

Department of Statistics and TSA

Summary

UNWTO Project on Macroeconomic Indicators for the Analysis of Tourism

The *Project* represents an initiative by the UNWTO Department of Statistics and TSA as part of its strategic endeavour towards not only developing national statistics for improved international comparability and propelling TSA, but also towards stimulating the macroeconomic analysis of tourism. Realizing that tourism forms an important sector in many economies, countries and institutions require ways to raise their preliminary understanding of tourism in relation to a number of key analytical areas in macroeconomics. The *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008* and the *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008* form the only international recommendations on tourism statistics and, therefore, the pillars of further progress in the field. However, since the standardized quantification of tourism advocated in the aforementioned publications constitutes a medium to long term project, there exists at present a considerable shortage in a great majority of countries of internationally comparable basic statistics that permit measuring the economic importance of tourism.

The *Project* will provide an opportunity to National Tourism Administrations (NTAs) to raise awareness about the economic relevance of the key sectors in their respective economies. It consists of a compilation of comparable indicators obtained from three different sources: tourism statistics, National Accounts and Balance of Payments estimates. Conceptually, they are derived using available official data and the UNWTO understands that the resultant database will be of interest to different types of users: not only is it useful for NTAs in lobbying and other purposes, but it can also be a tool in different initiatives (such as the UNWTO Statistical Capacity Building Programmes and other needs of decision makers and researchers).

The compilation of the indicators emerged from a collaboration between the UNWTO and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC). Thus far, the dataset, updated biannually, encompasses an unbalanced panel of indicators (see table below) on a yearly basis since 1980 for a good number of countries of the world (approximately 130). The same variables are available on a quarterly basis since 2000 for about 60 countries.

Table: List of Macroeconomic Indicators Presently Included in the Dataset

	Indicator Name
1	Inbound tourism consumption as a percentage of GDP
2	Outbound tourism consumption as a percentage of GDP
3	Tourism balance (inbound minus outbound tourism consumption) as a percentage of GDP
4	International tourism (inbound plus outbound tourism consumption) as a percentage of GDP
5	Tourism coverage (inbound over outbound tourism consumption)
6	Inbound tourism consumption as a percentage of exports of goods
7	Inbound tourism consumption as a percentage of exports of services
8	Inbound tourism consumption as a percentage of exports of goods and services
9	Inbound tourism consumption as a percentage of Balance of Payments current account credits
10	Outbound tourism consumption as a percentage of imports of goods
11	Outbound tourism consumption as a percentage of imports of services
12	Outbound tourism consumption as a percentage of imports of goods and services
13	Outbound tourism consumption as a percentage of Balance of Payments current account debits
14	Inbound tourism consumption as a percentage of workers' remittances

Both organizations have agreed to consider feasible extensions of the present shape of the project. Therefore, it is essential to scan the requirements and interests existing amongst the users of tourism information. The intuition is to start working from a demand perspective by putting into words what users want and/or need from an economic perspective on tourism, and then making the supply, in the form of available indicators and their analysis, match this demand in the best way possible.

In order to do this, the *Project* proposes first, (1) a sketch to be made of the main research and policy areas reflecting the interests and needs of potential users in relation to tourism and macroeconomics. These so-called 'Key Analytical Areas' are meant to form a liaison between important macroeconomic topics and current tourism concerns for purposes of analysis. The indicators¹ will then be matched to those areas.

The *Project* will proceed with (2) encouraging the assistance of experts from different organizations and academia to give their opinion on the formulation of these 'Key Analytical Areas' and associated indicators. Experts will be enticed to collaborate by offering them the latest version of the macroeconomic dataset in return for their revision of the *Project* document. Along the course of the *Project*, a (3) bond may be created with national officials that can initiate and facilitate the advocacy and future guidance for statistical development in national governmental bodies (basically, National Statistical Offices and NTAs). This last point is especially relevant in developing and least developed countries.

¹ A typology of these indicators has already been designed: (1) Basic Macroeconomic Equilibria, (2) Production, (3) Consumption and Prices, (4) Employment and Wages, and (5) Investment.