



**COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS
AND TOURISM SATELLITE ACCOUNT**
Fifteenth meeting
UNWTO Headquarters, Madrid, Spain

Tuesday, 13 January 2015, 10.00 – 17.00
Wednesday, 14 January 2015, 9.00 – 12.00

MINUTES

Tuesday, 13 January

A) Opening session

Item 1. Adoption of the agenda

An additional point to the agenda (item 11) was added to the agenda and the Committee adopted the modified agenda.

Item 2. Communication of the Chair

The Chair welcomed all participants.

Item 3. Welcome by the Secretary General

UNWTO Secretary General, Taleb Rifai, welcomed participants.

B) For discussion

Item 4. Report from the last UN Statistical Commission

- UNWTO Compilation Guide

UNWTO Compilation Guide on Tourism Statistics has become an official document endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission. It will be made available in all UN languages.

The final edited version will be submitted to the UNWTO Executive Council, and the Compilation Guide will be disseminated in this year UNWTO General Assembly for general information to member States.

- UN Post-2015 Development Agenda

UN Statistics Division (UNSD) presented the latest developments in the UN post-2015 agenda in relation with the UN System Task Team and the Open working group. The UN System Task Team was established by the UN Secretary-General to support system-wide preparations for the post-2015 development agenda. To develop further analytical inputs, the Open Working Group was established on January 2013 and after several meetings in July 2014 they presented the “Final Compilation of Amendments to Goals and Targets”.

UNSD mentioned that out of the 17 proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), goal 8, 12 and 14 refer to tourism, in particular target 8.9 (devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism) and target 12.b (develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism) will be of interest for UNWTO. On December 2014 with the approval of the UN General Assembly of the [“The Road to Dignity by 2030”](#) the UN Statistics Division have the role of guiding and developing a comprehensive programme of action on data and indicators.

The **Executive Director** added that the Rio+20 outcome document showed for the first time the recognition of sustainable tourism as an area for development. This is reflected in the proposed SDGs mentioning sustainable tourism as a potential tool for development, as well as the 10 Year Framework Programmes (10YFP) including sustainable tourism as one of the programmes, UNWTO will be co-leading the sustainable tourism programme. He mentioned the political importance that tourism has gained in the last years, and reinforced the UNSD proposal to create indicators to monitor the implementation of the SDGs related to sustainable tourism.

The discussion highlighted the need to operationalize sustainable tourism concepts and indicators, in particular considering national indicators or other territorial level indicators type.

All agreed that a conceptual framework should be created, based on countries experiences and the existing data available.

Item 5. UNWTO Data Access

UNWTO Chief of Communication presented an overview of the UNWTO Elibrary and introduced the Tourism Factbook as UNWTO dissemination tool. She mentioned that the Communications department is trying to improve the electronic platform, as well as change the membership packages (e.g. corporate, government, etc.). There is a possibility to grant mutual access to other international organisations after signing an agreement with them. Data coverage is a challenge, particularly timely data. UNWTO internally discusses a new dissemination strategy for submission to the next UNWTO general assembly.

The discussion highlighted strong criticism with regard to UNWTO’s policy of paying for data. Most international organizations adopted an “open access” policy with regard to data. This is in line with the UN recommended principles of official statistics at national and international level. In particular **OECD** and **Eurostat** added that they provided free access to data (in general, not only on tourism) and the initiative has been very welcome by members, users and organizations.

Members highlighted that the current UNWTO data policy leads to an underutilization of UNWTO’s data and suggested that UNWTO thrive to get more users and by this promote UNWTO and increase its influence.

STSA Director presented the results of the UNWTO Data survey carried out in 2014 regarding users and non-users of the elibrary.

A number of countries/organizations made some remarks/comments:

Italy considers that the survey showed that tourism statistics data is not very well used, i.e. accessing data four times a year on average is not a consider a high number. Italy also suggested that if data is available in another kind of platform the number of users will increase. **Austria** mentioned the need of benchmarking data in order to be compared by countries.

UNWTO Chief Communications stated that considering that the majority of users are the public sector (free access); the use of the Elibrary should be enhanced. Communications still needs to develop a strategy to promote and disseminate the Tourism Factbook.

The chair summarized the discussion: The committee took note of the finding of the UNWTO data user needs survey. The committee encourages UNWTO secretariat to increase efforts to cater for the needs of UNWTO data user, in particular for data analysis and for a user-friendly access. The committee also encourages UNWTO secretariat to re-think its “pay for data” policy in view of UN policy and practice by other international organizations of “open data”.

Item 6. Monitoring of IRTS 2008 Implementation

STSA Director briefly explained the first results of the STSA programme mapping exercise to monitor the IRTS 2008 implementing, following a resolution adopted by the UNWTO General Assembly in 2013. He mentioned that regarding data coverage the main findings were an increase in data available globally between 1995 and 2010, followed by a decrease on data from 2011 onwards. The Inbound Tourism thematic area is the most complete area, while there is a clear need of data in Domestic Tourism and Employment. Thus, it is necessary to know in more detail what is blocking countries in providing tourism statistics data (e.g. economic crisis, lack of importance of tourism statistics, UNWTO reporting system). The STSA director encourages members and participants to suggests ideas and proposals how to develop a more detailed monitoring system.

A number of countries/organizations made some remarks/comments:

EUROSTAT pointed out that at the European level there is not a decline on data provided to EUROSTAT. He mentioned that data availability is not a problem, thus perhaps there is a problem on data transmission to UNWTO.

Japan mentioned that the Japanese government in partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat and Korea conducted a survey that showed that some countries did not conduct surveys on domestic tourism consumption. This situation may explain the lack/decline of data in the region. He mentioned that assistance is needed in the Asia Pacific region.

Mexico highlighted the importance of a demand approach when collecting data. He mentioned that policy makers need to know better the needs of the tourism sector in order to develop effective policies.

Egypt explained that lack of data related to domestic tourism may be related to the development of domestic household surveys that are costly and in general basis implemented every three years.

Sweden said that the development of better input data matrices might be a solution to increase the number of data available. He mentioned that in the current system data have to be entered manually. He also pointed out that the possibility of countries that provide information to UNWTO to access to tourism statistics freely; this might motivate users to provide more data.

STSA Director mentioned that with regard to data availability the Statistics Capacity Building Programme is a key element of UNWTO's programme for the implementation of the IRTS 2008 and TSA:RMF 2008. An evaluation of the Statistics Capacity Building Programme is currently being undertaken to identify impacts and outcomes of the implemented workshops. The insights will be used to improve and adapt future capacity building programmes.

Regarding data availability, **WTO** suggested that the UNWTO Compendium could have a new section on data coverage and mention what data is missing.

Spain highlighted two future potential dimensions of training: mirror statistics (how domestic statistics of one country could be useful for inbound data of other country, and data expenditure) and metadata about good practices.

Austria welcomed the evaluation initiative, and mentioned that as a trainer in previous workshops one of the main challenges was to bring together the different bodies involved in the tourism statistics compilation process.

OECD mentioned the work being done by the organization to standardize the data collection process. She said that the identification of core indicators it is crucial for enhancing countries to provide information.

STSA Director outlined that the UNWTO Secretariat currently collects TSA data in a non-systematic way and posed the question to the Committee if UNWTO should collect TSA data on a regular basis and systematically, e.g. through the questionnaire used to compile other UNWTO publications such as the Compendium or Yearbook of Tourism Statistics.

Members and participants mentioned that there is a need to move from producing TSA in individual countries to compare/benchmark TSA data among countries and support the idea of collecting TSA data in regular bases.

Item 7. Themes and topics for the next issues of the Tourism statistics' issue paper series

The **STSA Director** informed the Committee about the currently available tourism papers of the UNWTO issue paper series: Governance, Regional TSA and Economic Impact of Tourism. Two more papers will be published in 2015 on "the use of statistics to evaluate tourism policies" and "computable general equilibrium (CGE) modelling in the tourism sector". He underlined that all suggestions and ideas for potential topics from the Committee are most welcome.

Item 8. UNWTO technical committees: competitiveness and sustainability

STSA Director explained that UNWTO re-launched two technical committees and introduced the directors.

Destination Management and Quality Director presented the recent development of the Committee particularly the development of a framework with operational definitions related to quality, innovation and competitiveness.

A number of countries/organizations made some remarks/comments:

- **OECD** mentioned the current work of the organization on measuring competitiveness in a destination. She expressed the will to cooperate and share information with the competitiveness committee.
- **Egypt** highlighted the importance of enhance cooperation among the two committees in order to create UNWTO indicators and measure competitiveness in a destination.

Sustainable Development of Tourism Director presented the mission of the programme as well as the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (10YFP). He presented a list of international issues; particularly he mentioned the major issues in sustainable development indicators.

INRoute welcomed the initiative of sharing information among other committees. Cooperation between statistics and sustainability will help to move forward on the importance of sustainable tourism and how to measure sustainability. He welcomed the development of a framework and definitions that can be measured.

Item 9. Follow up action

- Tourism Statistics Week in Nara, Japan

STSA Director informed the committee that the Nara Tourism Statistics Week (November 17 - 21, 2014) was a successful event for tourism statistics with two events: 1. "13th Global Forum on Tourism Statistics", co-organized by OECD and Eurostat, and 2. "UNWTO Special Workshop on Tourism Statistics".

- ISI World Statistics Congress 2015: UNWTO Participation

STSA Director informed that UNWTO obtained a session during the ISI World Statistics Congress (WSC) congress (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26–31 July 2015). The session will address issue of tourism statistics, particularly sub-national measurement and measuring the environmental impacts of tourism.

- UNWTO Conference on Tourism Statistics

STSA Director outlined that UNWTO still intends to run the next UNWTO Conference on Tourism Statistics in the first quarter of 2016. UNWTO is still in negotiations with the city of Malaga to host the conference. The results of the survey that was sent to the Committee members about the potential topics of the conference showed that the main topics will be: sustainability, sub-national measurement, employment, and investment in the tourism sector.

A number of countries/organizations made some remarks/comments:

- **OECD** mentioned that is willing to contribute and take an active role in the UNWTO Conference on Tourism Statistics 2016.
- **EUROSTAT** mentioned that is necessary to coordinate the dates of the meeting in 2016 since is the year of the 14th Global Forum on Tourism Statistics.

Item 10. Sub-national measurement of tourism and INRoute

STSA Director underlined that UNWTO member states are interested in developing tourism statistics at sub-national level. He summarized the importance of this kind of data, as well as the challenges on how international recommendations can be adopted to measure tourism at a sub-national level. One of the outputs agreed between INRoute and UNWTO will be the *“Handbook for Regional Tourism”* (provisional title). This manual will be drafted by 2016 including a worldwide consultation and will be presented to the Committee in its meeting of 2017.

INRoute briefly presented the latest document of the project: the Regional Tourism Basic Glossary. The glossary is consistent with the IRTS 2008. He stressed the need of support of the Committee for circulating the document in a two months consultation process, followed by the worldwide consultation until the end of 2015, so the document can be presented to UNWTO Executive Council.

STSA Director clarified the timeline by saying that the internal consultation process for the Regional Tourism Basic Glossary will be open until the end of April 2015, so that in May 2015 the worldwide consultation process starts.

Members and participants welcomed the initiative and expressed willingness to participate in the consultation process stressing the importance of cooperation between national and regional statistical offices, and the need of harmonized conceptual and methodological issues.

INRoute added that countries should be focusing on the development of a regional statistical system first, more than on the development of a regional TSA. It was underlined that the handbook will be UNWTO document, not a UN document as the Compilation Guide.

The Chair summarized the discussion:

- The committee **welcomed the joint initiative proposed by UNWTO Statistics and TSA programme and INRoute to circulate the proposed Basic Glossary on Regional (Sub-national) Tourism** for consultation first to the Committee members and INRoute associated partners. Once the glossary will be revised the committee supports the plan to launch a world-wide consultation process (to be concluded by 2015) of the updated version.
- The final version of the Basic Glossary will be included in a document (“the Handbook of regional tourism”) to be presented to UNWTO. This document, including proposed guidelines on a list of 20 topics mentioned in the UNWTO/INRoute agreement, will be delivered by the end of the first half of 2016 for a world-wide consultation to be concluded by October 2016.
- The Committee also requests the Secretary General to **keep working in collaboration with INRoute along the future programme of work of UNWTO in order to guarantee the success of such an initiative focused on the measurement and analysis of tourism at the sub-national level.**

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Item 11. Latest UN General Assembly resolution with regard to data

UNSD explained the relevance of the Committee and UNWTO to develop measurable and manageable indicators to track progress in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets that mention sustainable tourism.

STSA Director suggested that UNWTO establish a working group, and asked for the Committee's cooperation on sharing best practices and information available. A master plan will be developed with the cooperation of the Sustainable Development of Tourism to be shared with the Committee. He mentioned that the timeline for the development of the project is between 6-7 months.

Members and participants supported the idea. Junta de Andalucía and Ciset stressed the importance of to consider data at a sub-national level.

EUROSTAT proposed to look at what has been done about the topic, and supported the idea by sharing information in the future.

STSA Director added the importance of knowing what has been done in international organizations. Regarding the sub-national level data, UNWTO counterparts are national statistical offices, but this does not exclude the possibility of including an indicator related to sub-national data. **UNSD** pointed out that the indicators will be focused on a national level; however indicators that measure regional differences could be developed. **Canada** mentioned the national project linking TSA with the National Environmental Account that was stopped because of the economic crisis. She also mentioned the support on this initiative.

C) For information

Item 12. Country presentations

- Egypt: Regional Statistics and TSA

Ms. Adla Mohamad Ragab, from the Ministry of Tourism, presented the development of pilot regional statistics project in the Red Sea Governorate in Egypt.

- Measuring Tourism Investment in the Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia

Mr. Munthir Al-Ansari, from the Saudi Tourism Information and Research Centre, presented the work on an experimental exercise about Tourism Investment Estimates in the Tourism Satellite Account of Saudi Arabia.

Item 13. UNWTO statistical publications

- Countries and territories: UN terminology

STSA Director informed about the terminology used in STSA publications following the United Nations Statistics Division terminology in countries and areas in order to enhance international comparability and coherence among UN agencies.

UNSD informed that the UN Statistical Commission established 2014 a global working group mandated to provide strategic vision, direction and coordination of a global programme on Big Data for official statistics. He would like to include this initiative as a potential topic for next year's Committee agenda.

D) Closing

Item 14. Closing remarks by UNWTO

The **Director of STSA** summarized the conclusions of the Committee meeting. These were:

- The useful feedback provided regarding the Monitoring of IRTS 2008 implementation. This topic will remain in the 2016 agenda.
- The remarks and comments about how members should be accessing into the UNWTO Elibrary will be taken into account.
- The potential cooperation with Competitiveness and Sustainability Committees should be enhanced.
- The importance to include sub-national level data in UNWTO and the Committee activities.

The **STSA Director** thanked all participants, as well as the Chair (Spain). He announced that the next session will take place in 2016 in January and thanked all Members for their work.

Item 15. Closing remarks by the Chair

The **Chair** thanked all participants for their contributions and officially closed the Committee session.