A. Introduction (Chapter VI)

In this section:

- A.1. Defining the statistical unit
- A.2. Sources
- A.3. Tables of results

6.1. Tourism is classified as an economic activity that is determined principally by demand (IRTS 2008, para. 1.12). In describing and measuring tourism, however, supply (economic activity in response to demand) must also be considered, since without it, the economic effect of tourism could not be pinpointed or described. Indeed, one of the major contributions of IRTS 2008 is its description of tourism from not only the demand side (encompassing visitors) but also the supply side (encompassing the industries that cater to visitors), which thereby acknowledges the status of tourism as an economic sector.

6.2. Further, the proper integration of the analysis of tourism into that of the total economy requires that what is measured on the supply side be consistent with that measured on the demand side. Although the specific goal of ensuring the overall coherence and consistency of the data is often pursued only when a TSA is being set up, countries are encouraged for a number of reasons to work on ensuring data consistency as part of their development of tourism statistics (see also chapt. VIII, sect. A). Such consistency enables comparison not only of data over time but also of data between countries.

6.3. Tourism statistics have traditionally focused on the demand side and on physical data and indicators. IRTS 2008 has brought a new perspective to bear on supply. Within the framework of the IRTS 2008:

- Tourism supply is approached as the direct provision to visitors of the goods and services that correspond to tourism consumption
- The processes, production costs and economic performance of suppliers belonging to the tourism industries are described
- The establishment is identified as the observation unit (see IRTS 2008, paras. 6.7-6.15; and Box VI.1 and Box VI.2)
- The relevance of administrative and business records for the development of a national System of Tourism Statistics (STS), particularly in developed countries, is underscored. For more detail on available sources, see section A.2 below.

6.4. Tourism statisticians should be aware of an issue that bears on the credibility of the tourism industries’ basic data and indicators (see sect. A.3, entitle “Tables of results” (paras. 6.21-6.23)), and about which users should be warned by National Tourism Administrations (NTAs), National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and other government agencies that publish tourism data, namely, that only part of the output of each tourism industry is attributable to visitors’ consumption. This issue is explicitly identified and treated in the TSA through the application of “tourism shares” (or “tourism ratios”) to total output (see TSA: RMF 2008, paras. 4.50-4.55).

6.5. It should also be recalled that visitors acquire or use goods and services that are not tourism-specific (e.g., newspapers, clothes, medical care[1], cleaning and hairdressing); hence tourism characteristic activities do not cover all possible acquisitions by visitors (see IRTS 2008, para. 4.4).

Box VI.1

Enterprises, establishments and industries in the context of the 2008 SNA

According to the 2008 SNA:

The majority of enterprises by number engages in only one sort of production. The majority of production, though, is carried out by a relatively small number of large corporations that undertake many different kinds of production, there being virtually no upper limit to the extent of diversity of production in a large enterprise. If enterprises are grouped together on the basis of their principal activities, at least some of the resulting groupings are likely to be very heterogeneous with respect to the type of production processes carried out and also the goods and services produced. Thus, for analyses of production in which the technology of production plays an important role, it is necessary to work with groups of producers that are engaged in essentially the same kind of production. This requirement means that some institutional units must be partitioned into smaller and more homogeneous units, which the SNA defines as establishments. An establishment is an enterprise, or part of an enterprise, that is situated in a single location and in which only a single productive activity is carried out or in which the principal productive activity accounts for most of the value added. Further, the SNA defines industries in terms of establishments. An industry consists of a group of establishments engaged in the same, or similar, kinds of activity. In the SNA, production accounts and generation of income accounts are compiled for industries as well as sectors.

Source: 2008 SNA, para. 5.2.

6.6. Directly below, some of the issues are discussed that are related to the industry data (including those of tourism characteristic industries) that are collected – usually by NSOs – for National Accounts (and TSA) purposes. However, for a more detailed explanation of the issues involved in such collection, the relevant publications (such as the EurostatOECD Manual on Business Demography Statistics) should be consulted. Also, in most countries, the NSO produces explanatory notes setting out the methodology, concepts and definitions involved in their collection of such economic data, which may also be consulted.

6.7. Observation of the tourism industries’ productive activities is quite straightforward and follows the general recommendations for the observation of any economic activity.

6.8. When the focus is on supply, it is important that NSO-developed production surveys be used and that NTA officials understand how those surveys are designed and implemented.
Medical care might be a tourism-specific product in some destinations.