

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

INBOUND TOURISM AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS (BOP): BOP developments ("travel" and "passenger transportation" items)

1) Present situation of administrative records and expenditure surveys used for estimating the “travel” and “passenger transportation” items.

In Romania, the collection system used for reporting bop data is an enhanced ITRS (International Transaction Reporting System), in which the primary source of information is banking records. For the time being, travel data are not collected via surveys.

According to BPM5 recommendations, the two main standard components of the Travel item are:

- *Business Travel*
- *Private Travel.*

Many data sources are used for the compilation of Travel item within BOP, with the primary source being banking data flows:

Business travel *is compiled taking into account:*

- *individual incoming payments above EUR 12 500 (or equivalent) related to business travel arrangements reported by the banking system on behalf of their resident customers: hotels, other private accommodation establishments, travel agencies etc.: the geographical breakdown of transactions is available; the amounts below the EUR 12500 threshold are estimated based on patterns observed for 2005 and 2006, before the introduction of the reporting threshold in the Romanian bop data collection system.*
- *The information on credit/debit cards transactions is also reported by the banks. Due to the way of settlement, banks cannot provide geographical allocation of amounts received from non-residents using credit/debit cards in Romania. Geographical breakdown is estimated taking into account geo information available from exchange offices about cash amounts of foreign exchange sold by non-resident travelers. An assumption is made the same geographical breakdown is applicable for both types of transactions: for payments with cards made by non-residents in Romania and for cash amounts sold by non-residents through bureaux de change.*
- *A rough assumption could be made concerning the fact that the main part of the card payments is related to travel and therefore all the amounts reported by banks are used for compilation. No estimates of the weight of transactions not-related to travel in the total incoming card payments are available for the time being.*

*For compilation of **Private Travel**, data reported by banks and bureaux de change have mainly been used:*

- *banks report individual incoming payments above EUR 12 500, based on information provided by the residents customers (hotels, other private accommodation establishments, travel agencies etc), on special statistical forms. Amounts below the EUR 12500 threshold are estimated based on patterns observed for 2005 and 2006, before the introduction of the reporting threshold in the Romanian data collection system.*
- *credit entries of the travel balance are supplemented by the amounts of foreign exchange sold/purchased by non-residents through bureaux de change (calculated as the difference between amounts sold and purchased by non-residents).*

Geo information is available for both sources.

Passenger transportation data are collected via ITRS, according to the nature of the transactions, by mode of transportation and country of the non-resident counterpart. The statistical reporting threshold is applied.

2) Does your present information system allow for distinguishing visitors from travellers?

The current data collection system does not allow distinguishing between visitors and travelers. It is supposed that transactions collected via ITRS refer to travelers, rather than visitors' concept.

3) Initiatives that you might be considering for improving the estimation of these BoP items.

Collection of travel data is significantly affected by applying the reporting threshold of EUR 12500 for individual payments, collected via credit institutions. The intention of the EU officials to propose the increase of the reporting threshold from EUR 12500 to EUR 50000 starting with 2009, will lead to a greater loss of information in the area of travel. In this respect, a solution for improving quality will be the use of surveys to estimate travel credits and debit entries.

Cooperation started in 2007 between the NIS, the NBR and NIRD (under the umbrella of Ministry of Tourism), in order to conduct a survey, with the aim to estimate the expenditures of non-residents accommodated in Romanian tourism collective establishments. A questionnaire has been drafted by the NIS in cooperation with the other two institutions, and a pilot survey is foreseen to be run starting with the second quarter of 2008.

4) Is there any discussion about the credibility of the “travel” item data?

It is assumed that credit entries for Business Travel are underestimated, leading to a negative balance of the component. At the same time, an increased number of non-residents traveling for business purposes has been observed, together with a need to increase the accommodation capacity of business people, especial in the capital city.