B.3.1. Border surveys

4.54. As discussed in Chapter III, UNWTO has designed a set of proposed basic questions which can serve as the starting point for a questionnaire (see para. 3.88), a sample questionnaire for illustration as well as the Sweden’s visitor survey are provided in Annex I. A separate “expenditure module” can be included in border surveys and used in conjunction with other types of procedures at accommodation establishments and/or popular tourism sites. The set of model questions and the expenditure module should be used by countries as a background reference when updating or designing their own questionnaires.

4.55. In the context of tourism, a module is a set of interconnected questions designed to elicit details on certain characteristics of tourism behaviour, which can be included as part of a regular survey with the same frequency as the survey on flows (or with a lower frequency but, in any case, always regularly). The module refers specifically to the questionnaire module on “Expenditure” (see Annex I).

4.56. As module’s frequency of use and structural link with the border survey deserve attention, the issue is further elaborated below.

4.57. The procedures for implementing a survey discussed in Chapter III apply to border surveys but they can also be applied to surveys at accommodation establishments and popular tourism sites (see paras. 3.90-3.91), or to the use of mirror statistics. Information based on the electronic prints that visitors leave behind as they pay for their expenditure can also be used; but in this case, the procedure is quite different (see sect. B.3.3 of the present chapter).

4.58. In countries in where tourism is significant, inbound tourism expenditure can be measured continuously and simultaneously with the observation of visitor flows, provided that the necessary technical and financial resources are available for this work on an ongoing basis.

4.59. If sufficient resources are not available, or if it is deemed unnecessary to perform these measurements continuously — for instance, because average expenditure per day is observed or because expenditure is considered to remain relatively constant over roughly five year time spans (controlling for important determinants such as purpose of trip and form of accommodation used) — countries may conduct their observations with the following frequencies:

- **Pluriannually** (every five years, for instance). For the years inbetween the observations, a modelling procedure is used, correlating the structure and level of expenditure with the characteristics of tourism flows. For the years in which observations are conducted, the number of observations needs to be sufficiently large in each category to permit such modelling, within acceptable margins of error. The observations must be spread throughout the year, since the categories of visitor (families, retirees, business persons) and their activities (winter sports, summer sports, etc.) — and thus their level and structure of expenditure are often highly seasonal (see paras. 3.18, 3.110 and 3.127).
- **During high and low tourism seasons**. Before setting up such a system, it is important to determine clearly the seasonality of tourism (see Box III.2 for the example of Austria), which may differ depending on the purpose of the visit. In particular, the busiest seasons for personal tourism may be entirely different from those for business and professional tourism. The design of border surveys should reflect such patterns, enabling identification of which flows should be covered in high versus low season. Seasonality should also be verified regularly, to identify changes in the cycle.