

IAEG-SDGs

TASK TEAM ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

In the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, tourism is explicitly mentioned in Targets 8.9, 12.b, and 14.7. In particular, tourism is one of the driving forces of global economic growth, a recognition reflected in Target 8.9 calling for “By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.”

In the global SDG indicator framework, due to the lack of good measurement of sustainable tourism, at the conclusion of the comprehensive review of the framework in 2020, *Indicator 8.9.1: Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate* remained the sole indicator for Target 8.9.

The tourism sector is a vital contributor to the economies of many UN Member States, especially those of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. As such, there have been calls for the development of further indicators of sustainable tourism for inclusion in the global indicator framework.

The UN Statistical Commission has instructed the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) to work closely with the custodian agency to propose indicators on sustainable tourism to better monitor Target 8.9. The IAEG-SDGs has therefore established a Task Team on Sustainable Tourism (the task team) to work on a proposal on sustainable tourism indicators for the 2025 comprehensive review.

Tourism is a vital contributor to sustainable development – but only when there is a careful balance between the economic benefits it brings and the social and environmental footprints it imposes on host communities. Agreeing on appropriate indicators to measure and monitor progress on sustainable tourism can go a long way towards ensuring this outcome.

2. Objectives and Activities

The primary objectives of the Task Team on Sustainable Tourism are to discuss, build consensus on, and develop a detailed proposal for sustainable tourism indicators to better monitor Target 8.9. This proposal should be ready in time for submission to and consideration by the IAEG-SDGs during the 2025 comprehensive review of the global indicator framework.

More specifically, the task team will:

- i. Define “sustainable tourism” taking into account already existing investigations in that respect in order to have a clear and appropriate understanding of the term,

- ii. Review existing frameworks and best practices in measuring sustainable tourism,
- iii. Screen and select indicators for measuring sustainable tourism for Target 8.9 based on the criteria set out in the global indicator framework and other relevant considerations such as data availability, quality, and timeliness,
- iv. Consult stakeholders including, but not limited to, member States, UN agencies, tourism experts and practitioners in this screening and selection process,
- v. Prepare a proposal on sustainable tourism indicators for inclusion in the global indicator framework in time for the 2025 comprehensive review, and
- vi. Regularly report the progress of its work to the IAEG-SDGs and the Statistical Commission.

3. Membership

The task team comprises of the following members:

- i. Canada (Co-Chair of IAEG-SDGs)
- ii. Grenada (IAEG-SDGs)
- iii. Hungary (IAEG-SDGs)
- iv. Malaysia (IAEG-SDGs)
- v. Trinidad & Tobago (IAEG-SDGs)
- vi. Austria (Co-Chair of the Working Group of Experts on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism)
- vii. Spain (Co-Chair of the Working Group of Experts on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism)
- viii. The Seychelles
- ix. Bolivia
- x. Chile
- xi. Uruguay
- xii. Fiji
- xiii. Samoa
- xiv. UNSD (Secretariat)
- xv. UNWTO
- xvi. ILO
- xvii. ESCAP Pacific Office
- xviii. South Pacific Tourism Organization

4. Meetings and Working Methods

The task team will meet virtually every quarter. The task team may also meet more or less frequently as required and agreed by the membership. Between meetings, the task team will work through electronic exchanges and platforms.

Given the spread of task team members across the globe, it is not practical to choose a meeting time that works for all members. Therefore, each task team meeting will be held twice:

1. In the morning New York time with attendance by members from the Americas, the Caribbeans, Africa, and Europe, and the UNWTO; and
2. In the evening New York time with attendance by members from Asia and the Pacific as well the ESCAP Pacific Office and the South Pacific Tourism Organization.

UNSD will attend both and serve as rapporteur and conduit between the two meetings.

The task team will be chaired by two co-chairs elected by the members. The work of the task team will be supported by UNSD who serves as the Secretariat.

5. Tentative Timeline and Workplan

The task team’s work will be guided by the following general timeline. More detailed workplan will be discussed and agreed by the members.

August 2022	Preparatory work by the Secretariat and the IAEG-SDGs in setting up the task team
September 2022	First meeting of the task team; finalize membership and elect co-chairs; discuss and agree on TORs, timeline, and workplan
December 2022	Initial review of possible indicators; prepare brief updates for the 54 th session of the Statistical Commission
January-December 2023	Search, screen, and select indicators; prepare draft proposal
January-March 2024	Consultation process for the draft proposal
April 2024	Finalize proposal
May 2024	Submit final proposal for sustainable tourism indicators to the IAEG-SDGs