D.4. Structure and organization of work

8.43. This Compilation Guide advises countries to review the good practices described below and implement them as applicable, taking into account the specificity of their national statistical systems. The practices described might be of particular interest to countries that are at the early stages of the development of their System of Tourism Statistics. These practices include the following:

(a) Specific formal agreements should be established between the NTA, the NSO and other institutions that are relevant in each national situation. These agreements should cover, inter alia, such topics as (i) responsibility for developing methodology, including the incorporation of the international recommendations contained in IRTS 2008 and TSA: RMF 2008; (ii) timing of the conduct of particular data collection activities; (iii) resources involved and cost sharing in data collection and dissemination of the official tourism statistics; (iv) rules of access to the survey results and microdata (including data anonymization) and relevant administrative records enabling the production of the necessary aggregates while preserving the confidentiality of individual data; and (v) quality standards. The agreements should cover not only governmental agencies, but also relevant private organizations;

(b) In order to support the sustainability in time of tourism statistics' development efforts, countries may wish to establish an IIP consisting of agreements at two levels: the political and the technical. The higher (political) level body (which could carry the name of council, board or commission), would include the heads or deputies of the concerned bodies and would be chaired by the minister of tourism or his equivalent. The main responsibilities of the political level body would include: determining the basic policy issues and strategic direction, adoption of a long term plan for the development of the System of Tourism Statistics and the medium term work programme, and commitment for bringing together the necessary staff, technical capabilities, financial resources and political commitment. This body would review and give its approval to the results obtained at the different stages of the tourism statistics and TSA production process and formulate, and monitor the implementation of, the dissemination policy for tourism statistics;

(c) The technical level body (which could carry the name of “technical committee” or one similar) may be established as a second level body consisting of leading experts from the different participating institutions. It would be responsible for the coordination of the technical work involved, and might be chaired by the head of the NTA unit in charge of tourism statistics. Alternatively, it could be chaired by the head of the NSO unit in charge of tourism statistics or of National Accounts, or by any individual whose personal capacities clearly deem him or her fit to occupy this position. This person would be in charge of advising at the political level, and of the implementation and translation into technical terms of its programme of work. This technical level body should design a long term plan for the development of the System of Tourism Statistics which is to be presented to the political level body for its approval and political follow up. Further, cooperation of different areas within the NTA (e.g., including a minister or equivalent, the head of the unit in charge of tourism statistics or the head of research/analysis) and the NSO (e.g., including the chief statistician or the equivalent, or the head of the unit in charge of tourism statistics, National Accounts or business statistics) would be crucial in that respect;

(d) In addition, the technical level body may choose to form ad hoc technical working groups according to the different topics to be addressed. Creating these as needed, it should appoint their members and chairs, provide guidelines for their operations and specify expected output. The working groups would report to the technical level body which would report in turn to the political level body. The working groups would comprise technical staff specializing in various relevant topics of interest and affiliated with the different institutions included in the IIP. Each of these ad hoc working groups would be chaired by the staff providing the best conditions for support of its operation according to the institution to which he or she belongs, or his or her personal capability and past experience in the matter at hand. The institutional links of Staff hired specially for the project should be clearly established.
8.44. It should be noted that, as regional cooperation in tourism statistics is a highly important initiative, the UNWTO fully endorses its strengthening. In this connection, countries might wish to consider establishing regional interinstitutional political and technical bodies which would meet periodically, discuss common issues and agree on the terms of mutual assistance (see also Box VIII.5). In particular, such regional bodies might be instrumental in raising awareness and mobilizing political support and resources, adopting common methodological approaches (e.g., region-specific classifications of characteristic products and activities), organizing regional “training the trainers” programmes and establishing regional tourism statistics websites (and databases). Such activities might improve significantly the efficiency of national STS and ensure a better comparability of national tourism statistics. In some cases, secretariats of the regional organizations might be in a position to enable maintaining, coordinating and controlling the agendas and commitments relevant to the development of tourism statistics. Such regional institutional arrangements will help UNWTO and other regional and international organizations provide policy guidance and technical assistance more effectively.

8.45. The country experiences in institutional arrangements are diverse. Box VIII.6 and Box VIII.7 briefly describe coordination among different agencies and the work of an Interinstitutional Platform in the Philippines and Canada, respectively. Readers who are interested in more detailed information are encouraged to consult the future edocument for this Compilation Guide, to be available from the UNWTO website.

Box VIII.5

The example of MERCOSUR setup of an Interinstitutional Platform

The Interinstitutional Platform setup illustrated below is what emerged from the “Harmonization of the System of Tourism Statistics in the countries of the Southern Cone” project, which involved Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay and was supported by the InterAmerican Development Bank and the World Tourism Organization.

Note: The Migration Authority is extensible to any institution which possesses and has the potential to provide information that could be relevant to the System of Tourism Statistics (e.g., airports and ports, and the tax authority).

The function of the Technical Committee is to periodically evaluate compliance with the development plan, propose actions, establish and monitor a programme of work and an agenda of meetings, and report back thereon to the Interinstitutional Commission.

The role of the Interinstitutional Commission is to extend the monitoring of the project into the political arena, which would involve decision-making, formalizing agreements and commitments of the institutions, and allocating tasks and resources.

Representation of these two bodies is elevated to the regional level with a Regional Technical Committee, constituted of the NTA representatives of all MERCOSUR countries, and a Regional Interinstitutional Commission, composed of the ministers of tourism (or the equivalent) of each of the MERCOSUR countries. These groups meet regularly, often through videoconference, to discuss the progress of the group of countries and the project’s way forward. The Regional Interinstitutional Commission often meets within the framework of the official MERCOSUR meetings, with the project as an item in the official agenda.

It is noteworthy that the sustainability over time of this Interinstitutional Platform setup was established and reinforced by the signing of memorandums of understanding which identified the institutions and persons involved, including their roles and responsibilities.

The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) is the highest policymaking and coordinating body on statistical matters in the Philippines. In 1997, NSCB created the Interagency Committee on Tourism Statistics (IACTS) whose main functions are to provide direction in the generation of tourism statistics and in the institutionalization of the compilation of a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), and to advise on the development and maintenance of appropriate statistical standards and classification systems relative to tourism. IACTS is chaired by NSCB and cochaired by the Department of Tourism (DOT). Its members are: the Asian Institute of Tourism, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Bureau of Immigration (BI), the Civil Aeronautics Board, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the National Economic and Development Authority, the National Statistics Office and private associations. The agreed institutional arrangements focus on methodology, data collection and compilation, dissemination of official data and information sharing, coordination and advocacy, and statistical capacity building.

The functioning of the system of tourism statistics in the Philippines has been facilitated through the signing of various memorandums of agreement between DOT and other members of STS, which cover various aspects of both the statistical process and capacity building. These include the memorandums of agreement between DOT and BI on the operation of the A/D card processing Centre, between DOT and NSO on the conduct of the household survey on domestic visitors and on the conduct of the establishment survey, and between DOT and the Statistical Research and Training Centre on statistical capacity building for DOT regional personnel and local government units.


Constitutional arrangements for tourism statistics: example of Canada

Canada provides an example of a centralized statistical system based on a strong legal framework which facilitates establishment of effective institutional arrangements and compilation of high quality statistics. The Statistics Act enabled Statistics Canada to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC). The agreement defines the objectives and responsibilities of both agencies with respect to both collection, processing and sharing of information and the costs of production and dissemination of tourism statistics.

Most tourism related surveys are conducted by Statistics Canada in cooperation with CTC. To ensure that tourism statistics are compiled efficiently, Statistics Canada uses various sources of information and cooperates with other governmental agencies (besides CTC), which provide assistance in the organization of data collection activities in their areas of responsibility (e.g., the Canada Border Services Agency renders assistance in the area of the frontier count of travellers and the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council in the area of statistics on employment in tourism industries).

Canada’s tourism statistics, being part of the official statistics compiled by Statistics Canada, is subject to common quality assurance policies which enhance the public’s trust with regard to those statistics.

Source: Statistics Canada (2013).