High-level panel on the Sustainability of Tourism

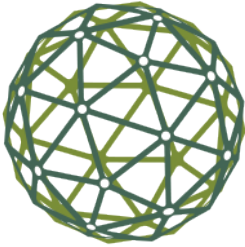(Monday, 10 June 2024, 16h05 -17h00)

1. Background:

Tourism is one of the world's major economic sectors. It constitutes 4% of global GDP, a figure comparable to that of agriculture. As an internationally traded service, it represents the third largest export category, after fuels and chemicals. Tourism's role as a driver and enabler of sustainable development recognized in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and included as targets in Goals 8, 12 and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, respectively.

As the tourism sector is increasingly concerned by its environmental, social, and economic impacts, effective data governance and data integration become imperative for informed decision-making.

The Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism provides a solution to the pressing need for a harmonized methodology to effectively assess the sustainability of tourism. Endorsed by the 55th session of the UN Statistical Commission (2024), it is the first statistical framework that goes beyond GDP and demonstrates the potential to integrate data across economic, environmental and social dimensions, from global to local scales.

Given the inherently interconnected and spatially diverse nature of key sustainability aspects in tourism, the successful implementation of the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism requires a collaborative effort among different agencies and disciplines. This includes close coordination with sub-national administrative bodies in many countries.

Furthermore, in order to bring the benefits of data harmonization and integration to also the private sector, UN Tourism collaborates with the University of Oxford and its SDG Impact Lab to develop a harmonized Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) framework, under the umbrella of Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism. This framework will serve as a guiding reference for tourism businesses and policymakers, ensuring that on-ground actions align with overarching policy and strategic objectives at national and international levels.

Implementing both the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism and the ESG framework for tourism businesses can serve as catalysts for exploring non-structured data sources such as Big Data.

2. Objectives:

The High-level panel will delve into the critical nexus of data integration and data governance in measuring the sustainability of tourism at both national and subnational levels for informed policies. It will explore best practices, highlight the potential to drive tangible sustainability outcomes in the tourism businesses and discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with using Big data sources.

3. Programme

Moderated by Ms. Clara van der Pol, Director a.i, Statistics, Standards and Data Department, UN Tourism

16h05 –   Keynote speech by Ms. Elena Manzanera, President, National Statistics Institute (INE), Spain

16h15 – 16h55   Panel discussion
- National Statistical Office, Slovenia
- BPS Statistics Indonesia
- Centre for Regional and Tourism Research, Denmark
- Tourism Institute of Spain (TURESPAÑA)