tourism statistics and stated that the current recommendations were the foundation for the standardization of tourism statistics worldwide for many years. Mr. Cheung emphasised that compilation of tourism statistics is not an easy task both at the national as well as international levels, that tourism data are not well incorporated in the complex system of official statistics, and that they usually do not get the full attention they deserve.
6. In this context the Statistical Commission has asked UNSD to facilitate the exchange of views between the international organizations, involved in one way or another with tourism statistics, by creating an appropriate coordination mechanism. Such a mechanism was created in 2004 in the form of the Interagency Coordination Group on Tourism Statistics. The Group has done useful work, in particular in the identification of a number of issues that require revision. The task now is to ensure that national tourism administrations and national statistical offices are fully consulted and that their views on what and how to revise the international recommendations are clearly expressed. In this context the electronic forum created by the UNWTO is a very good initiative and UNSD encourages countries to use it. UNSD is developing a website dedicated to tourism statistics on which it will place all documents related to the workshop.
7. The UNSD Director stressed that the current workshop is a major and unique event in the context of a worldwide consultation process. It brings together representatives from different institutions and provides a unique opportunity to exchange views and to discuss a number of issues ranging from the methodological foundations of tourism statistics to data sources, data compilation methods, quality assurance practices and data dissemination policies. To facilitate integration of national statistical systems, an agenda item has been devoted to discuss the necessary strategic alliance between various agencies having responsibility in this area such as national tourism administrations and national statistical offices. This alliance and cooperation is extremely important and UNSD is looking forward to sharing of experiences on how to foster this alliance.
8. The draft revised *Recommendations* are planned to be submitted to the 39th session of the Commission (March 2008) for approval. Additionally, the Commission will also have before it the updated text of *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework*. This implies that both sets of recommendations should be reviewed simultaneously and

in a harmonized manner. UNSD will assist the community of tourism statisticians in general and the UNWTO in particular in bringing the revision process of the *Recommendations* to a satisfactory conclusion. In this connection Mr. Cheung announced that UNSD is ready to organize, jointly with the UNWTO, an Expert Group meeting on tourism statistics to be held in mid 2007 in New York. This Expert Group will review the draft revised recommendations on tourism statistics and endorse their submission to the UN Statistical Commission. After the adoption of the *Recommendations*, UNSD will cooperate with the UNWTO to ensure their successful implementation.

III. Main findings: summary

A number of issues were discussed in the workshop, the conclusions are summarised below.

Need for revision

9. The *Recommendations for Tourism Statistics* had served the international statistical community well for more than 13 years; they were incorporated in national methodologies of tourism statistics and provided a foundation for developing tourism satellite accounting.
10. The revision of the *Recommendations* is needed in view of (i) the approval by the UN Statistical Commission of *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework* that included some deviation from the *Recommendations*, (ii) the on-going revision of SNA93, of the IMF BPM Manual and the update of the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services*, (iii) the adoption of other relevant international statistical standards such as ISIC, Rev.4 and CPC, Ver.2, (iv) rich country experiences in the use of various data sources and in data compilation.

About the revision process

11. The revised *Recommendations* should be clearly linked to user needs.
12. It was emphasized that the revision of *Recommendations* should be conducted in close consultation with both national statistical offices and national tourism administrations, as well as with interested international and regional organizations.
13. The view that the current revision of international recommendations on tourism statistics should be seen as a part of the effort of promoting an integrated approach towards national statistics which requires, to the extent possible, the use of harmonized concepts, classifications and standardized data compilation methods in order to achieve maximum efficiency and minimize reporting burden; and that, in this connection, the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics should be used as reference, was supported.

14. The revised *Recommendations* should focus on the identification and definition of variables which (i) can be defined in terms of data sources and data compilation methods, (ii) do not create significant additional reporting burden, and (iii) can be implemented by most countries to ensure improved cross-country comparability. It should explicitly recognize the TSA as a conceptual framework for measuring the economic importance of tourism consistently with the general principles of national accounting and advocate for its worldwide implementation.
15. Any topic discussed during the current revision process should be assessed with respect to whether it should be included in the future *Recommendations* on basic tourism statistics, whether it belongs to the TSA conceptual framework, or whether it would rather be treated as an element of general statistical compilation common to the observation of all economic activities (and therefore might be excluded from the *Recommendations*).
16. An outline of the action plan suggested by UNWTO and UNSD including continuation of the worldwide consultations with national statistical offices and tourism administrations as well as international and regional organizations, review of the draft revised *Recommendations* by the UNWTO Committee on Statistics and the Inter-secretariat Coordination Group on Tourism Statistics, and endorsement of the draft by the UN Expert Group on Tourism Statistics was welcomed.
17. The electronic forum created by the UNWTO was supported and country representatives were encouraged to register and provide comments.
18. The UNSD initiative to create a website dedicated to the workshop and to place on it all the workshop documents for further reference was welcomed.

Contents of the revised *Recommendations*

19. It was suggested that the present scope of the *Recommendations* should be revised to allow for its necessary updating and restructuring. In this perspective, the way should be found to mention and recognize the relevance of a wide range of issues including description of user needs, different classifications and lists of variables relevant to the measurement of economic contribution of tourism, employment issues, potential data sources and data compilation methods, data dissemination, the need for metadata, relevance of inter-institutional networking, description of linkages with TSA and indicators of social and environmental impacts, checking consistency between tourism supply and consumption, etc.
20. Special emphasis should be placed on the connections of these *Recommendations* to other international standards such as the Balance of Payments, the System of National Accounts, the Manual on International Trade in Services as well as international standard classifications.

21. While emphasising that the revised *Recommendations* should include general guidance on practical matters including types of data sources, data compilation methods, metadata, consistency between tourism supply and consumption data, etc., the Workshop acknowledged that a distinction should be made between such guidance and more detailed practical documentation which should be provided in technical guides on specific implementation issues.
22. Although the development of national systems of tourism statistics is uneven and the resources (both human and financial) dedicated to the compilation of tourism statistics vary from country to country, there is nevertheless the need to strengthen international comparability of the measurement of tourism activity. Consequently, countries should be encouraged to compile demand and supply side tourism statistics to ensure a better information base for analysis of all aspects of tourism and its impact on economy and society in general.

Findings on specific issues

Definition of visitor and purposes of visit

23. The revised definition of visitor proposed by the UNWTO seemed more consistent with international standards such as the SNA93 and the BPM, both in process of revision; however, reservations were expressed regarding the possibility of making these refinements operational as it requires the use of visitors surveys; concerns were expressed that the coverage of the data on accommodation would deviate even more from the concept of visitor if this revised definition were used; UNWTO and UNSD were invited to continue consultations with countries on the matter and provide alternatives;
24. UNWTO and UNSD were invited to evaluate the treatment of travelers on trips on behalf of government and non profit institutions serving households in the context of the new UNWTO proposed definition of visitors.
25. It was observed that the revised classification of purposes of visit proposed by the UNWTO, if implemented, will provide useful additional information especially on business purposes, and in particular it will make possible to identify separately those purposes related to meetings, conference, trade fairs, etc..
26. The border between several purposes should be defined more carefully (in the case of health related and wellbeing activities that could belong to health or to leisure and recreation purposes, in the case of visit to second homes that is too vague, etc.); Eurostat proposed to include city tourism as an additional purpose, an issue that needs further consideration.
27. It was suggested that further consultations are needed on whether the determination of other (secondary) purposes of visit different from the main one might be useful.

The usual environment

28. The frequency criterion should be maintained (except for visits to second homes) but made more precise, e.g., in terms of number of visits per week, per month.
29. The exclusion of second homes from the criterion of frequency should be underlined; all second homes should be considered as outside one's usual environment; there is a subsequent need to better define the concept of second home.
30. It was suggested that crossing an administrative border could be used as a criterion provided countries are able to define these borders. The case of metropolitan areas should be carefully reviewed for the application of this definition.

Transit visitors

31. The current exclusion of all transit travelers from the definition of visitors in the 1993 Recommendations, a position that was amended in the TSA framework, should be carefully reviewed as their economic, social and environmental impacts on the receiving country cannot be ignored; additionally, persons in transit represent a potential market for goods and services offered in this place; the decision on whether or not to include some of the transit travelers in the scope of visitors should be based on the analytical relevance of such information, the availability of data sources and/or the feasibility of running systematic surveys; the mode of transport used by transit visitors might be a relevant characteristic to determine the treatment to be given; a number of issues exist requiring further consideration including in transit crossings through countries by road, in transit passengers in airports, passengers on board docking cruise ships that might or might not disembark and all these situations should be given some further thought.

Trips and visits

32. These concepts were at the core of the activity of tourism and required proper definition. There was tentative agreement that the term "trip" should refer to travel by a person from the moment he/she leaves his/her usual environment until he/she returns. The term "visit" refers to a stay (over-night or same day) in the places visited during a trip. "Trips" are defined as round trips and are/or can be made of various "visits" to different places.
33. As there is no additivity of trips to a country (a region) and visits to places in that country (region), globally and at the international level, duplication of data may occur; therefore the UNWTO is requested to provide further guidance on the use of these concepts in the revised *Recommendations*.

Country of residence and place of usual residence

34. As proposed by the UNWTO the definitions of the country of residence and the place of usual residence should be identical to those used in other statistical frameworks: SNA and BPM for the notion of country of residence, and recommendations on household surveys for the place of usual residence.

Same day and overnight visitor

35. As proposed by the UNWTO the definition of an overnight visitor should exclude reference to the form of accommodation used and the revised definition of an overnight visitor should be a visitor spending the night in a given place.
36. The number of same day visitors should not be aggregated to that of overnights by visitors.
37. The proposal that the international recommendations concerning classification of duration of stay or trip was of little practical use, was supported though the importance of associating its duration to each trip or visit was recognized.

Classification of accommodation

38. It was acknowledged that it is impossible to establish a unique detailed classification of accommodation establishments across countries. In this connection it was noted that it was necessary to review the use that is presently given to this classification in the UNWTO collection and publication of data to see whether it should be maintained or could be dropped. Eurostat recommended that the classification of accommodation according to ISIC, Rev 4 should be developed and adopted; further consultations are required.

Tourism supply

39. The proposal to introduce some guidance on the compilation of data on tourism supply including a list of tourism activities, the variables that need to be observed and their definitions was supported; it was agreed that such guidance should be aligned with other international standards on economic statistics and Eurostat and UNSD were asked to contribute to its drafting.
40. Tourism employment should be defined and practical indications on how to measure it have to be developed consistently with other variables related to supply; in this connection ILO was asked to prepare, in collaboration with the OECD, a draft of relevant recommendations.

41. The role of informal units of production among activities serving visitors should be recognized and particular attention should be paid to the estimation of their output and employment.
42. SICTA would not continue to be the reference classification for tourism supply in the new recommendations. Instead, unified lists of tourism products and activities expressed in terms of CPC, Rev.2 and ISIC, Rev. 4 should be developed.
43. It was recognized that the total integration of tourism supply analysis and demand data in a given economy requires the compilation of a TSA, and the compilation of such instrument should be highly recommended.

Tourism statistics by region

44. It was recognized that this aspect will be highlighted as an area of future development.

Visitor expenditure

45. Whenever the concept of "tourism consumption" is used, in accordance with national accounting principles, it should refer to the acquisition of goods and services by visitors in order to meet their own needs and wants. The moment of consumption is the moment of acquisition.
46. The term consumption "related" to a trip should be given a rather restrictive meaning and it was agreed that it was not necessary to include consumption made after the trip within visitor expenditure.
47. It was observed that the treatment of tourism single purpose consumer durables within visitor expenditure as well the treatment of tourism single purpose consumer durables as tourism characteristic products need further consultations.
48. The issue of the treatment of the so-called tourism business expenses (tourism consumption expenditure that national accounting classifies as intermediate consumption of productive activities rather as household final consumption expenditure) is rather an operational measurement issue and should not be included in the conceptual part of the recommendations;

Package tours

49. The need for package tours to be broken down into their components as well as the importance of determining the country of origin of each of those components (including that of the travel agent and of the packager) in order to be able to establish the impact of tourism on the different activities and economies concerned (that of origin and that of destination) was recognized; it was noted that it cannot be a part of regular data

compilation and that use of a sufficiently reliable estimation procedure might be a better option.

Reconciliation of tourism supply and consumption

50. It was recognized that though the full reconciliation of tourism supply and tourism consumption is to be achieved in the TSA context, the relevance of such an exercise for checking consistency should be mentioned in the *Recommendations*.

Linkages with indicators of social and environmental impacts of tourism

51. The revised *Recommendations* should recognize the importance of basic tourism statistics as an input towards developing indicators of social and environmental impacts of tourism in the context of work on measuring sustainability of tourism.

Institutional arrangements

52. The crucial importance of developing a strategic alliance between national agencies involved in the compilation of tourism statistics and supported development and inclusion of the appropriate guidelines in the future *Recommendations* was recognized;
53. Countries were encouraged to work towards establishing such an alliance and the need of more systematic review and publication of good practices in this area was recognized;

IV. Evaluation of the workshop

54. Gratitude to both UNWTO and UNSD , was expressed for their efforts to bring together representatives from NSOs, NTAs, international and regional organizations, for a structured discussion of country experiences on various substantive issues as well as on how to make further progress in strengthening institutional arrangements underpinning tourism statistics.
55. The value of the workshop in fostering a better communication and knowledge sharing among statisticians working on tourism statistics was recognized.

Annex I

Agenda

Monday, 17 July - *Morning session* – (Chair: Mr. Meis, UNWTO consultant)

08:30 – 9:00 Accreditations

09:00 – 09:45 (1) Opening remarks by UNWTO Deputy Secretary-General

(2) Opening statement by UNSD Director

09:45 – 10:00 (3) Administrative matters

(4) Adoption of the agenda

10:00 – 10:30 (5) Organization of the workshop and expected outcomes

- Joint UNSD/UNWTO presentation (30')

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break

10:45 – 12:00 (6) Tourism statistics in a changing world: users' perspective

- Presentation by UNWTO Business Council (30')
- General discussion (45')

12:00 – 13:15 (7) Overview of the main features of 1993 Recommendations on Tourism Statistics

- UNWTO presentation (15')
- UNSD statement (10')
- Invited presentations (2 x 10': Philippines, Sweden)
- General discussion (30')

13:15 – 15:00 Lunch

Monday, 17 July - *Afternoon session* - (Chair: Mr. Chernyshev, ILO)

15:00 – 15:30 (8) A summary of country responses to the UNWTO/ UNSD questionnaire on country practices in the compilation of tourism statistics

- UNWTO presentation (30')

15:30 – 17:00 (9) Forms of tourism

- UNWTO presentation (20')
- Invited presentations (3 x 10': Spain, Philippines, Saudi Arabia)
- General discussion (40')

Tuesday, 18 July - *Morning session* – (Chair: Mr. Dupeyras, OECD)

08:30 – 10:30 (10) Basic tourism units and concepts – visitor, purpose of the trip and usual environment

- UNWTO presentation (20')
- Invited presentations (3 x 10': USA, Malaysia, Turkey)
- General discussion (70')

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break

10:45 - 12:00 (11) Other tourism units and concepts

- UNWTO presentation (20')
- Invited presentation (10': Canada)
- General discussion (45')

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch

Tuesday, 18 July - *Afternoon session* – (Chair: Ms. Harrison, CARICOM)

13:30 – 15:00 (12) Characterization of trips and related statistics – concepts, definitions and classifications

- UNWTO presentation (20')
- General discussion (70')

15:00 – 17:00 (13) Characterization of trips and related statistics – data sources and data compilation issues

- Invited presentations (3 x 10': New Zealand, UK, Lesotho)
- General discussion (90')

Wednesday, 19 July - *Morning session* – (Chair: Mr. Laimer, Austria)

08:30 – 09:30 (14) Statistics on tourism supply – concepts, definitions and classifications

- UNWTO presentation (20')
- General discussion (40')

09:30 – 09:45 Coffee break

09:45 – 12:00 (15) Statistics on tourism supply – data sources and data compilation issues

- Invited presentations (5 x 10': Sri Lanka, India, Mexico, Russian Federation, South Africa)
- General discussion (85')

12:00 – 13:30 – Lunch

Wednesday, 19 July - *Afternoon session* – (Chair: Mr. Virola, Philippines)

13:30 – 15:00 (16) Statistics on visitor expenditure – concepts and definitions

- UNWTO presentation (20')
- Invited presentation (10': Canada)
- General discussion (60')

15:00 – 17:00 (17) Statistics on visitor expenditure – data sources and data compilation issues

- Invited presentations (4 x 10': Argentina, Jamaica, Thailand, Austria)

- General discussion (80')

Thursday, 20 July - *Morning session* – (Chair: Mr. Ramos, Brazil)

08:30 – 10:00 (18) Analytical applications of tourism statistics - Tourism Satellite Accounts

- UNWTO presentation (20')
- Invited presentations (3 x 15: Czech Republic, Brazil, Spain)
- General discussion (25')

10:00 – 10:15 Coffee break

10:15 – 11:15 (18) (Follow-up of the General discussion) (60')

11:15 – 12:30 (19) Issues of measurement of environmental and social sustainability of tourism

- UNWTO presentation (20')
- UNSD statement (10')
- General discussion (45')

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

Thursday, 20 July - *Afternoon session* – Chair: Mr. Meis, UNWTO consultant)

14:00 – 17:00 (20) Designing a strategic alliance between NTA and NSO in compilation of tourism statistics and its analytical applications

- Invited presentations (3 x 10': Ireland, Singapore, Argentina)
- General discussion (30')

(21) Technical assistance programmes on tourism statistics

- UNWTO presentation (10')
- General discussion (20')

(22) Towards the revised 1993 Recommendations

- General discussion and preliminary conclusions (50')

(23) Evaluation of the meeting (20')

(24) Conclusion of the meeting (20')

Annex II

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