



WORKING GROUP on
MEASURING TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
1st meeting
20 November 2015 in San Juan, Puerto Rico
Minutes

Agenda item 1. Welcome and round of introductions

(see final list of participants)

Agenda item 2: Update on the initiative *Measuring Tourism for Sustainable Development* (UNWTO)

- The UN 2030 Development Agenda, with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leaves no doubt: sustainability is at the forefront of policy. Tourism is explicitly considered in 3 targets. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that integrated policy requires integrated information.
- The broad intent of the initiative is to contribute to the organization of information regarding tourism and sustainable development, and the general concept of sustainable tourism. In this way, it should cater to the information needs of the 2030 Development Agenda and the integration of tourism therein.
- Three interconnected objectives are identified: (1) linking the accounting frameworks of Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), (2) indicators for global monitoring of tourism within the SDGs (not only for the three targets explicitly mentioning tourism but also a “tourism theme” of indicators), and (3) integration of the sub-national perspective this measurement.
- Comparability is a primary consideration. Equally important is the ability of the framework to be flexible enough to accommodate relevance (to stakeholders) and feasibility (given the statistical and institutional reality).
- UNSD/Karoly mentioned the two recent UN General Assembly resolutions on tourism in 2014 on Sustainable Tourism, including Ecotourism, for Poverty Reduction and on 15 Oct 2015 draft Resolution on 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

Agenda item 3: Towards a SEEA-TSA link

a) Annotated Outline of the Technical Note (*Carl Obst, UNWTO expert*)

- Introduce where the project may head and get contributions from the Group. One aspect will be learning from country and regional experiences (case studies) in bringing data together for linking tourism and environmental accounts.
- Gave overview of SEEA process, including the development of the SEEA Central Framework, SEEA Experimental Ecosystems Accounting, and SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
- Purpose of outline is to frame the discussion we might head into around a methodological document, an accounting framework, but it might also say we need some other work on statistical guidance or data collection methodologies and a range of other pieces that might fit into a suite of products. Austria expressed the need for a section on satellite accounting in general in the introduction chapter; clarify whether in Ch. 3 we speak of particular indicators (like SDG indicators) or whether indicators will be result of combining SEEA-TSA link; and the need for a stock-taking of countries with (full-fledged) TSA and with SEEA.
- Italy drew attention to considering implementation, maybe not in the Technical Note but certainly soon afterwards, and the need for a tiered approach. Instead of aiming at providing very comprehensive accounting frameworks, we may think of giving priority to something that is feasible and simplified (so-called combined presentation). Then, after checking feasibility of such a combined presentation, move on to simplified accounts, and finally move to full accounts.

- UNSD/Alessandra clarified that a Technical Note usually refers to something that is being developed in SEEA accounting modules to (relative quickly) develop tables and accounts, and then develop around them a framework approach. But what is presented seems to have elements of framework, Technical Note and practical guidelines. Need to think about what type of products we could go for because there are various options: (1) framework and then eventually a standard on sustainable tourism (SEEA-TSA), (2) compilation guidelines for countries, etc. It would be good to have a framework to support sustainable tourism as a standard. But this should not be mixed up with practical guidelines (country examples).
- Response from Carl: a different term is better. We're not quite at the point of designing the tables but need a scoping document to bring together the two communities (SEEA and TSA) and start a dialogue about objectives, possible products, issues and challenges.
- UNSD/Karoly supported this idea and one of the main goals should be helping countries produce the tourism SDG indicators (guidelines for the longer term).
- UNWTO thanked contributions and confirmed that Carl hit the spot as to what the idea is at this point and agreed with Alessandra about having to clarify what objectives/products, as well as with Italy about the need to consider (tiered) implementation in countries.
- INRouTe stressed that this project is a huge amount of work, implying a medium-long term perspective. UNWTO has to define this project. One of the clarifications needed is that linking SEEA-TSA should not just be a conceptual exercise (how/where to expand the conceptual framework) but should also include accounting frameworks, (potential) data methodology, and guidance for countries to develop indicators. Going beyond conceptual issues means we need to know where we stand with TSA implementation in countries; UNWTO could launch a questionnaire. Only then could we think about squeezing the complexity of linked SEEA-TSA accounting tables into a limited number of tables before being more ambitious. If this project is to help countries develop indicators, there is a need for compilation guidance.
- Saudi Arabia noted the useful outline and good initiative. Agreed on a medium-long term view because of implementation challenges (of TSA and SEEA in terms of technical and institutional issues) and the need to also consider social elements. This project could help propel development of cultural and environmental satellite accounts in Saudi Arabia.
- Cardiff University/Annette requested clarification on whether only the impact of tourism on the environment is considered or also the other way around to fully consider the system.
 - Carl replied that this two-way consideration is certainly the case.
- Cardiff University/Max supported long term project vision and called for the need to define what the (data) demands on the system may be. One of the key demands could be on air travel and emissions. An issue may be that of responsibility in the context of accounts—who is responsible for the activity, for air emissions.
- Netherlands proposed that SNA should be mentioned in Chap.1, and Ch.5 could include a discussion of the applications of data for policy makers.
- Canada noted that the outline looks very complete. Though Ch.5 could give some guidance on the interpretation of the data and its limitations (e.g. TSA direct effects vs. indirect or induced effects and the residence principle (emissions come from both domestic and foreign carriers though TSA only considers former). Policy and private sector stakeholders find these issues important.
- Mexico underlined the importance of a definition of sustainable tourism, i.e. defining tourism as a responsible activity (one that e.g. reduces CO2 emissions, generates green jobs, etc).
- For INRouTe defining “sustainable tourism” is almost impossible because it is a policy concept. We should not aim to insert “sustainable tourism” in national agendas, rather aim to define how tourism affects elements of sustainable development. So there is no such thing as “sustainable tourism”. As the term is used in the SDGs, we need to clarify that this is a policy term and distinguish that from the need to define indicators in the SDGs context. A policy concept cannot be used to define indicators.
- The Regional Government of Andalucía agreed that the definition of sustainability is a political issue, and we need to consider aspects like social sustainability and integrate the local population. If we measure specific aspects of sustainability in relation to tourism we obtain a kind of definition by integrating these.
- UNSD/Alessandra agreed that there are different concepts that need to be underpinned by statistical frameworks. It is important to do a scoping of what users and policy needs are, and develop a statistical framework accordingly. But the statistical framework should support decisions related to sustainable

tourism, even if we use the word loosely. Analogously, SEEA is a tool to support sustainable development. Several aspects of this project are: (1) conceptual, (2) data, and (3) getting the two communities together.

- It was agreed that additional comments could be sent to UNWTO/Clara. Received from Austria (26/11/2015):

Chapter 1: Introduction some general thoughts related to "Satellite Accounting should be considered, see also SNA 2008, Chapter 29 and ESA 2010, Chapter 22.

Chapter 2: Overview to the SEEA and TSA frameworks: in the bullet-point "Description of TSA framework" the following might be added:

- production boundaries (i.e. services undertaken in the household for use by that household is excluded; domestic concept: residence as the center of economic interest)
- valuation principles, characteristicity of supply
- Chapter 5: Conclusions and next steps Stock-take of countries having TSA and SEEA systems; collaboration with other international organisations (i.e. OECD, Eurostat).

Agenda item 3: Towards a SEEA-TSA link

b) Country experiences:

Mexico (Raúl Figueroa, INEGI; see PPT):

- Mexico feels that it should first have exercises and tables in priority issues (e.g. have tables on emissions coming from tourists, cross environmental goods and services with tourism services). Second, it is important to talk about what the methodological aspects and the borders are (in tourism and in SEEA). Fundamentally: what is the objective to linking? Think about users to ensure sustainability in time of these efforts. E.g. Tourism Ministry people are convinced this is important information.
- Linking cultural and tourism services is important.
- Need to consider both negative and positive effects of tourism, and link with macroeconomic variables (GDP, investment, savings). Have experimented with environmentally-adjusted GDP measures.
- In addition to linking tourism and environment, it is very important to use spatial units. Have geo-referenced information and could combine different layers: on tourism industries with layers on water, forest, land cover, ecosystems, etc.
- Combined information on e.g.: water, water contamination, air emissions (note methodology by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on emissions by international bunker but take advantage of this kind of data), soil degradation (tourist use of urban soil, forest and land cover), residues (solid waste generation by visitors).
- Challenges are: identification of tourism activities for each of the classifications in SEEA, disaggregation of information in physical and monetary units (we need a catalogue of data sources), linking with the measurement of ecosystem services ("cultural services"). INEGI produces NA, TSA, SEEA and cartography information which enables direct access.

Austria (Peter Laimer, Statistics Austria)

- At the beginning of putting together environmental and tourism statistical information. Have a lot of the puzzle pieces (TSA, regional TSA, environmental statistics and some indicators) but still some gaps, and this is why this initiative is very important to us.
- Also doing some estimates of indirect effects based on TSA.
- Have environmental statistics due to EU Regulation on Environmental Economic Accounts (integrated NAMEA).
- Also have some experience with environmental indicators (based on an OECD document). Some conclusions from this work were:
 - Relation with sustainability is always regionally based (and even a region doesn't give a precise enough picture) but at these levels data availability is a problem.
 - Sustainability needs to be defined (we largely looked at ecological sustainability and not social).
 - Sustainability cannot be measured by one indicator, rather should be a package of both quantitative and also qualitative indicators.

- Indicators require a regular monitoring system—need comparability in time and space.

Italy (Angelica Tudini, ISTAT; see PPT)

- TSA first published in 2012 (ref year 2010). Will issue an updated and more comprehensive TSA in 2016 (ref year 2014). There will be an attempt to develop a regional TSA for Veneto Region.
- Extensive experience and regular production of environmental accounts for EU regulation: air emission accounts, environmental taxes and material flow accounts. Now developing the new accounts (have already some estimates) to comply with extended Regulation effective as of 2017: environmental protection expenditure accounts, environmental goods and services sector, and physical energy flow accounts.
- Have some experience on trying to link TSA with environmental accounts (in 2003): proposed a hybrid supply and use table for the case of tourism. See references in slide to the papers. Developed estimates applied to the impact on air emissions by tourism (ref year 2008), included in the SEEA Applications and Extensions.

Netherlands (Maarten van Rossum, Statistics Netherlands)

- Relevance of connecting TSA and SEEA: SDGs reflect a clear need to monitor progress (economy and environmental side) and thus clear need for unquestionable indicators based in this future conceptual framework. “Sustainable tourism” is a policy construct.
- Can use different perspectives to monitor sustainable tourism:
 - production approach – e.g. GHG emissions by direct tourism production
 - consumption approach – e.g. direct and indirect GHG emissions embodied in tourism consumption by residents
 - ecosystems flows (not already covered by TSA accounts, no double counting)
- What ingredients do we need?
 - For production approach: e.g. with tourism related production per activity (TSA), residuals per activity (SEEA), production per activity (SNA) can calculate residuals related to tourism production
 - For consumption approach: tourism related consumption per activity or commodity (TSA), source (domestic/imported) of this consumption, IO framework, information on residuals per activity per country (SEEA)
- NL has yearly TSA data and environmental data.
- Ambition for 2016 is to compile figures for the production approach

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c) Implications from the INRouTe perspective (*Antonio Massieu, INRouTe*)

- INRouTe is supported by UNWTO and our work deals with helping UNWTO in addressing the sub-national focus in the measurement and analysis of tourism.
- We brought 3 documents which account for approx. 60% of a handbook that we will, by agreement, present to UNWTO in Feb 2016. This will provide recommendations/guidelines for regions where tourism is significant or other sub-national entities to help them do their job as credible and useful as possible.
- Looking into how the international recommendation on tourism statistics and TSA can be adapted and how ambitious they could be at sub-national level.
- Some of the things we learned:
 - One of our basic aims is how to link tourism and sustainability, the basic focus being on environmental sustainability because of the international agenda
 - There is room at sub-national level to expand the conceptual framework of the IRTS 2008. The handbook, with glossary, will be sent to consultation.
 - The link of subnational measurement of tourism with the UN 2030 agenda goes through ecosystem accounting
- The subnational perspective opens the floor for identifying the tourism connection with all SDGs. We can contribute from the tourism perspective to this international agenda.

Agenda item 4: Update on the SDG indicators and implications (Karoly Kovacs, UNSD)

- UNWTO noted its participation in Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) meeting in Bangkok where countries agreed on many SDG indicators for submission to the next UN Statistical Commission. The tourism indicators are still under discussion.
- UNSD/Karoly presented the status of sustainable tourism indicators:
 - Target 8.9 “By 2030, devise and implement policies to **promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products**”): **tourism direct GDP and number of jobs in tourism industries**
 - Target 12.b “Develop and implement **tools to monitor** sustainable development impacts for **sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products**”: **residual flows generated as a result of tourism direct GDP**
 - Target 14.7 “By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism”: **productivity of aquaculture in utilizing natural resources (land, water & wild stock)**
 - Note similarities between targets 8.9 and 12.b but different focus
 - Further work is needed to finalize list of indicators
 - The 3 targets would need to have a regional component:
 - Targets 8.9/12.b: local culture varies greatly across regions within a country
 - Target 14.7: degree of dependency on marine resources and degree of sustainability vary regional in given country
 - The SDG tourism indicators are part of the broader project proposed here
- Austria asked about the next steps for these SDG indicators: will they be tested in terms of practicability, usability and how they fit broader data “life”?
 - UNWTO replied that the process for the SDG indicators continues with the IAEG-SDG agreeing on a set to be submitted to the UN Statistical Commission (3-6 March 2016). After this work on indicators will continue, and framed within this project.

Agenda item 5: Next steps and conclusion

- Incorporate comments, rework into a “scoping document”, include next steps and send to Working Group for review
- Circulate for comments and endorsements also to:
 - UNWTO Statistical Committee (Jan 2016)
 - UNCEEA (June 2016) and possibly
 - Technical Committee on SEEA Central Framework (which does the technical work and sets the research agenda for SEEA Central Framework)
 - London Group (group of experts to advance certain items of the SEEA research agenda as well as other specific issues)
 - UNSD/Alessandra: this big project on SEEA-TSA linking will bring forth (conceptual and implementation) issues that could be associated to the SEEA research agenda.
 - Saudi Arabia suggested involving UNWTO’s Committee on Tourism and Sustainability
- By Oct-Nov 2016 could have a more consolidated, formal project document. In 2017 the aim is to work on a methodological document.
- Noted interest in being case studies from: Austria, Fiji (previous to the meeting), the Netherlands, and Whales (in bilateral meeting). Others are welcome.
- The role of the Working Group is to: share experiences and ideas on how to move forward, review documents, develop case studies, and raise awareness and leadership of this project within national governance structures.
- The next meeting of the Working Group will take place in Madrid, approximate dates will be communicated.