D. Domestic tourism

3.103. Domestic tourism differs from inbound tourism in ways that affect the procedures followed in observing both and the type of results obtained at national level with respect to domestic tourism:

- As no specific geographical border is crossed, usually no counts or equivalent measurement procedures are undertaken. In specific cases, some countries have developed methods for counting vehicle flows (translated into flows of persons) entering or leaving a closed (or nearly closed) area (a place, usually a city), which in this case simulates a border. Such procedures can measure visits to specific places (destination analysis), but not all domestic tourism trips.

- Obtaining data on domestic sameday visits may pose a particular challenge, with regard to recall problems (which arise when the data is collected by the recommended methodology, i.e., by way of household surveys) and the difficulty of providing in summary terms the precise criteria for the trips to be included.

- It should also be possible for countries to approach residents with a view to generating statistics on their tourism behaviour during a past reference period. However, this is not an easy procedure to follow in the case of nonresidents who take trips in the country of reference but cannot be approached for interviews after the trip is over. However, they can be given a questionnaire to complete after they return home or they may be contacted in their country of origin if an address is available (see, for example, Box III.19).

- Because residents can always be approached, a domestic trip in its entirety (round trip) can be observed and information obtained on different legs of the trip and the different places visited, whether within the country or outside it, as part of the same trip.

- In addition to round trips, domestic tourism also includes fractions of outbound tourism (see para. 3.142 below and IRTS 2008, para. 2.39) and would cover, for example, the case where a domestic visitor takes a trip to a destination that is close to the border with another country and then crosses the border, perhaps for, say, a day trip.

- Often, National Tourism Administrations are also interested in covering those who did not travel in a given period, with a view to identifying their personal characteristics and those of their household and determining their reasons for not having travelled. Such measurements can be easily accomplished for domestic and outbound tourism (see Box III.31 and sect. D.2.2.1 for discussion on differences in the propensity for travel) and but with more efforts for inbound tourism as well.

Box III.25

Compilation of sameday trips: example of Austria

Statistics Austria compiles information on domestic and outbound sameday visits by using a demand-side approach. Every quarter, 3,500 chosen individuals living in Austria, chosen for then representativeness are questioned about their travel behaviour. Regarding domestic sameday visits information only on the number of trips for leisure and business purposes is collected. On the other hand, there is much more information surveyed for sameday visits abroad, namely, the sociodemographic profile of the traveller and the profile of the trip, including, destination, purpose, transportation, accompanying household members and expenditures.

The main challenges in the compilation of sameday visits are associated with the recall problem and the coverage. Another issue that has to be taken into consideration is the fact that it is particularly difficult to define applicable and comparable distance and frequency thresholds for sameday and overnight trips when the person concerned is to be considered outside of his or her usual environment.


3.104. As in the case of inbound tourism, countries either use a two-phase process of observation (see para. 3.26) or observe all the variables simultaneously. Both approaches are based on household surveys, either as a module within a general-purpose survey or as a specific tourism statistical operation. In some countries, such as France, a permanent panel continuously monitors the travel behaviour of residents (domestic visitors). In Canada, the domestic travel survey is supplementary and piggybacks on the monthly Labour Force Survey. Countries might also use interviews of individuals, selected on the basis of population registers. Austria, for instance, conducts telephone interviews using this approach.
3.105. UNWTO, in cooperation with ILO, has made proposals on the subject of measuring domestic tourism and the United Nations Statistics Division and other international organizations have issued manuals and guidance material on the use of household income/expenditure surveys (HI/ES) in this regard.[1]

3.106. If they lack household surveys, countries should try, as an interim measure, to use supplyside accommodation data to estimate at least the number of resident visitors staying at market establishments providing accommodation services. However, this method is unreliable in the many countries where most domestic flows are of sameday visitors and most domestic tourists do not use commercial accommodation services.

In this section:

- D.1. Household type surveys: general overview
- D.2. Household type surveys: learning from experience
- D.3. Table of results