
Technical Sub-Group of the Inter-agency coordination group on tourism statistics, 2nd meeting

New York, 24 February 2006

Report of the 2nd meeting of the Technical Sub-Group of the Inter-agency coordination group on tourism statistics (TO BE REVISED)

The Technical Subgroup of the Interagency Coordination Group on Tourism Statistics met in New York on February 24, 2006. As previously agreed, the meeting had been organized as being back to back with the TFSITS.

The list of participants is attached as Annex 1 and the agenda as Annex 2.

A) Review of the topics which need further discussion

UNWTO had sent to the participants 3 position papers for discussion on the following topics: an exception to the product dimension: the “business/personal” split of the travel item; measuring timeshare in the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and related macroeconomic frameworks (SNA93 and BPM5); and finally update of the definition of visitor/list of tourism purposes/international travelers excluded as visitors. These topics will be added to the list of changes and amendments that is the basis of the process of revision of the statistical standards.

1. On the first document, *An exception to the product dimension: the “business/personal” split of the travel item*, as this topic had been intensively discussed during the TFSITS meeting, there was no justification to reopen the discussion.

It was agreed:

- to support the TFSITS agreement for BPM6 to include with minor editorial amendments the alternative breakdown for “travel” as proposed in the BPM5 revision Annotated Outline document;
- to support that BPM6 future Compilation Guidance document as well as the revised Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services, should mention the relevance of identifying tourism related services both in the “travel” and “passenger transportation” items.

Although such suggestion was not endorsed for the BPM6 manual, the group agreed on the importance of the breakdown of the BOP travel item by products (goods, local transport services, accommodations services, food serving services and other services). Regarding the statistical sources, the use of credit card information seemed to be worth to look at. This breakdown would facilitate the bridge with tourism statistics.

It was suggested that a technical note could be asked from Australia for them to explain how they make the breakdown (as Memorandum item) in their publication.

2. The second topic had to do with *Measuring timeshare in the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and related macroeconomic frameworks (SNA93 and BPM5)*. The position paper presented by UNWTO had stimulated alternative proposals, both by UNSD and by IMF.

Neither UNWTO proposal of looking for a unique solution, nor the idea of considering a timeshare arrangement as a non produced intangible asset were accepted. UNSD¹ reviewed 7 major categories mentioned by the UNWTO and suggested two different ways of treating time shares: (i) payments / prepayment for services, and (ii) purchase /sale of fixed assets, whereas IMF² considered that the various existing situations could be summarized under 3 major categories.

Also, the suggested treatment of *Transactions related to dwellings owned by non residents in the balance of payment* made by EUROSTAT Technical Group Travel³ and presented to the Interagency Task Force on Statistics on International Trade in Services, was considered.

Future guidelines on the measurement of time-share in TSA should be consistent with BPM and SNA conceptual frameworks as presented.

3. The third topic related to the *Update of the definition of visitor/list of tourism purposes/international travelers excluded as visitors*. Comments presented by Eurostat raised the question as whether the new proposed definition of visitor was a change of the previous recommendation (with implications on the measurement of visitors) or only a clarification issue. In the view of UNWTO and others, the present formulation of the exclusion from visitors of "those remunerated from within the country visited" was ambiguous because it did not explain what was meant by this expression of "being remunerated from within the country visited".

An agreement has to be reached on the actual scope of tourism as related to the different classes of travelers. The process of consultation, the initiation of which is the following topic, will aim at clarifying this scope. The work underway on the measurement of provision of services through the presence of natural persons (mode 4) will be also a very useful input to the process.

It was agreed that the revised TSA document would include a bridge table exercise identifying conceptual consistency between the related frameworks (SNA93, BPM6, Migration/Household statistics and TSA).

B) Updating Tourism Statistics International Standards – List of initiatives regarding opening the updating process to the public domain

A presentation was made of the different initiatives that UNWTO has proposed to undertake in order to achieve the participation of countries in the revision process. The revised recommendations on tourism statistics international standards will be presented for approval at the 2008 session of the UN Statistical Commission, a timetable which requires for the first phase of the consultation process to be over by the end of October 2006. A first draft would be ready to be presented at the next TSG meeting (scheduled for January 2007), in order to initiate the final round of consultation.

¹ See UNSD paper "Comments on the paper "Measuring timeshare in the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and related macroeconomic frameworks (1993 SNA and BPM5) – Position Paper".

² See IMF paper "Some deliberations on the WTO position paper "Measuring timeshare in the Tourism Satellite Account and related macroeconomic frameworks".

³ See Eurostat Technical Group Travel paper "The revision of travel-related concepts in the Balance of Payments", Annex 2 "The treatment of transactions related to dwellings owned by non residents in the balance of payments".

The UNWTO is setting up an electronic discussion forum to which countries would be invited to participate. The sets of changes and amendments that have been identified by this Technical Subgroup in its first and second meeting would constitute the initial input. The TSG should continue discussion via e-mail of the revised list of issues prepared by UNWTO after the meeting: amendments should be sent by March 24 at the latest.

A discussion followed regarding the organization, access, and management of the forum. UNSD proposed that a worldwide consultation with national tourism administrations and national statistical offices be carried out, so that countries needs and views are fully taken into account. The UNWTO proposal to issue a joint letter from the chief statisticians of the international entities that are part of the Inter-agency was not supported. However, it was agreed that each agency will inform its constituency about the consultation process in the most appropriate way.

UNSD and UNWTO informed the TSG members that they will conduct a joint workshop on tourism statistics focusing on Recommendations on Tourism Statistics which were approved by the UN Statistical Commission in 1993. The workshop will be held in Madrid on 17-20 July 2006 and will be co-financed by UNSD and UNWTO. Representatives from national tourism organizations and national statistical offices will be invited and asked to provide their assessment of the relevance of the current recommendations, indicate areas where revision is needed and to make concrete proposals regarding revision of specific recommendations. The workshop is seen by both organizations as a major event in the context of a worldwide consultation on revision of Recommendations on Tourism Statistics.

Annex 1

List of participants

A. Members

UNSD

Ivo Havinga
Vladimir Markhonko
Vu Viet

OECD

William Cave

Eurostat

Daniela Comini

IMF

Natalya Ivanik

WTO

Joscelyn Magdeleine

UNWTO

Antonio Massieu
Marion Libreros

B. Observers

Japan

Bank of Japan
Tetsuma Arita

Philippines

Central Bank of the Philippines
Illuminada Sicat
Central Statistics Office
Estrella Domingo

Annex 2

Agenda

1. Those issues that require additional discussion in order to bring closer related conceptual frameworks in the present revision process.
In line with this objective, the following topics, for which UNWTO has prepared a documentation that was released in advance to participants, will be discussed:
 - “Measuring timeshare in the TSA and related macroeconomic frameworks (SNA93 and BPM5)” ;
 - “Business / personal split of the *travel* item” (Position paper;
 - “Update of the definition of visitor / list of tourism purposes / international travellers excluded as visitors”
2. “Updating Tourism Statistics International Standards – List of initiatives regarding opening the updating process to the public domain”.