



2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
FOR DEVELOPMENT



Sixth UNWTO International Conference on Tourism Statistics MEASURING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Manila, Philippines, 21 – 24 June 2017

Towards Sustainable Tourism Indicators: Linking the Canadian Tourism Satellite Account 2012 with the Canadian System of Environmental-Economic Accounting

Session 2. Linking the Economic and Environmental Measurement of Tourism

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Topic addressed:

Linking the economic and environment dimensions of tourism

Sustainable tourism and how to measure sustainability are not new questions, just difficult to answer with no comparable measures of the “environmental impact” of tourism. Statistics Canada first explored linking its tourism and environment satellite accounts to determine the feasibility of developing a set of measures to assess environmental impacts of tourism in Canada in 2008.

This paper extends the work of the exploratory study to link the Canadian Tourism Satellite Account for 2012 and the Canadian System of Environmental-Economic Accounts to determine if it is possible to develop a set of measures of environmental impacts of tourism in Canada. Can these two frameworks be linked to develop a statistical framework for sustainable tourism? Can we develop some indicators of sustainable tourism? The paper will consider energy use, water use and greenhouse gas emissions generated by tourism in Canada. It will permit an examination of the difficulties associated with the linking of the two economic accounts.

First, the economic performance of the Canadian tourism industry is measured through the Canadian Tourism Satellite Account (CTSA), an extension of the traditional National Accounts used to measure supply, demand, GDP and employment by industry. Second, the environmental impact on the Canadian economy is measured through the Canadian System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) physical flow accounts.

The paper will also explore the possibility of developing indicators that would track the environmental performance of the Canadian tourism industry. What information do we get through merging these two data sets? How can these be used. What will this new information say about sustainable tourism? Most importantly does it move us along the road toward sustainable tourism indicators?

Keywords:

Tourism Satellite Account, System of Environmental-Economic Accounts, sustainable tourism