

Regional Workshop for South-East Asian Countries

**DEVELOPING NATIONAL SYSTEMS OF
TOURISM STATISTICS:
CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

United Nations Statistics Division,
World Tourism Organization

16 - 19 June 2009, Vientiane, Laos

Final report of the workshop

**Madrid, New York
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I. Organization, purpose, objective and participants of the Workshop

The workshop on “Developing National Systems of Tourism Statistics: Challenges and Good Practices” was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). It was hosted by the Department of Statistics, Lao PDR (DoS). The workshop took place in Vientiane, Laos between 16 and 19 June 2009. The workshop was held within the LDC-SEA development account project for building statistical capacity in the low income countries of South-East Asia.

The workshop aimed to provide training for the representatives from national statistical offices, national tourism authorities and central banks from the South-East Asian (SEA) countries on methodological development of tourism statistics and also the current country practices in compiling tourism statistics. The training focused on both the interpretation of conceptual issues and options for the implementation of the international recommendations in country specific circumstances and facilitated the establishment of a network of statisticians in the South-East Asian countries working on tourism statistics.

The workshop was attended by 28 participants from selected South-East Asian countries, international and regional organizations. All five SEA countries sent representatives to the workshop: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. The following three international organizations sent representatives as resource persons to the workshop: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Statistics Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

II. Summary

Opening session: Dr. Boupha, Director General, Department of Statistics Lao PDR, welcomed the participants and opened the Workshop. Mr. Manivong, Director General of Lao National Tourism Administration welcomed the participants. Mr. Kovacs, Chief of the International Trade in Services Section welcomed the participants on behalf of Paul Cheung, Director, UNSD.

Mr. Cheung’s statement emphasized that the organizers, UNSD and UNWTO see the workshop as an important part of their efforts to assist countries in implementing the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 (IRTS 2009) after its adoption by the Statistical Commission. He underlined the importance of the availability of high quality tourism statistics for policy makers and the society at large based. He also stressed the importance of cooperation between those institutions being involved in the production of tourism statistics, namely the national statistical office, the national tourism authority and the central bank.

The workshop included the following presentations: “Revisions on the manuals on tourism statistics”, “The importance of tourism in South-East Asia”, “Basic concepts and definitions: travel and tourism”, “Tourism in the macroeconomic framework”, “Characterizations of visitors and tourism trips”, “Measuring tourism consumption”, “Measuring tourism expenditure”, “Classifications of products and productive activities

for tourism”, “Classifications of products”, “The supply perspective”, “Supply perspective: measuring tourism”, “Employment in the tourism industries”, “Tourism data sources”, “Data quality and metadata”, “Summary of the short questionnaire for compiling practices for tourism statistics in SEA countries”, “Towards the implementation of IRTS 2008 in SEA countries”, “Tourism statistics as a case study of integrated economic statistics: from basic statistics to the TSA. Linking the IRTS 2008 and the TSA-RMF 2008”, “Basic steps for the implementation of a TSA”, – The presentations were followed up by general discussion.

Group discussion included the topics: data sources, data collection procedures applied, cooperation of the national statistical offices, national tourism authorities and the central banks in data collection, problems encountered in data collection and data quality assurance.

At the last session the participants presented a set of recommendations to improve the availability, timeliness and completeness of trade in services statistics in the SEA region. The recommendations adopted by the participants are included in chapter III.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

I. Legal and institutional framework

1. Considers necessary to improve further the legal and institutional framework for tourism statistics in the South-East Asian countries in order to make it comply with the fundamental principles of official statistics adopted by the UN Statistical Commission.
2. Recommends to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between national statistical offices, national tourism authorities and central banks to provide a systematic exchange of information, to establish coordinated work plans, and to ensure the completeness and quality of data. Relevant other institutions should also be actively involved in this cooperation (finance ministries, border authorities/customs, etc.).
3. Recognizing that several agencies of the government are involved in collecting data on tourism, recommends that the release of official tourism statistics should be executed by one organization.
4. Draws the attention of heads of the organizations/agencies that are responsible for tourism statistics to the importance of establishing a regular programme of official statistical surveys for collecting good quality data for tourism statistics and making a strong case for their funding.
5. Considers important that the directors of the national statistical offices are made aware of the importance and urgency of developing tourism statistics in the SEA region as they are supporting the compilation of National Accounts.

6. Recognizes the necessity to involve data users in identifying the requirements for data collection and understanding the uses of tourism statistics, including metadata, for decision making and tourism development.

II. Methodological framework

7. Welcomes the revision of the “International Recommendation for Tourism Statistics 2008” (IRTS 2008) and the “Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework” (TSA: RMF 2008) and believes that the new editions provide clear methodological recommendations and closely align them with the needs of data users and data producers in countries.
8. Considers it highly desirable to update the training manual for the IRTS and the TSA compilers including description of good practices on selected IRTS and TSA issues. To make full use of the manual, it should be translated into local languages.
9. Believes that it is necessary to develop and to coordinate among countries the methodology of data collection and compilation of tourism statistics including the assessments of official data.
10. Suggests that producers of tourism statistics make a comprehensive review on their current work to assure that the recommendations and the data requirements of the TSA as a framework to improve data coherence and serve as a guiding principle.
11. Recommends that countries develop an in-depth understanding of the necessary classifications (ISIC, CPC and COICOP) and adopt them for the production and compilation of tourism statistics at national and local level.
12. Recognizes that the conceptual framework of SNA and BOP is required for the production of data on tourism as to ensure that the data is consistent and can be integrated into those frameworks.

III. Developing national databases

13. Encourages countries to take further steps to collect tourism statistics data and to prepare and distribute them in accordance with IRTS including the use of
 - i. International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Rev. 4 (ISIC Rev. 4),
 - ii. The Central Product Classification 2.0 (CPC 2.0)

IV. Sources and methods of data collection

14. Notes with concern the inadequate cooperation in data collection and data sharing between relevant government organizations.
15. Emphasizes the need to ensure the confidentiality of individual statistical data records and their use for non-statistical purposes.
16. Invites countries to establish a more systematic exchange of experiences on the methodology, organization of surveys and other practical issues on IRTS; appeals to the UN Statistics Division and the UNWTO to propose a convenient option of organizing such exchanges.
17. Believes that regular exchange of experiences in the compilation of tourism statistics between countries would be particularly useful at this stage.
18. Strongly recommends the countries to assess systematically the quality of their tourism statistics and the underlying data, and to establish a comprehensive plan to improve data quality.
19. Emphasizes the crucial importance of maintaining detailed metadata on tourism data and make appropriate details of those metadata available in their publications and also in the questionnaires they submit to international organizations; recommends countries to implement the UNWTO metadata project.
20. Considers it useful for the countries to make bilateral and multilateral comparisons and, as the accumulation of positive experiences, practice exchange of such data among SEA and other countries.
21. Recommends that all producers apply ISIC and CPC in the primary data collection (both for the demand and supply sides surveys).

V. Distribution and use of tourism data

22. Recommends that agencies responsible for tourism statistics publish their data, appropriate metadata, and release calendars on the web, and use other relevant media for their dissemination policies.
23. Agrees that it is necessary to study and synthesize international experience to assess the quality of tourism statistics; recommends that each SEA countries should start publishing extensive reports on the quality of national tourism statistics.

Developing National Systems of Tourism Statistics: Challenges and Good Practices

Regional Workshop for South-East Asian countries

Jointly organized by the United Nations Statistics Division and World Tourism Organization, Vientiane, Lao, 16 – 19 June 2009

Tuesday, 16 June

Morning session: 9.00 – 12.30

1. Registration

2. Opening of the workshop
Department of Statistics of Lao
National Tourism Authority of Lao
UNSD
UNWTO

Coffee break

3. Revision on manuals on tourism statistics
(UNSD presentation)

4. An overview of the status of tourism statistics in the SEA countries
 - (a) UNESCAP presentation
 - (b) UNWTO comments
General discussion

Afternoon session: 14.00 – 17.00

5. Basic concepts and definitions: travel and tourism (domestic and international)

- (a) UNWTO presentation
- (b) country interventions

General discussion

Coffee break

- 6. Tourism in the macroeconomic frameworks: use tourism aggregates in the System of National Accounts and in the Statistics of International Trade in Services (UNESCAP/UNSD presentation)
- 7. Demand perspective: measuring flows of visitors / trips and their characterization in each form of tourism (inbound, domestic, outbound)
 - (a) UNWTO presentation
 - (b) country interventions

General discussion

Wednesday, 17 June

Morning session: 8.30 – 12.30

- 8. Demand perspective: measuring tourism consumption
 - (a) UNESCAP/UNSD presentation
 - (b) country interventions

General discussion

- 9. Classification of products and productive activities for tourism
 - (a) UNSD presentation
 - (b) UNWTO presentation
 - (c) country interventions

General discussion

Coffee break

- 10. The supply perspective: conditions to provide goods and services to visitors
 - (a) UNWTO presentation
 - (b) country interventions

General discussion

11. The supply perspective: measuring the tourist industry
 - (a) UNSD presentation
 - (b) country interventions

General discussion

Afternoon session: 13.30 – 17.00

12. Employment in the tourism industries

- (a) UNWTO presentation
 - (b) country interventions
- General discussion

Coffee break

13. Data sources: administrative data sources, surveys
(UNSD presentation)

14. Group discussion: current data collection practices in the SEA countries: data sources, reliability of data sources, data collection problems (chaired by UNSD)

15. Presentation by groups about the group discussions

Thursday, 18 June

Morning session: 8.30 – 12.30

16. Tourism data quality, metadata, dissemination, cooperation between different agencies

- (a) UNSD presentation
- (b) Summary of short questionnaire (UNSD presentation)

General discussion

Coffee break

17. Group discussion: cooperation of NSO, national tourism authority, ministry of economy in data compilation and quality checking practices, problems and solutions (chaired by UNSD)

Afternoon session: 13.30 – 17.00

18. Presentation by groups about the group discussions
19. Tourism statistics as a case study of integrated economic statistics: from basic statistics to the Tourism Satellite Account (linking the IRTS 2008 and the TSA:RMF 2008)
(UNWTO presentation)
20. The way ahead for SEA countries
(UNWTO presentation)

General discussion

Friday, 19 June

Morning session: 8.30 – 12.30

21. Conclusions and recommendations of the Workshop

Afternoon session: 13.30 – 17.00

22. Evaluation and closing of the workshop

Annex II**List of participants**

No	Country	Name and Surname	Organization
1	Cambodia	Mr. Saonith YIM	Ministry of Tourism
2	Cambodia	Mr. Horth VANNY	Ministry of Tourism
3	Cambodia	Mr. Kong SOPHEAREAK	Ministry of Tourism
4	Myanmar	Ms. Hla Hla MYINT	Central Statistical Organization
5	Myanmar	Mr. U Kyaw SOE	Ministry of Hotels & Tourism
6	Timor-Leste	Mr. Rodolfo SOARES	NSD Timor-Leste
7	Timor-Leste	Mr. Gastao Martinho Gama DE SOUSA	Central Bank
8	Timor-Leste	Ms. Inacia DaConceicao TEIXEIRA	NTA Timor-Leste
9	Viet nam	Ms. Mai NGUYEN THI XUAN	General Statistics Office (GSO)
10	Viet nam	Ms. Thuy NGUYEN THI DIEU	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
11	Laos	Mr. Bandavong PHAMATH	Lao Department of Statistics
12	Laos	Mr. Sengsouvan SOUTHAMMAVONG	Lao Department of Statistics
13	Laos	Mr. Darika MANIPOUN	Lao Department of Statistics
14	Laos	Mr. Souksakhone PHONEKEO	Lao Department of Statistics
15	Laos	Mr. Tyth LUANGSIDAXAY	Lao Department of Statistics
16	Laos	Ms. Sengdala VISOUNNOUANE	Lao Central Bank

17	Laos	Mr. Phosone SAYALATH	Lao National Tourism Administration
18	Laos	Ms. Phonesouk PHETKONGCHACK	Lao National Tourism Administration
19	Laos	Mr. Bounthavy SISAVA	Lao National Tourism Administration
20	Laos	Mr. Vanpheang ITTHIPHOL	Lao National Tourism Administration
21	Laos	Mr. Linton SUVANTHON	Lao National Tourism Administration
22	Laos	Mr. Thaviphet OULA	Lao National Tourism Administration
23	Laos	Mr. Phommachanh	NHDR, DoS UNDP supported project
24	Laos	Ms. Phetsamone SONE	Lao Department of Statistics
25		Ms. Marion LIBREROS	UNWTO
26		Mr. Iipo SURVO	UNESCAP
27		Mr. Karoly KOVACS	UNSD
28		Mr. Oddbjorn HAUGEN	UNSD