

A. Introduction and a summary of good practices

7.2. Chapter 7 refers mainly to population censuses, household surveys (including labour force surveys) and border surveys. Surveys of persons and households can be used to compile international transactions in services in which individuals or households, as major purchasers or suppliers of services, can be relatively easily identified for survey sampling purposes. For trade in services, the transactions would typically refer to travel tourism, transportation and mode 4-related transactions, but with the growing use of e-commerce by households, it may be relevant to consider other types of services or modes. Such sources, as well as population censuses, can also be used to collect non-monetary information in relation to modes 4 and 2. With respect to collecting BOP services data for households, compilers should consider if the information is already covered by another data source, such as those described in the present *Guide*. However, in some cases it may be necessary to turn to surveys of persons or households, in situations in which they are important for trade in certain services.

7.3. Population censuses and person and household surveys are generally used as major data sources for such other statistical frameworks as social and demographic statistics and tourism statistics. They can also be used to collect information on economic transactions. Persons and, more generally, households are in many economies important economic agents in the context of the international supply of services. The usefulness of such sources will need to be carefully assessed by compilers for each type of information that could be used. Therefore, an integrated approach is imperative for the use of such sources for the purposes identified in MSITS 2010 and the present *Guide*. Following the basic principle of efficient statistical work—collect once, use many times (multiple-purpose use)—it is good practice to design a survey whose results can be used for compilation in several statistical domains to ensure the highest possible efficiency. Given that the organization and conduct of the surveys will be the responsibility of different units in a statistical system, compilers should, if a need is identified, actively seek cooperation in all stages of the statistical process with those units. For example, such close cooperation is essential in border surveys, which have to provide data for both tourism statistics and statistics on the international supply of services. Such cooperation will need to be formalized through an institutional arrangement (see chapter 3). Cooperation with demographic statistics is also important, for example to ensure the proper use of population censuses in the context of the organization of household surveys and as a benchmark in grossing up their results.

7.4. Population censuses and surveys of households and persons can be used for various purposes to collect the required information, but none can serve all needs. The present *Guide* suggests the following purposes:

- (a) Population censuses can be used to gather benchmark information (in particular, to compile outgoing mode 4 data, but not limited to that) or for household sampling. That can be done by adding questions directly to the population census or by developing a tailored module for the census;
- (b) Household (limited to outbound travel) and border surveys are particularly relevant for collecting data related to international travel (including transport), such as on the expenditure and consumption of households or persons while they are outside their country of residence. Such sources can also be used to collect other information on the characteristics of those travelling. A breakdown by purpose of travel and by type of product consumed should be collected to the extent possible (as a first priority according to the recommendations of MSITS 2010, BPM6 and the *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008* (IRTS 2008), with further items if relevant to the compiling economy);
- (c) For border surveys it is important to ensure that no category of person is excluded from the survey, such as persons beyond the definition of visitors used in tourism statistics, but a clear distinction should be made for each category so that compilers can select the population of interest to their statistical domain;
- (d) Labour force surveys can be used to collect various types of information in relation to the needs of MSITS 2010. For example, for the mode 4 variable “number of persons or trips”, questions can be added to the labour force survey or a specific module can be developed (see suggestions in box 8.3). A labour force survey can also be used for collecting more targeted information on outbound business travel (mode 2 consumption for personal purposes or business purposes);
- (e) Household surveys can also be used to collect data on (i) the consumption of other services (e.g., Internet purchase/consumption of services, mode 4) and (ii) the international provision of services of members of households, in particular for self-employed persons (modes 1 or 4);
- (f) Complementary surveys of persons travelling (e.g., at places of accommodation or in sites of tourism interest) can be used, but are recommended for use only under certain circumstances. Indeed, there are a number of challenges in using such sources, including the identification of non-residents or subsets of the population, or a stay not terminated at the time of surveying, etc.;
- (g) There could be interest in surveys that target categories of persons, such as students or patients, with specific spending characteristics;
- (h) The use of surveys of households or persons should be considered carefully, given their cost and the likely prevalence or sparsity of the activity within the broader population. Increased response burden on the households or persons and the burden of data collection, as well as the reliability and relevance of the data obtained, should also be considered;
- (i) A particularly useful source for mode 4 (and related mode 2) is business travel surveys. Synergies can also be found in that context with labour force statistical sources, for example, by comparing or joining samples;
- (j) Given that there are strong synergies with related statistical frameworks, such as tourism or labour statistics, and that surveys of persons or households or population censuses are primarily designed to serve other information needs, and given that it is considered good practice for one source to serve multiple needs, compilers are strongly encouraged to find synergies and to discuss the possibility of using such sources to respond to MSITS 2010 data needs (chapters 2 and 3 provide more information on legal and institutional frameworks);
- (k) When designing the data collection system using surveys of households or persons, special attention should be brought to the sampling /selection of households or persons and informants, as well as the cost, response burden and sparsity of responses obtained, etc. Compilers should weigh how those sources can be used for the various data needs identified. In particular, increasing the size of samples may significantly increase costs and alternatives may involve using auxiliary information to better target the population to be covered.

Next: [B. General purpose and description of population censuses and persons and households surveys](#)