Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism

MST sub-group on Employment - Key Findings and Recommendations

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Background

By its labour-intensive nature, tourism is a major source of employment, which according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), directly or indirectly relates to 1 in every 11 jobs globally. As such, data on employment in the tourism sector is crucial.

The development of employment indicators in the context of tourism is explicitly identified as a key outcome in the Sustainable Development Goals 8.9 and 12B[1]. Sustainable tourism is defined as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNWTO/UNEP, 2005)[2]. Given the importance of the Tourism sector, it's concerning that limited effort has been put towards collecting adequate tourism employment statistics beyond the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and data on tourism-related employment (persons employed) remains fragmented and lacks international comparability. It should also be noted that while many countries have been compiling the key TSA tables, not all of them produce TSA Table 7 (employment in the tourism industries).

Statistical standards are able to bridge the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism through two existing UN statistical standards, the Tourism Satellite Account and the System of Environmental Economic Accounting. Also, the 19th ICLS in 2013 endorsed guidelines concerning a statistical definition of employment in the environmental sector and green jobs[3]. This provided definitions of the main concepts, measurement methods and potential sources of data. Following the endorsement of the guidelines, the ILO has developed two modules and supporting material for collecting information on employment in the production of environment outputs and in environment processes, for inclusion in the ongoing Labour Force Survey and Establishment survey.

The purpose of this paper is firstly to provide a summary of the feedback received from members of the Measuring Sustainability of Tourism (MST) sub-group on employment and secondly, to provide three specific practical options for the measurement of employment related to tourism sustainability for discussion and possible endorsement.

Summary of key Findings

1. **Key Points:**

   a. Availability and quality of employment data in the sector is seen as a major obstacle to adequately investigating and developing considered policy responses to sustainable tourism.
   b. No formal international classification system to identify and recognise tourism specific occupations within the tourism workforce. An international occupational classification of

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[1] https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/
[2] http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/dtix0592xpa-tourismpolicyen.pdf
[3] ILO. Report of the Conference. 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Geneva, 2–11 October 2013.) *Guidelines concerning a statistical definition of employment in the environmental sector*; see available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_234124.pdf

tourism would be required to integrate the human capital, education and skill dimensions into a sustainability of tourism framework.

    c.   Measuring the sustainability of tourism in the informal economy.

Employment and Sustainable Tourism – A Way Forward

Improving the sustainability of tourism and decent work is a continuous process and a rigorous, statistical approach to the measurement of the sustainability of tourism is required for evidence-based decision-making. From a measurement point of view, we should keep things simple but also be practical in our thinking, given the tight timeframes. Given this, the following three practical options are put forward for consideration and endorsement:

1.   Decent Jobs in the Tourism Sector

Employment will be sustainable, if it is decent, in terms of, individuals receiving decent salary, have decent working conditions (formal job, normative working time, safe workplace). According to the ILO, green jobs have to be not only green but also decent. This is reflected in the broader definition currently used by the ILO Green Jobs Programme: "Jobs are green when they help reduce negative environmental impact ultimately leading to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable enterprises and economies[4].

From a practical point of view, it's suggested that as a starting point to measuring decent sustainable tourism jobs is (a) identify tourism jobs[5] in an economy, (b) then determine which ones are decent jobs using the following five decent work indicators[6]:

- Wages
- Working Time
- Informality
- Social Security
- Social Dialogue

It's suggested that by working jointly with countries, they can be provided with the relevant frameworks, tools & questionnaires to support them in collecting, analysing and disseminating the statistical information. A recommended set of indicators include:

- Total employment in the tourism sector
- Percentage of employed persons in the tourism sector that earn below 2/3 of median hourly earnings
- Percentage of employed persons in the tourism sector that work more than 48 hours per week
- Percentage of employed persons in the tourism sector with contract less than 12 months
- Percentage of employed persons in the tourism sector who are informally employed

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[4] ILO. Proposals for the statistical definition and measurement of green job: see available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/WCMS_220734/lang--en/index.htm

[5] This relates to data covering mainly the main job of the person. To improve coverage, countries should capture all jobs.

[6] ILO. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/documents/publication/wcms_229374.pdf

- Percentage of employed persons in the tourism sector who are covered by a pension scheme
- Percentage of employed persons in the tourism sector that are members of the Trade Union

Some statistical information is already available in the UNWTO Compendium of Tourism Statistics, the OECD Database and on ILOSTAT.

2. Developing an International Classification of Characteristic Tourism Occupations

Within national and international systems of economic and social statistics, data and information on occupations groups relating to jobs observed in the tourism industries is the strategic link between existing statistical information on jobs in the tourism industries and access to related information on relevant skills-specific labour demand and supply in the tourism industries.

To compile data about occupations and skills related to jobs in the tourism industries, it is necessary to refer to existing National Occupational Classifications (NOC) and International Occupational Classification Standards (ISCO) that classify jobs by grouping them into categories of occupations on the basis of work tasks and duties performed and skill level. Currently however, such classification standards are of limited value for this application, since none of the existing international and national classifications, such as ISCO and NOC, recognize and identify tourism occupational categories as such.

In part, this is because of the special character of tourism as a cross-cutting economic activity as discussed elsewhere. There is a need to develop a robust new concept, definitions and classification structure for tourism specific occupations, in order to assess and analyse these aspects of employment in the tourism industries for the purposes of informing policies and practices of tourism labour force development and compiling relevant data and information on the skills related aspects of jobs in the tourism industries.

It's recommended that a small working group be created to develop the International Classification of Characteristic Tourism Occupations (ICCTO). As a starting point, we could propose to use Canada's informal Occupational Classification System for Tourism as the building block. Once the draft classification has been developed, further input can be sought via organising global consultation. The final classification could be approved by the UNWTO Committee on Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account and thereafter presented to the UN Statistical Commission for its endorsement.

3. UNWTO and ILO enhance their collaborative efforts to improve/standardise tourism employment statistics

UNWTO and ILO should enhance their collaborative efforts by working closely together on training program to improve/standardise tourism employment statistics collection by providing technical assistance through training and capacity-building, especially for national statistical agencies and relevant statistical services in line ministries. This should both enhance national capacity in measuring employment in the tourism industries and improve international comparability of employment-related statistics in the tourism sector.

There are already a comprehensive set of international statistical standards for employment in the environmental sector that can be adapted to identify and asses the quality of the jobs in the tourism industry, in a comparable and consistent manner across countries.

Funding and Resources

Funding and resources will need to be committed upfront to ensure all the deliverables agreed are achieved. A detailed work plan (including milestones, key delivery dates, monitoring and evaluation plan) can be developed once the funding and resources are confirmed.