



UNWTO COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS AND TSA

Eleventh meeting

25-26 March 2010

Item of the provisional programme: Employment in the tourism industries and the use of ISCO'08

PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A TOURISM VIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS

Following endorsement in 2008 of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) by the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO), it is proposed to develop a set of 'thematic groupings' or 'views' of ISCO-08 for certain groups of occupations. Thematic views are a standard alternative way of aggregating occupational data classified at the 4-digit level of ISCO, according to selected aspects of skill specialization, such as the kinds of goods or services produced or the field of knowledge required. They will be developed where there is a need, in order to satisfy key analytical and policy requirements, to aggregate occupational data independently of skill level, the overriding criterion used to organize occupations into groups in ISCO.

Tourism has been proposed as one of several thematic views. Others include Agriculture, Construction, Education, Health and Information and communications technology

For areas such as health or information and communications technology it may be relatively easy to define and specify occupations that produce related goods or services and/or that require specific skills and knowledge. For occupations related to tourism this is likely to be much more difficult. Many tourism characteristic products are also provided to consumers who are not visitors. The skills and knowledge required to produce such products may vary greatly from one product to another.

In order to define the concept "tourism occupations" it is therefore especially important to clearly identify the purpose of doing so. We understand the key purposes might be the following:

- a) to measure the total numbers employed in producing Tourism characteristic products, name the occupations, and measure the numbers and characteristics of those employed in these occupations;
- b) to measure total employment in occupations that produce Tourism characteristic products, regardless of whether or not the employing establishment belongs to a tourism characteristic industry;
- c) to identify and measure skill shortages and training requirements that need to be addressed to facilitate development of tourism.

There needs to be a discussion, therefore about whether the definition should cover:

- all occupations required to produce Tourism characteristic products?
- all occupations in Tourism industries?
- selected Tourism characteristic occupations?

Consideration of the following questions could be helpful for the discussion:

(a) “Should the definition cover all occupations required to produce Tourism characteristic products?”

This would correspond conceptually to the Tourism Satellite Account framework, and seeks to identify, among other variables, employment associated with the production of products, goods and services, purchased by visitors. In theory, the concept can be extended to identifying the occupations of those employed in producing those products. It should be noted that a definition of this type would lead to the identification of some occupations that are commonly employed in almost all industries (Eg Personal assistants, secretaries, accounts clerks) and do not contribute directly to the production of the tourism products.

However, occupational data when collected through Censuses and other household surveys can be related only to industries, and not directly to products. Occupational data can be related statistically to products only through industries and the products that they produce (and this requires supply side data usually from establishment surveys).

Given the difficulties of relating even employment to products, it is quite questionable whether it is possible, in practice, to relate occupations to products through statistical analysis.

(b) “Should the definition cover all occupations in Tourism industries?”

This assumes that, in the first instance, it is best to relate occupations to industries and to begin by collecting information about occupations within Tourism characteristic industries. These are the industries that primarily produce the products mainly purchased by visitors and account for the major share of them. Occupations in these industries are the ones that are likely to be of interest for Tourism purposes. As with question (a) a definition of this type could also lead to the identification of some occupations that are commonly employed in almost all industries

(c) “Should the definition cover only selected tourism characteristic occupations?”

The development of a definition along these lines would need to focus on what criteria should be used to select the occupations. One approach could involve extending the analysis above to occupations in all the other industries producing products purchased by visitors.

Since one of the criteria used to organize occupations into groups in ISCO-08 group relates to the good and services by each occupational group, this information is generally included in the ISCO-08 group definitions. A qualitative analysis of the ISCO-08 structure and group definitions, could therefore allow the identification of those occupational groups that directly involve the production of goods and services related to tourism, and that require specific skills related to the production of these products.

This second approach would be more relevant for satisfying purpose (c) identified above and would also provide suitable data for purpose (b). In satisfying purpose (a) it would exclude those occupations in the industries that produce tourism characteristics products that are not directly involved in the production of those services.

Conclusions

It is unlikely that a distinction can be made between the occupations that produce the products purchased by visitors and ones purchased by other types of consumer, but this question would need to be further investigated. Further, whether all the identified occupations are of interest and/or only a subset of them remains a matter for discussion.

Considering the perspective of availability of statistics about occupations for Tourism that could be internationally comparable in a medium term process, ILO and UNWTO understand that creating a predefined grouping of occupations for Tourism is not straightforward. The selection of occupations based on analysis of ISCO definitions could be undertaken in the short term, however. This approach would be partially intuitive, however, unless occupational data to support the selection of occupations are available.

To move the proposal forward we therefore suggest the following process:

1. develop one or more working definitions of tourism related occupations based on the existing definitions of tourism related products;
2. review ISCO-08 group definitions to identify those ISCO-08 groups that fit within the proposed definition(s);
3. collect employment data associated with tourism industries as well as occupational data classified to ISCO-08 (these will only be available after it has been implemented in national censuses starting in 2010);
4. analyse these data to assist in validating the results of step 2 and to ensure the identification of all relevant occupations in the tourism industries, as well as other occupations in all other industries producing good and services purchased by visitors.

It is anticipated that this work would be funded primarily by UNWTO and undertaken in close consultation with ILO.

The advice of the Statistics Committee on this proposal is sought. In particular, the Committee may wish to consider:

- a) The main purposes of a predefined listing of ISCO-08 groups for occupations related to tourism;
- b) Whether a definition that focussed on selected occupations that produce tourism characteristic products (and/or require specific skills necessary to produce those products) would facilitate the compilation of data that would inform these purposes;
- c) Whether an approach that relied on empirical analysis of occupations that exist in tourism related industries would be preferable.