

D.2. Role of the institutions involved

8.32. Section D of chapter I provides a brief overview of the Interinstitutional Platform and its advantages. The National Tourism Administration (NTA) and the National Statistical Office (NSO) are key members of the Interinstitutional Platform in any country. In many countries, the central bank is also a key member, especially if the central bank is running its own datacollection system with respect to the Travel and Transportation items of the Balance of Payments^[1] (see also paras. 1.32-1.33).

8.33. In addition, close cooperation should also be sought with other stakeholders such as immigration and border protection authorities, customs administrations, ministries of trade and economy, ministries of finance and taxation, and the private sector (chambers of commerce or other representatives of a country's tourism sector).

8.34. The *National Tourism Administration* is both a major user and an important producer of tourism statistics as well as the key governmental agency providing political leadership and support for the development of tourism statistics. It has an essential role to play because of its responsibility in the formulation of public policy in respect of tourism, in the description and analysis of tourism and in the coordination of the relevant activities of various stakeholders. National Tourism Administrations should make use of the technical and statistical capabilities of other agencies, like the National Statistical Office, in setting up, coordinating and managing complex statistical operations (e.g., surveys and the compilation of a full set of TSA tables).

8.35. *National Statistical Offices* play a major role within the Interinstitutional Platform, as they are responsible for the coordination of the national statistical system, which means that they will provide the required credibility for tourism statistics. Also, the experience of the NSO's in carrying out statistical surveys is essential for the compilation of tourism statistics in an integrated way and in accordance with the internationally adopted statistical techniques. Important, also, is the fact that NSOs are in charge of the national accounts, meaning that any efforts towards producing a Tourism Satellite Account, as part of the development of the System of Tourism Statistics, need to be integrated in, or at least closely aligned, with their programme of work in the long run.

8.36. *Central banks*, which usually are in charge of the compilation of the Balance of Payments of a country, should also be part of the Platform. They have a specific interest in compiling items closely related to tourism activity, such as international passenger transportation and the travel item. Their international commitments to providing data to international organizations, (particularly to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)) enable them to exert pressure on their partners to generate the needed data. Moreover, they may be able to provide both technical and financial assistance to the common effort. All these elements may be helpful in putting the IIP process in motion and/or significantly improving its functioning and obtaining the required results.

8.37. *Immigration and border control authorities* should play a specific role, as in many countries the data they collect is the main source of information on flows of international travellers. In other countries, they participate in the collection of Entry/Departure (E/D) cards, although they do not process them. Close interagency coordination to ensure timely processing of the relevant administrative records generated by the immigration and border control authorities is essential for assuring the quality of tourism statistics. Also, such cooperation is very important for a timely assessment of the impact of the planned changes in administrative procedures on the content of tourism statistics in the future and, subsequently, on the structure and content of the country's TSA.

8.38. Not only *representatives of the private sector* are key users of tourism statistics and a main focus of tourism policy, but they can also assist in the datacollection process by informing tourism enterprises of the importance of timely and accurate reporting of the requested information on their activities, and promote the use of modern information technology in such reporting. They can support the communication between tourism statistics producers and the tourism sector in both survey design and in the interpretation of results. For example, hotel associations might help collect information on availability of rooms and beds and the occupancy rates among their members.

8.39. Other members will also have a role to play in the identification of the variables to be observed, in the formulation of the scope of the conclusions to be drawn from the data, and/or in the collection of specific kinds of raw data. These might relate either to the national level or to more restricted or specialized levels the geographical, or to for example specific subject areas or activities. For example, ministries of education and health might be helpful in collecting data on specific categories of visitors. Ministries of trade and the economy might encourage improved measurement of tourism if they witness the implications for their own policy areas; and the ministries of finance and taxation might have to be on board to ensure adequate longterm funding. Moreover, in countries with a decentralized government, as some decisions related to tourism statistics might be taken by subnational administrations, their involvement becomes crucial.

8.40. Various private consultancy groups might provide some insights and technical expertise in respect of modelling missing data. However, UNWTO does not recommend outsourcing the development of the System of Tourism Statistics (including tourism statistics and the TSA) to private contractors. Although this might seem more efficient in terms of procuring rapidly certain data that could be used in the political sphere, such a procedure could hinder attainment of the objective of national capacitybuilding and limit the sustainability in time of efforts to continue and improve the system. Nevertheless, some specific jobs might still be assigned to consultants; however, this should always be the technical responsibility of an official national institution.

^[1] It should be noted that in several countries (e.g., Austria, Australia, Canada and Norway) compilation of the BOP (or parts of it) is the responsibility of the national statistical office.