



Overview of the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 (IRTS 2008)

Statistics of International Trade in Service: Challenges and Good Practices

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United Nations Statistics Division
Statistics of International Trade in Services Section



Outline of the presentation

- IRTS 2008 definitions
- International travel vs international tourism
- Travel and tourism
- Measurement issues
- Tourism statistics – relation to BoP

Definitions from IRTS 2008

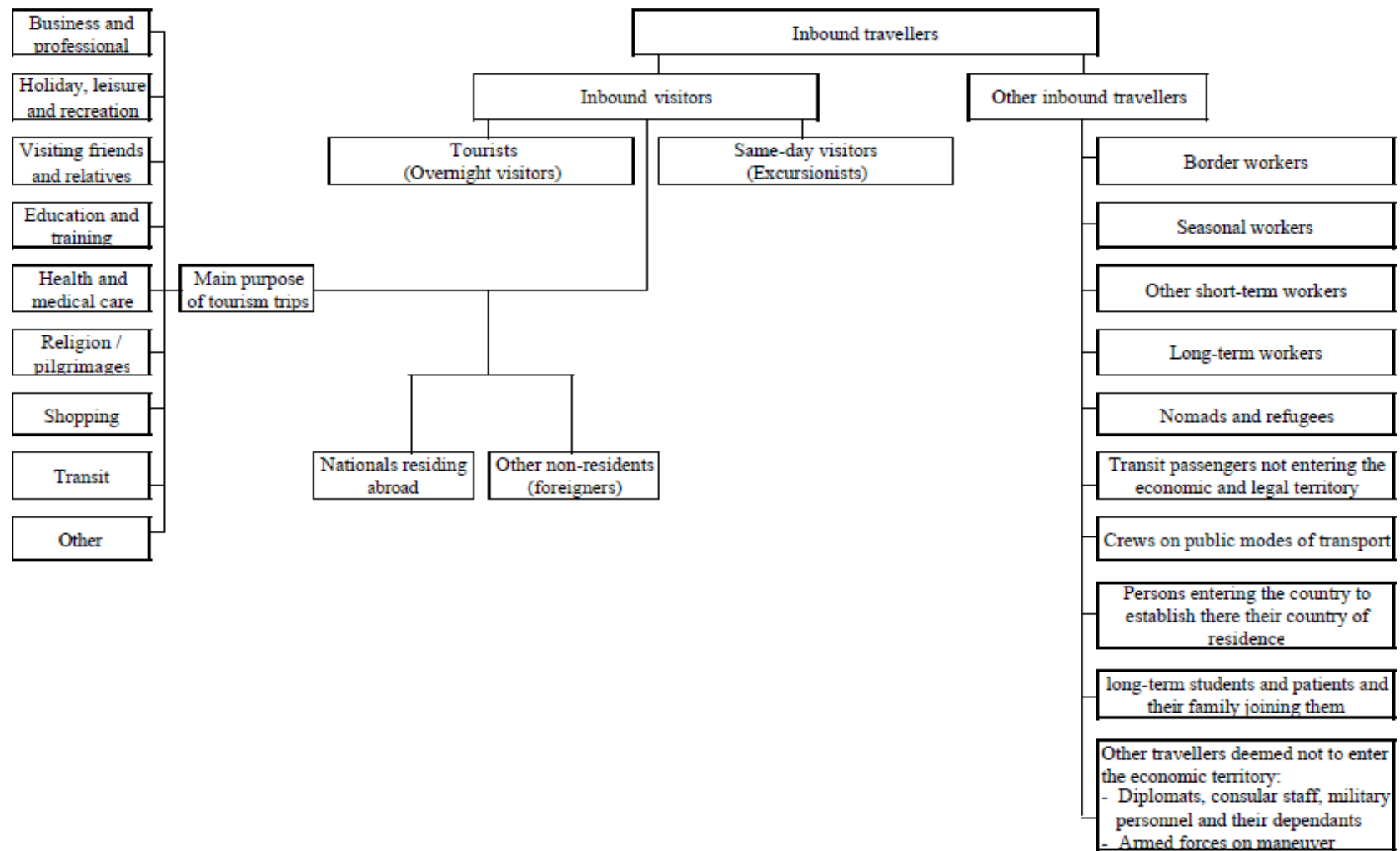
2.4 **Travel** refers to the activity of travelers. A traveler is someone who moves between different geographic locations, for any purpose and any duration.

2.9 A **visitor** is a traveler taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited. These trips taken by visitors qualify as tourism trips. Tourism refers to the activity of visitors.

2.12. **Tourism** is therefore a subset of travel and visitors are a subset of travelers. These distinctions are crucial for the compilation of data on flows of travelers and visitors and for the credibility of tourism statistics.

Classification of inbound travellers (Fig. 2.1, IRTS 2008)

Figure 2.1
Classification of inbound travellers



Trips; tourism trips

A **trip** refers to the travel by a person from the time of departure from his usual residence until he/she returns: it thus refers to a round trip. A trip is made up of visits to different places.

IRTS 2008 para 2.8

An **inbound trip** will correspond to the travel between arriving in a country and leaving,

A **domestic trip** or an **outbound trip** will correspond to the travel between leaving the place of residence and returning.

A **domestic trip** has a main destination in the country of residence of the traveller, while

An **outbound trip** has a main destination outside this country.

The main destination of a trip: the place visited that is central to the decision to take the trip

International Travel vs. International Tourism

International Travel

- All displacements that do not convert the international traveler into a resident
- Border controls: by nationality
- Treatment of students and patients, even long term
- No special treatment of short term workers

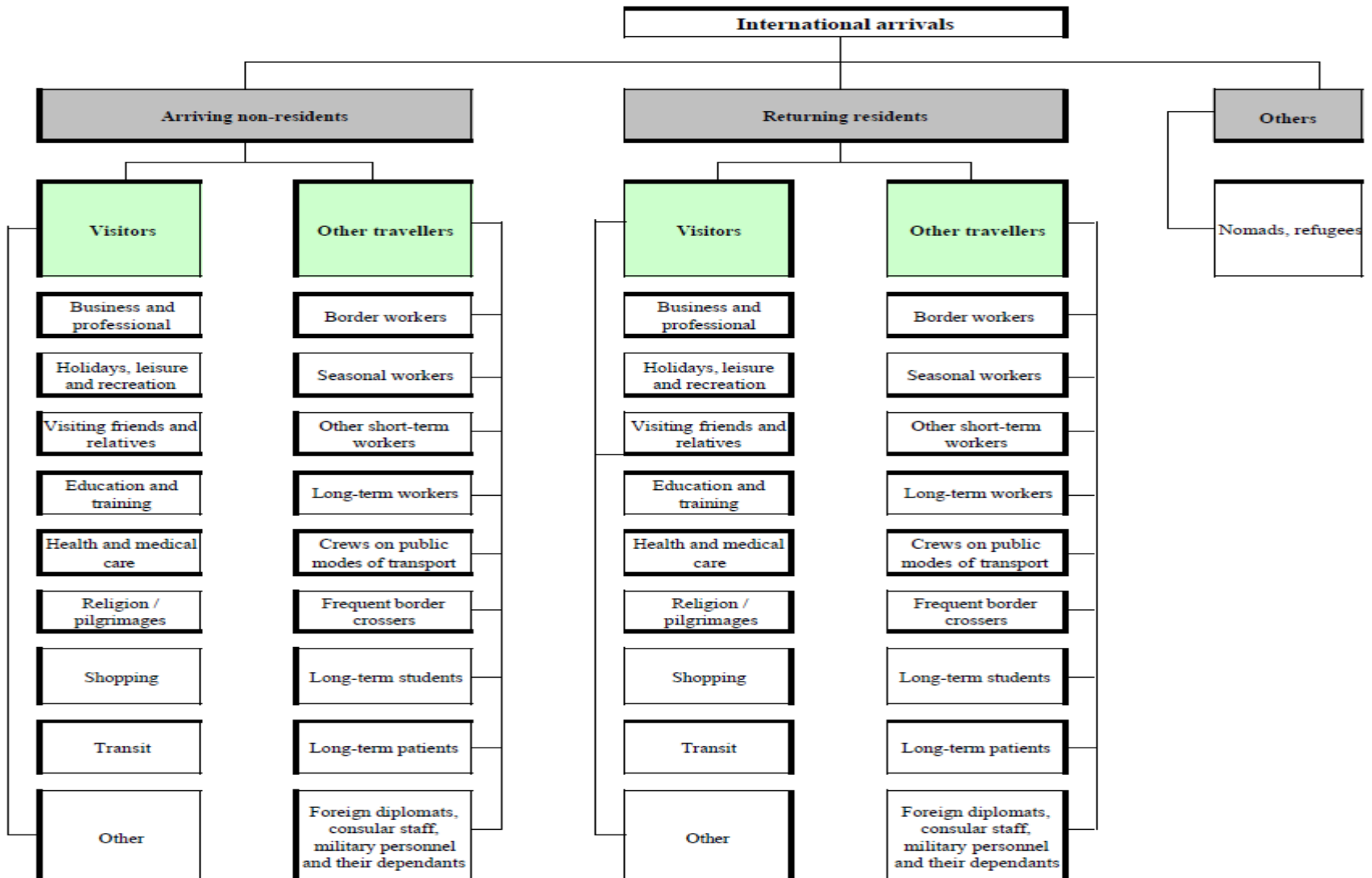
International Tourism (IRTS)

- All displacements that do not convert the traveler into a resident and that are outside his/her usual environment
- Classified by country of residence
- Long term students or patients are considered to be within their usual environment (non visitors)
- Short term workers in an employer/employee relationship with a resident employer are not

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International arrivals, visitors and other travellers (Fig. 2.2, IRTS 2008)

Figure 2.2
Relationship between international arrivals and different categories of visitors and other travellers



- IRTS 2008, para 2.20:

Para 2.20: It is **recommended** that travelers (and visitors) be classified on the basis of **their country of residence**. (measurement issue related with international migrants).

- IRTS 2008, para 2.21:

The **usual environment** of an individual, a key concept in tourism, is defined as the geographical area (though not necessarily a contiguous one) within which an individual conducts his/her regular life routines.

- IRTS 2008, para 2.22:

The individual fulfills the **concept** of country of residence used in the **national accounts** (NA) and the **balance of payments** (BoP) and that of place of usual residence used in household statistics (see also Box 2.2 and 2.3, IRTS 2008).

IRTS 2008 (para 2.21-2.28):

Frequency of the trip (regular is excluded; daily shopping, school)

Duration of the trip (one year or longer is excluded)

The crossing of administrative or national borders (i.e. municipality)

Distance from the place of usual residence (i.e. outside municipality)

Based on the prevalent habits of movements, it is **recommended** that each country define the precise meaning of what is termed regular and frequent in the context of its tourism statistics!

Measurement issues – main data sources

- **Border statistics:**

- ✓ Immigration controls
- ✓ E/D cards
- ✓ Border survey

Usually: **Not sufficient** to determine tourism flows (more traveler flows)!

- **Data from collective accommodation:**

- ✓ Administrative data (i.e. registration of guests)
- ✓ Surveys (i.e. business statistics)

Private paid accommodation?

- **Data from international transport:**

- ✓ TBoP
- ✓ Civil aviation statistics

- **Household surveys:**

- ✓ CATI
- ✓ CAPI

- **Surveys at “tourism” attractions (i.e. guest inquiries)**

IRTS 2008 (para 8.10-8.25):

- **BoP shows the economic relationship between residents and non-residents, including transactions associated with international tourism (see IRTS 2008, para 2.40) defined on the basis of a concept of residence similar used in BoP and SNA.**
- **Within BoP the term “travel” does not refer to all activities of individuals while on visits outside their country of residence but only to the value of expenditure during these journeys:**
 - ✓ **Travel credits** cover goods and services for own use or to give away acquired from an economy by non-residents during visits to that economy.
 - ✓ **Travel debits** cover goods and services for own use or to give away acquired from other economies by residents during visits to other economies.

IRTS 2008 (para 8.13 and 8.14):

- **Differences to tourism statistics have to do with**
 - ✓ the scope of the individuals whose transactions are included, and
 - ✓ with the scope of expenditures that are covered.
- **Regarding the scope of individuals whose expenditure is included, the “travel” item include the expenditure of travelers who are not considered visitors, such as**
 - ✓ border workers, seasonal workers and other short-term workers, frequent border crossers who are within their usual environment,
 - ✓ students taking long-term courses (longer than 1 year) outside their country of residence and long-term patients who are being treated outside their country of residence.

IRTS 2008 (para 8.16):

- **Regarding the goods and services covered by the “travel” item and by tourism expenditure, the differences are:**
 - ✓ Notion “acquisition” used in the “travel” item is broader than the notion of tourism expenditure, including imputed values, such as the provision of accommodation free of charge (notion “tourism consumption” used in TSA is closer to “travel”);
 - ✓ Purchases of valuables / consumer durables are included in in-bound/outbound tourism expenditure (irrespective of their unit value) whereas the “travel” item in the BoP includes only those purchases whose value is below the custom’s threshold (see also para 4.36 (h));
 - ✓ Expenditure on international transportation when representing a resident to non-resident transaction is part of international tourism expenditure but is not included in the “travel” item but included under the “passenger services” item of BoP.

“Passenger services” of the BoP includes:

- **passenger services provided to travelers who are not visitors (i.e. refugees);**
- **services provided between two destinations outside the country of residence of the carrier:**
 - ✓ For the country of residence of the carrier, the travelers that are transported under this condition, even though they might be international visitors (from the perspective of their country of residence), are not on a trip to, from or within this country, and as a consequence, they are not considered as visitors and their consumption is not part of inbound tourism expenditure (for the country of residence of the carrier, this transaction is not part of tourism expenditure (debit) because the traveler is not a visitor to, from or within this country);
 - ✓ nevertheless, for their country of origin, they are outbound visitors and their consumption involving a **resident-to-non-resident transaction** is part of outbound tourism expenditure.

Resident-to-non-resident transaction, for example:

- A **Cambodian** travels from **Vietnam** to **Lao** using the **Vietnam Airlines**:
 - ✓ For **Cambodia** – she/he is a outbound visitor and the expenditure undertaken is outbound tourism expenditure!
 - ✓ For **Vietnam** – as the residence of the Vietnam Airlines – the passenger service is an “international transport of non-residents by a resident carrier” (credit) – so the transport expenditure is accounted under the credit side of the BoP!

IRTS 2008 (para 8.20-8.24):

- **Balance of payments requires countries to present the “travel” item separately for **business** and **personal** purposes:**
 - ✓ Business travel covers goods and services acquired by persons going abroad for all types of business activities.
 - ✓ Personal travel covers goods and services acquired by persons going abroad for purposes other than business, such as vacations, participation in recreational and cultural activities, visits with friends and relations, pilgrimages, and education and health-related purposes.
- **This breakdown corresponds roughly to that of “personal” and “business and professional” used for classification of tourism trips by purpose (see also para 3.15 and 3.17).**

IRTS 2008 (para 8.20-8.24):

- **The differences in scope between BoP and tourism statistics must be taken into account:**
 - ✓ The expenditures included under “business” in the BoP include the spending on tourism trips with a business or professional main purpose, as well as those on travel by seasonal, border workers and other short-term workers and crews; this scope is broader than that of tourism statistics which only include the expenditures of visitors on business trips;
 - ✓ The expenditures included under “personal” in the BoP include those made on tourism trips with a personal main purpose, those of long-term students and patients, and others.
 - ✓ The scope of expenditures included under “travel” both for “business” and “personal”, in the BOP, and inbound/outbound tourism expenditure in tourism statistics is different (see also para 8.15, 8.16 and Figure 8.1).

IRTS 2008 (para 8.20-8.24):

- **BPM6 recommends the presentation of the “travel” item broken down into goods, local transportation services, accommodation services, food serving services, and other services, a breakdown that would adjust fairly well with the classification by purpose recommended for tourism expenditure (see para. 4.26);**
- **this improve the consistency of the measurements with the TSA, as well as with the supply and use tables (see para 8.6-8.8).**

It is recommended that tourism statistics should allow tourism related expenditure to be identified in “travel” and “international passenger transport” as a supplementary item to the standard components of the balance of payments. This is also a recommendation that is explicitly mentioned for the balance of payments compilation!