



**COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS
AND TOURISM SATELLITE ACCOUNT
Sixteenth meeting**

Courtyard Marriott Hotel, BallRoom 1, Tbilisi, Georgia

26 January 2016, 10.00 – 17.00

27 January 2016, 9.00 – 12.00

MINUTES

Tuesday, 26 January 2016

A) Opening session

Item 1. Welcome by UNWTO

Brief welcome by UNWTO and outline of the mandate of the committee.

Item 2. Welcome by Georgia

Welcome by the host country.

Item 3. Tour de table: introduction of participants

The meeting is the first meeting of the committee with new members. All participants introduce themselves.

Item 4. Communication of the Chair

The current chair, Spain, welcomes all participants.

Item 5. Election of a new chairperson and vice-chairperson

The committee members agree that Austria will chair the committee for the period 2016-2017, Spain will chair the committee for the period 2018-2019, Georgia will act as vice-chair for the period 2016-2019.

Item 6. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda is adopted.

B) For discussion

Item 7. UNWTO General Assembly 2015: update

UNWTO debriefs participants regarding relevant decisions by the UNWTO General Assembly (GA) 2015:

- The financial situation of the Organization is tight, the general programme of work and budget for 2016-2017 was adopted with zero nominal growth based on the 2015 budget
- GA requests the Secretariat to undertake relevant action with regards to the delivery and implementation on the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- UN Member States referred to “the global indicator framework, to be developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs)”. National statistical offices play the leading role in the IAEG-SDGs and thus in development of the indicator framework to ensure national ownership, however, regional and international organizations agencies are included as observers.

Item 8. UNWTO/STSA Programme of work

UNWTO explains current programme of work of STSA programme:

- Compendium and Yearbook publication and prepare modernization of data handling
- Statistical Capacity Building Programme (SCBP) for North and West African countries
- STSA issues paper series
- Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) project
- Refine and clarify concepts of sub-national measurement of tourism
- Monitoring the current state of implementation of the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics (IRTS) 2008

Participants **welcome** the programme of work. However, some Members and other participants criticize UNWTO’s restricted data policy. An open data policy is seen more adequate in an era of ubiquitous data availability. The current UNWTO data policy leads to an underutilization of UNWTO’s data and a decreased influence, visibility and reputation. Experience by countries and other organizations with regard to free access shows that this has been very welcomed by members and users, and that it actually leads to savings at the organizational level.

Furthermore, member countries **point out** that a focus should be also set on the use of “big data”. It is also mentioned that the “sharing economy” is gaining an increasing importance for the tourism industry; since for this segment data are hardly available more work in this respect would be welcomed.

Item 9. Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) Project

UNWTO presented the main statistical project for the coming year, called “Measuring Sustainable Tourism”. UNWTO, jointly with the UN Statistics Division, set up a Working Group that will lead the development of the project, which has three main objectives: (1) develop and secure tourism indicators in the formal SDG indicator framework, (2) link the Tourism Satellite Account with environmental accounts (so-called System of Environmental Economic Accounts, SEEA) to underpin a statistical framework for sustainable tourism, and (3) integration of national, regional (subnational), and local scales.

The Working Group will report to the UNWTO Committee on Statistics and Tourism Satellite Accounts and to the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting.

The Committee has been informed by UNSD by the state of the art of the work related the development of “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDG) and the respective indicators in the frame of the “UN Agenda 2030” (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>) which is on the agenda of the 47th meeting of the “UN Statistical Commission” in March 2016 (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents>). Tourism itself is mainly concerned by three targets/indicators (8.9., 12.b. and 14.7.). Several countries presented case studies showing experiences related to the measurement of sustainability of tourism (Argentina, Austria, Mexico, Netherlands).

Conclusion of the discussions:

- The committee **welcomes** and **supports** the initiative.
- The committee also **supports** the **scope** and **proposed approach** of the project and encourages the UNWTO secretariat to **continue the work as outlined in the concept note**.
- The committee **acknowledges** the **long-term goal** of the project to **propose international statistical standards** for **measuring sustainable tourism**.
- In this effort, the committee **notes** the importance of agreeing on what is understood as sustainability and its scope within this project, and **mentions** some of the challenges: integration of sub-national level, availability of data, and taking into account both quantitative and qualitative aspects, measurement of particular topics (i.e. safety).

Item 10. Sub-national measurement of tourism and INRouTe: update and implications for MTSD project

UNWTO outlines the current work by the INRouTe initiative on measuring tourism at the sub-national level and explains next steps and the involvement of the committee.

Conclusions:

- The committee **welcomes** the progress made by INRouTe in the preparation of the draft “Handbook on Regional Tourism”. The draft handbook will be reviewed by UNWTO and circulated during 2016 for consultation; and the UNWTO Executive Committee (Malaga, 9-11 May 2016) will be informed accordingly.
- The committee **agrees** to have STSA explore the possibility to present the final version of the “Handbook” as a background document to the UN Statistical Commission 2017 meeting and to the next UNWTO General Assembly in 2017.
- The committee **agrees** for UNWTO to explore what future collaboration with INRouTe could look like along the programme of work 2016-2017 and in the coming years in order to guarantee successful implementation of sub-national measurement and analysis of tourism.

Item 11. UNWTO technical committees on competitiveness and sustainability: update

UNWTO outlines the current work of the technical committees on competitiveness and sustainability.

Committee on competitiveness:

- Supports the UNWTO in fulfilling its normative role
- Provides a dialogue mechanism between the public and the private stakeholders and the academia within a coherent framework to give guidance for tourism competitiveness
- Identifies, harmonizes and develops concepts, models and definitions as regards the key qualitative factors of tourism / destination competitiveness

Committee on sustainability:

- Advancing sustainable and resilient tourism development
- Monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Work of Sustainable Development of Tourism
- Strengthening the normative role for the Secretariat's work in the area of Sustainable Development of Tourism Programme

Item 12. Follow up action

- ISI World Statistics Congress 2015: UNWTO Participation

UNWTO informs participants about the session dedicated to tourism statistics at the last ISI World Statistics Congress (WSC) congress (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26–31 July 2015). A session for the ISI 2017 is not foreseen due to the planned UNWTO conference on tourism statistics, see next point.

- UNWTO Conference on Tourism Statistics

UNWTO will organize the next UNWTO Conference on Tourism Statistics in 2017 (tentatively during the 2nd quarter) to take advantage of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (UN General Assembly adopted a resolution hereon).

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C) For information

Item 13. Country presentations

- Austria
- Egypt
- Spain
- OECD/Eurostat/Italy: 14th Global Forum on Tourism Statistics will take place in Venice on 23-25 November 2016.

D) Closing

Item 14. Closing remarks by UNWTO

UNWTO thanks all participants and Georgia for successfully hosting the 16th session of the committee and their warm hospitality.

Item 15. Closing remarks by Georgia

Georgia expresses great joy in organizing and hosting the committee meeting.

Item 16. Closing remarks by the Chair

The **Chair** thanks all participants for their contributions and officially closes the Committee session.