



2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
FOR DEVELOPMENT



Sixth UNWTO International Conference on Tourism Statistics MEASURING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Manila, Philippines, 21 – 24 June 2017

CONCEPT NOTE

Why measuring sustainable tourism?

Despite the long-standing interest and discussion of sustainable tourism and the important advances in tourism statistics, there is as yet no standardized basis for the collection of relevant information, at either the national or subnational level. This is a significant gap, and one that limits the potential for the development of policies directed at advancing sustainable tourism.

In order to fill this statistical gap, UNWTO, with the support of the UN Statistics Division (UNSD), initiated *Towards a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism* (MST). This project builds on and complements previous strategic projects of UNWTO which resulted in the United Nations approval of the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics (IRTS). Indeed, in the IRTS, adopted in 2008, it is recommended that “linking tourism and sustainability be considered a priority”.

Through MST, the aim is to develop an international statistical framework that supports the measurement of sustainable tourism in its various dimensions (economic, environmental and social) and at relevant spatial levels (global, national and subnational). The statistical framework will provide a common language and organizing structure to exploit the richness of data already available and to identify additional data that may be needed. The starting foundation of the statistical framework involves bridging the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism through two existing UN statistical standards: the TSA and the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA).

The previous five International Conferences on Tourism Statistics in Ottawa (1991), Nice (1999), Vancouver (2001), Iguazu (2005) and Bali (2009), have driven the establishment of the core components of the System of Tourism Statistics. They are considered landmark events having decisively contributed to the development of key concepts, definitions, classifications and indicators which are now viewed as the foundation of tourism statistics.

The Manila Conference will yield a Declaration acknowledging the importance of developing a statistical framework for measuring sustainable tourism in fostering a common understanding for tracking progress and directing policy efforts.

UNWTO defines sustainable Tourism as:

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and futures economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”

More than one billion tourists travelled during 2016 and it is projected that the annual number of tourists will reach 1.8 billion by 2030. The tourism sector – if well managed – can foster inclusive economic growth, social inclusiveness and the protection of cultural and natural assets.