

**Information provided by Georgia about the following topic discussed in the
Capacity-building Programme on Tourism Statistics,
I Workshop - Vienna, 1-4 April 2008**

**INTERNAL TOURISM (DOMESTIC/INBOUND): Accommodation statistics /
Household survey / Guest inquiry**

1) Which are the most important gaps regarding the measurement of inbound and domestic tourism flows of visitors?

Unfortunately, the Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which is in charge of calculating travellers by the purpose of visit within crossing national borders of Georgia, couldn't exactly define total number of international visitors because they don't investigate every traveller.

The Border Police of Georgia provides us (DOTR) with 2 statistical figures on a monthly basis:

1. Total number of international travellers by country of citizenship
2. Total number of visitors by purpose of visit (Leisure, recreation and holidays, VFR, Business and Professional)
3. Transit passengers – (2007 – 137,000)
in 2007, the number of international travellers reached an all time record and exceeded 1,000,000 after gaining independence as well number of visitors were 473,000 due to the information provided by MIA Border Police. We don't understand to what category belongs rest 38% of travellers.

Regarding domestic tourism flows, Department of Statistics of Georgia publishes an annual manual on Hotel Statistics of Georgia. According to the official figures presented by Department of Statistics, the number of domestic visitors throughout Georgia was 134,887. Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara Autonomous Republic which is coastal region gathers information on domestic and international tourists staying in the above region. In 2007 239,786 Georgian citizens visited Adjara beach resorts within summer period. As a matter of fact, Department of Statistics of Georgia doesn't publish credible figures.

The main gap in terms of information collection is that a lot of accommodation facilities don't pay taxes and they keep this information as a secret.

2) About the design and implementation of national surveys: do you take into account the seasonality profile of each form of tourism?

One of the prior goal of Department of Tourism and Resorts of Georgia is to conduct destination surveys where the target group of research are the domestic and international visitors and accommodation facilities.

Due to National Tourism Development and Investment Strategy, Georgia is divided into Hub destinations and Spoke destination which should be fully improved and developed in order to receive 2,5 million tourists for 2015.

We take into account seasonal profiles of these destination while conducting surveys because some of them are ski resorts as well beach resorts, MICE destinations (Tbilisi, Batumi),

cultural and adventurous destinations and protected areas, areas for wine tourism etc. Thus, seasonal profile is taken into account of each form of tourism.

These surveys give us the possibility to make destination market reviews, identify problems and prepare practical recommendations for local tourism authorities and tourism industry stakeholders how to improve infrastructure and develop product as well work out investment proposals.

The survey covers such issues as:

1. Country or city of residence
2. Demographic profile
3. Length of stay
4. Purpose of visit
5. An average expenditures
6. Suggestions to improve infrastructure and service
7. Other marketing aspects

3) Could you evaluate the user's perspective regarding these statistics measuring physical flows of visitors. Please differentiate the case of National Tourism Administrations and private sector as main users.

National Tourism Administration:

- Market reviews
- Preparing investment proposals
- Preparing recommendations for private sector to qualitatively and quantitatively improve offers
- Making short-range and long-range forecasts of physical flows of visitors

Private Sector:

- Potential Investors are using our surveys to carry out feasibility studies and better design business plans
- Incoming tour operators use our surveys to find out market demands, ratio between demand / supply, services / rates
- Unfortunately, the awareness of local industry stakeholders (Hotel, B&B and dining and entertainment facilities) about importance of surveys and tourism is not adequate.

4) What are the main challenges of present surveys?

Main challenge of present surveys is that data are more credible.