

UNWTO Statistics Department

**COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS
AND THE TOURISM SATELLITE ACCOUNT
19th meeting
UNWTO Headquarters, Madrid, Spain
26-27 February 2019**

**MEASURING THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE
SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM**

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Introduction

The preparation of SF-MST is currently at a quite advanced stage and the submission of the document to the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) for possible approval as an international statistical standard is planned for 2020. As regards the social dimension of the sustainability of tourism, further effort is needed to complete Chapter 4.

Social statistics are particularly complex and in general they are relatively less mature, compared e.g. to the economic data. In the Working Group of Experts on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (WGE-MST) a sub-group was established in 2018 to explore further the possibilities and ways of expanding tourism measurement to also include social considerations.

In the 2nd meeting of the WGE-MST, in October 2018, within the discussion on the progress of SF-MST, a sub-session was on measuring the social sustainability of tourism. With the contributions prepared on that occasion individually by members of the sub-group on the social dimension the work of the sub-group itself was initiated; a presentation reporting elements of these contributions was made at the meeting³.

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³ Oliver R., "Measuring the social sustainability of tourism",
http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/wge_mst_2nd_item_2.4.1.pdf

Following the October meeting of the WGE-MST a written consultation was launched with its members on an updated version of SF-MST⁴, based on key questions formulated in an ad hoc template. One section was on measuring the social sustainability of tourism and the main areas of focus for the consultation included the approaches, aspects and perspectives considered in Chapter 4, together with indicators.

The work of the sub-group has been oriented to take stock of and elaborate on the useful insights obtained until there, with a view to a fruitful discussion at the 2019 meeting of the Committee on Statistics.

Concerning the potential approaches deemed suitable to consider the social dimension of the sustainability of tourism, a point of particular interest was how to organize the social capital, social inclusion, social equity and well-being approaches, including in relation to the broader multiple capitals-based approach to MST; in addition to these approaches, the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) approach was also given particular attention. The three perspectives on the social dimensions identified in Chapter 4 of SF-MST were considered as well, namely the visitors, the host community and the businesses perspectives. As for the actual measurement of the social aspects related to tourism, the identification of the most important topics on which to organize the data was considered the key point, before trying to identify possible data to be used for measuring the social dimension with reference to the key themes. A specific reflection concerned indicators, a matter often at the core of the discussions on the measurement of the social dimension of the sustainability of tourism.

In general, the overall effort made by the sub-group on the social dimension has been inspired by the need to take into account that SF-MST has by nature a statistical character and the role it plays is to provide methodological guidance for statistical work.

1. An initial input to the discussion on the social dimension

1.1 Within the sub-group

In one of the documents drafted on the occasion of the 2nd meeting of the WGE-MST a first attempt was made to structure the many aspects possibly of interest in relation to the potential approaches to consideration of the social sustainability of tourism and the key themes in reference to which statistical data should be developed. The different approaches were linked to themes and vice versa through the consideration of insights derived from the literature that appeared to be relevant in relation to given themes and approaches⁵. Among these, it was found that the social capital approach was of particular interest.

⁴ This version followed the one circulated in March 2018.

⁵ Recchini E., "Note on measuring the social dimension of sustainable tourism", http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/italy_mst_discussion_note_social_issues.pdf.



Two other documents were focused on indicators. One of them concerned a study developed at the Argentinian government⁶. It was centred in the analysis of: a) inequality with regard to possibilities for residents to have access to tourism; b) social exclusion resulting from employment creation by tourism businesses. In the first case the Gini Coefficient and the Kuznets Index, adapted to tourism, were proposed for measuring inequality; the Informal Employment Rate calculated for the tourism sector was proposed as an indicator of inclusive development. It is noted that in principle the data for calculating these indicators are part of official statistics.

The other document with focus on indicators – prepared at the KU Leuven University⁷ – considered in particular the importance of combining an academic perspective with a policy-oriented perspective for the definition of key indicators that are both sound and relevant. Also the normative character of the concept of social sustainability was underlined in the sense that wellbeing thresholds should be identified as regards the distinct perspectives centred on visitors, the host community, and employment in the tourism sector. As a follow-up to this document, it was envisaged that further literature research on indicators would be made by the author; from this it was foreseen that indications could be obtained to articulate a set of relevant themes on which to organize the data.

1.2 The consultation on SF-MST with the WGE-MST

Part of the outcomes of the 2nd consultation on SF-MST refers to the measurement of the social sustainability of tourism. Some comments by six respondents have been considered of specific interest for the purposes of the present document.

With reference to the four approaches identified for the purposes of SF-MST – social capital, social inclusion, social equity and well-being – one country observed that they complement each other and provide a solid basis for organizing relevant statistics on the sustainability of tourism as far as the social dimension is concerned. Another comment seemed to be particularly relevant as regards one of the four approaches, namely the social capital approach; in fact, the merits of the broader multiple capitals-based approach adopted in SF-MST was stressed⁸ – while finding also drawbacks of such an approach⁹ – concluding that: “Anyway, building a statistical framework for MST with the help of multiple-capital approach can serve as conceptual national structure that is then enriched by complementary tourism indicators for both the national and the local level.”

⁶ Oliver R. et alii, “The design of statistical tools to measure tourism from a social focus”, http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/argentina_tourism_social_focus.pdf.

⁷ KU LEUVEN, “Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism”, http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/ku_leuven_mst_social_dimension.pdf.

⁸ Raúl Hernández Martín (CajaCanarias-Ashotel-Universidad de La Laguna): “In the field of tourism, multi-capitals approach has the advantage of allowing an integrated overview of sustainability issues and an opportunity to apply and eventually contribute to the development of methodologies designed outside tourism. It is important to use in tourism methodologies that can be used elsewhere having the capacity of integrating tourism sustainability with general sustainability. In addition the nature of tourism promote this kind of interdisciplinary approaches as multi-capitals. Following an approach similar to that contained in the UN System of Economic Environmental Accounting could be considered a natural extension of that powerful way of thinking and organising complex information in the case of tourism”.

⁹ “First, most of the stakeholders, even those with high tourism skills are not familiar with this kind of approach. Second, the multiple-capitals approach is not familiar for most stakeholders of tourism. Third, the multiple capitals approach has been particularly developed in the context of environmental impacts but there is a lack of methodological support to apply it to social or economic issues in a specific field as tourism”.



Among the three perspectives identified (visitors, host community and tourism/local businesses and employees), one country observed that host community and tourism/local businesses and employees were to be considered as the most important perspectives in assessing the social sustainability of tourism. Another comment was in line with this, specifying that a local destination related approach was required to deal with the social dimension of tourism.

Regarding the articulation of the themes on which to organize the data for the measurement of the social dimension, one country noted that Chapter 4 of SF-MST included the important aspects of the social dimension which could guarantee international comparability of data. The same country mentioned the ownership of the projects by the host community as an essential point to consider for the social dimension; this could be seen as a very important further aspect to include in SF-MST. Other aspects mentioned as being very important include: social connections and networks, community and individual levels of trust/tolerance, civic engagement and participation in institutions and governance, corruption, subjective well-being of host communities and visitors¹⁰; adequate earnings, job security, equal opportunity and remuneration, social dialogue and representation¹¹; access to basic rights such as sickness pay, social security; sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

As to the consideration of indicators as opposed to thinking about of establishing standard measures of social capital, one comment was that “SF-MST should not introduce new general concepts related to social accounting that are not still available worldwide. In future extensions of the SF MST there may be room for a contribution to international statistical standards beyond tourism. But this task exceeds the current objectives of the document.”¹²

2. Indicators

2.1 Indicators as part of a structured supply of official statistics

One way to look at indicators is to consider an organization of data for the measurement of the social dimension in SF-MST that is based on indicators as an alternative to relying on the social capital approach. In fact, relying rather on a set of indicators would avoid trying to establish standard measures for this form of capital. In this regard, the statement quoted last in the previous section clarifies a reasonable strategy to follow in the development of SF-MST, generally valid also for all three dimension of sustainability. Sometimes an indicator-based approach has also been emphasized as an alternative to an accounting approach.

¹⁰ All these aspects we considered sufficient to measure the social capital.

¹¹ Considered as the important aspects as far as decent work is concerned.

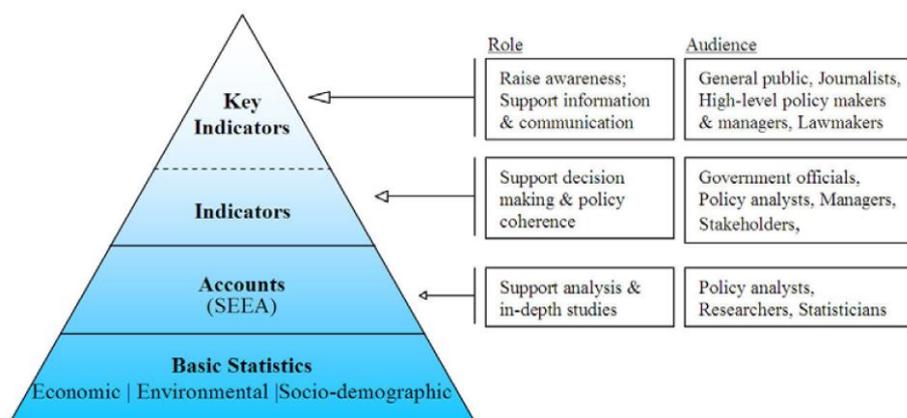
¹² Raúl Hernández Martín (CajaCanarias-Ashotel-Universidad de La Laguna).

In relation to the above, it seems worth noting the role of indicators inside the whole articulation of the different kinds of statistical tools characterizing the supply of official statistics¹³, as understood in the official statistics community on the basis of long experience, where the dialogue with data users has been essential. This can be appraised looking at Figure 1, which is quite self-explaining with reference to the whole range of statistics, from basic statistics to key indicators, considering also the potential audience for each category of data.

The figure highlights in particular that indicators are intended for the purposes of communication and performance control and suggests that indicators need to be based on information available at the lower layers of the pyramid, which makes them reliable and then appropriately exploitable by users. Indicators must also, by their nature, be relevant, which can only be achieved through appropriate consultation processes with stakeholders.

Key indicators – at the top of the pyramid – are also constructed from information in the lower layers and are designed to convey clear and easily understandable messages for the benefit of a broad audience. Perhaps even more than normal indicators, the identification and definition of key indicators should be agreed through the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders and experts.

Figure 1. Pyramid information



Source: Eurostat.

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Pyramid_information_1.png

2.2 An example of integration of indicators into a multiple capitals-based approach

One way to go beyond the consideration of indicators and an accounting approach based on capital as two alternatives is suggested e.g. from the experience of the German national statistical system, which demonstrated the possibility of integrating the indicators into a multiple capitals-based approach since the adoption in 2002 by the German Federal Government of the German National Strategy for Sustainable Development. The system

¹³ Official statistics are those produced under the statistical programme of a given country or an international organization. They are supposed to fulfil the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>).

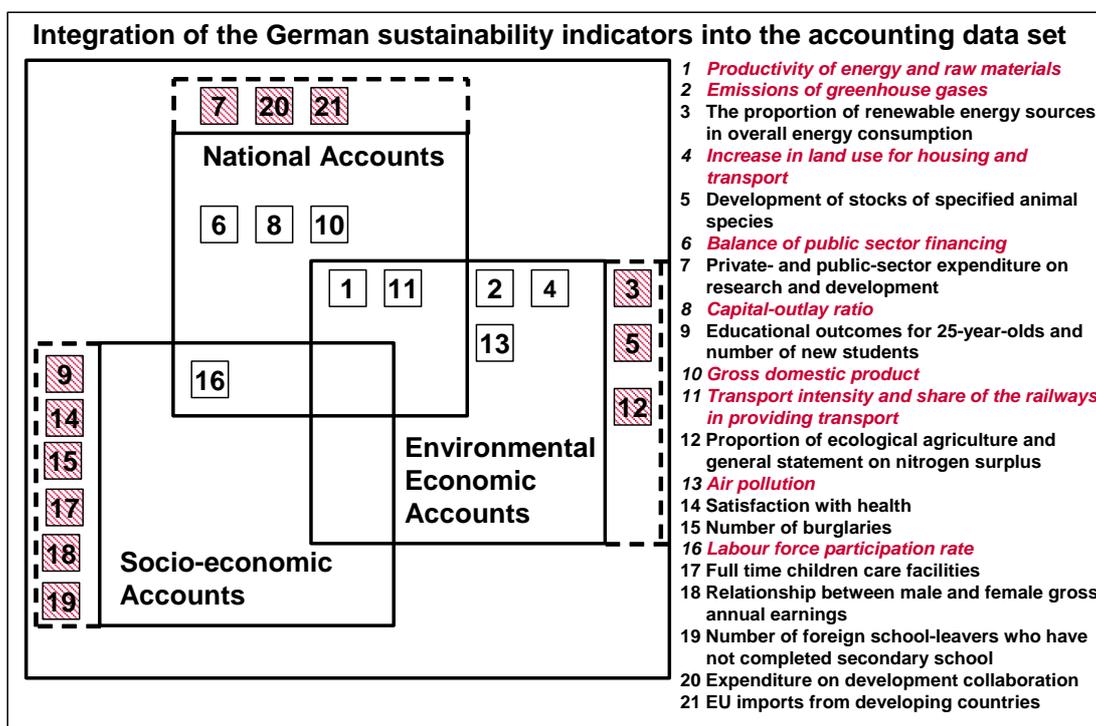
established in Germany for sustainable development indicators is summarized in Figure 2, where with reference to a set of sustainability indicators it is shown how these are conceptually located within distinct accounting systems corresponding to different forms of capital, namely economic, environmental, social.

Those sustainability indicators for which the embedding into the accounting system offered high comparative advantages were covered first, as it was stressed at the time of presenting the first results. The idea is that “comparative advantages appear if an indicator is strongly related to other indicators of the set or if the accounting framework is needed to generate the required data in a cost-efficient manner”.

Obviously, these advantages are in proportion to the stage of development of the accounting systems related to the different forms of capital. Although at present there is not yet a system for social capital, the general concept, however, is actually a very interesting point also for the social dimension of sustainability.

The importance of this example is emphasized by the fact that the integrated decision-making typical of sustainable development policies requires great integration of the data that informs policy.

Figure 2. Integration of indicators into an accounting system developed according to a multiple capitals-based approach: the case of the German national statistical system



Source:

https://www.destatis.de/EN/Publications/Specialized/EnvironmentalEconomicAccounting/Useofindicators.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

3. Approaches to consideration of the social sustainability of tourism

3.1 The conceptual approaches considered in Chapter 4 of SF-MST

Different conceptual approaches to the social dimension of sustainable tourism are considered in Chapter 4 of SF-MST. They are related to concepts such as social capital, social inclusion and exclusion, social equity and welfare, social cohesion and well-being. All these approaches are deemed relevant by the sub-group on the social dimension of the sustainability of tourism.

In general it is considered that the official statistics to be organized according to SF-MST basically should provide a comprehensive set of facts on the actual resources, conditions and situations. These are looked at as the factors that would make available for future generations viable options for meeting their needs. Based on this consideration the multiple capitals-based approach that has been proposed for SF-MST appears to be very appropriate.

As concerns the social capital, which is a multi-dimensional concept, the OECD defines it as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups”¹⁴.

Among the approaches considered in SF-MST, mentioned above, only for the social capital approach it was possible to make an initial tentative step towards the definition of a comprehensive rationale suitable for dealing with the various aspects concerning sustainable development. This candidates the social capital approach as an overarching approach, at least conceptually.

As stressed by the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development (WGSSD)¹⁵, social capital resides in social relationships and, as capital, may be conceived as a resource in which we invest to provide a stream of benefits.

Tourism can contribute to enhance social capital through the consolidation of shared values and community identity, the creation of networks and associations to organize and coordinate tourism activity within a community and through the creation of relationships – between hosts and visitors – which can prove strong and lasting despite the geographical distance. Tourism can feed on social capital without reintegrating it. An inequitable access to tourism opportunities and benefits can generate a depletion of social capital by eroding trust and cooperation.

¹⁴ OECD (2001), *The Well-Being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital*, OECD, Paris.

¹⁵ The Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development (WGSSD) was established by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in 2005 to identify good concepts and practices in order to assist national governments and international organizations in the design of sustainable development indicator sets and in the development of supporting official statistics in the area. The Working Group articulated a broad conceptual framework for sustainable development measurement with the concept of capital at its centre.

However, in the case of social capital it can be considered that in general neither directly observed values nor well-established indirect methods exist. Also due to this, several proxy indicators have been considered in the relevant literature. Examples are sets of indicators including e.g. membership in local associations and networks, trust and adherence to norms, and collective action¹⁶. As a matter of fact, for the time being, there is no international standard on the measurement of social capital.

What is deemed most important in relation to the above is that this should not prevent from considering social capital as a fundamental conceptual reference when discussing about approaches in Chapter 4 of SF-MST. By doing so, all different approaches taken into consideration as a whole would be aligned with the broader multiple capitals-based approach to some extent; this would be made possible via links of the social capital approach with all the others.

As argued by the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development (TFSD)¹⁷ an important link between social capital and well-being is that human well-being can be affected by social capital in several ways. In particular: “individuals who are strongly embedded in societal networks tend to be happier and more satisfied with life than those who are less integrated in society; social capital can stimulate increases in other types of capital; due to network externalities, social capital formation may lead to increases in efficiency and declines in transaction costs”¹⁸. It seems also of interest that the OECD framework for measuring well-being reflects a focus on factors that can positively affect people’s choices and opportunities e.g. concerning health, education and income.

Concerning social inclusion, this approach can be linked to the social capital approach based on existing linkages between certain phenomena. For example, cultural, traditional, folkloric, religious, sports, recreational events are crucial to attract visitors and to create networks within host communities and between hosts and visitors. Participation and involvement of local resident in event management and coordination could be an opportunity to socialize, to strengthen community pride, to share identity and values between themselves and with visitors and, therefore, to enhance social capital. If, on the contrary, events are not consistent with values and perceptions of host communities and overwhelm or exclude locals, a depletion of social capital will occur.

As concerns the social equity approach, an example of possible links with the social capital approach is that one reason for visitors to make a trip may be to be engaged in development projects, which results in helping host communities to gain skills, thus possibly contributing to improve the social capital via an enhanced human capital.

¹⁶ Only the indicator of membership in local associations and networks has an obvious flow parallel: change in membership in these same groups. No obvious flow variable parallels the indicator of trust and adherence to norms or the indicator of collective action.

¹⁷ The Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development (TFSD) is a follow-up to the Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development (WGSSD). The latter focused mainly on the inter-generational issues of sustainable development using capital measures, while in addition the TFSD also takes the well-being of the current generation into account.

¹⁸ UNECE, TFSD, 2012: “Draft Report of the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development”.

3.2 The Social Accounting Matrix (SAM)

In terms of accounting tools, the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) should be mentioned. A SAM is an extension of the core national accounts as presented in the System of National Accounts (SNA). It provides an organized matrix representation of all flows between different production activities, factors of production, and institutions (households, corporate sector, and government) within the economy and with respect to the rest of the world.

By ensuring consistency between social data in the matrix and with national accounts, SAM can be considered to some extent as a response to the possible lack of consistency which is observed within social statistics due to the use of a range of different sources.

According to SNA, “One example of where a SAM is useful is in the case of labour accounts. (...) SAM provides additional information for example on both the use of labour by industry and the supply of labour by socio-economic subgroup as well as the supply and use of various categories of labour services”. Also some non-monetary socio-economic indicators that are relevant from the point of view of the social sustainability of tourism could be fed into a SAM, e.g. life expectancy, infant mortality, adult literacy, access to health and education facilities, and housing situation by household group.

SAM can be seen as an extension of input-output tables and as such it could be used as a reference approach for analytical application exercises. In particular, a SAM could be used to calculate indirect generation of income and output along the whole supply chain linked to visitors' demand.

Conceptually SAM is a consolidated statistical approach, but practically the implementation level is still far from the availability of official statistics based on it produced on a regular basis. Despite this, perhaps some reference to SAM as a useful accounting tool particularly aligned with the multiple capitals-based approach could be done in SF-MST.

4. Themes in reference to which to measure the social sustainability of tourism

4.1 Towards an organization of the scope and articulation of the social dimension based on themes

The themes mentioned in Chapter 4 of SF-MST as potential areas of focus in the measurement of the social sustainability of tourism reflect the topics mostly taken into consideration in international initiatives in the recent past, even at global level.

In recognizing the broad coverage of social aspects that this suggests, in the sub-group on the social dimension an effort has been made to identify the overlaps between the phenomena of interest according to the different approaches to consideration of the social sustainability of tourism.

The social capital approach has been identified as an overarching approach and the main focus has been on the overlaps between the phenomena of interest according to the approaches centred on social inclusion/ exclusion, social equity and well-being and the topics referred to by the multi-dimensional concept of social capital.

This is intended, given the complexity of the matter, as a first step towards the possibility of organizing in SF-MST the scope and articulation of statistical information in such a way that all potential users can find the framework as much as possible suitable to meet their varying information needs. This is important with regard to cost-efficiency in the production of official statistics, an aspect not to be overlooked¹⁹.

A central feature of social capital is that this form of capital resides in social relationships. Those on the “inside” of particular networks and communities can have, thanks to the relationships stemming from this, important means of access to resources from which “outsiders” are excluded. This highlights an important linkage with the concept of social inclusion and its opposite, i.e. social exclusion.

Examples of themes that can be considered important areas of focus both from the social capital and the social inclusion/ exclusion points of view are: networks, norms, institutions and participation in society. But well-being and social equity can also be seen as broad themes that describe phenomena contributing to or resulting from the formation of social capital or are the result of social inclusion. In terms of social exclusion – which can be based e.g. on social, ethnic, or gender status – one example of overlap with the concept of social capital concerns trust and civic engagement. Trust and levels of engagement or interaction in group activities are, in fact, the subject of most of the measures available on social capital and, on the other hand, it is a common experience that acute forms of social exclusion take place in societies with low levels of trust and civic commitment.

Trust and civic engagement, important elements of social capital, are also a topic that links the social equity approach to the social capital approach. For example, countries where income, adult literacy and access to further learning are distributed more equitably in society are usually those with higher levels of trust and civic engagement.

Social relationships, in which essentially social capital substantiates, is an important factor of human well-being. This links importantly the social capital approach and the well-being approach and highlights the importance of the former to consideration of the social dimension also for this reason.

The well-being approach, in turn, is linked to the social inclusion/ exclusion approach as it shares with the latter, as a topic of interest, the participation in social networks. In this regard, it has generally been observed that individuals who are strongly embedded in societal networks tend to be more satisfied with life than those who are less integrated in society.

¹⁹ The demand for official statistics can vary considerably over time and depending on the various categories of users, but the statistical production of the national statistical systems and, therefore, the international statistical standards require a minimum of stability and standardization of the topics covered so as to optimize benefits to society with respect to the costs of production processes.



Across the discussion above several themes have been mentioned which are considered particularly important. It is believed also that health, labour, education, and quality of life are among themes that should not be neglected.

4.2 Population groups

In structuring in SF-MST the set of themes in reference to which the national statistical systems should develop data on the social dimension, it is relevant to consider different population groups to refer to for specific statistics.

There are several aspects that characterize tourism in general and also particular circumstances that suggest to articulate according to population groups certain topics of interest from the point of view of the social sustainability of tourism.

To start with considering the visitor point of view, the central concept is that in general tourism should be an opportunity for a safe and satisfying experience, available to all visitors without gender, race, disability or other discrimination. Furthermore, it is worth noting that there are particular types of tourism impacting on specific groups of people. For example, social tourism trips impact on the well-being of older people and also on levels of social engagement.

Considering the host communities, it seems relevant to take into account for example that local planners can decide to manipulate e.g. race differences at the destinations to market them strategically for tourism exploitation. Another example are marketing strategies that can promote specific landscapes to the detriment of other tourist destinations, with different impacts on people living in the various areas involved.

Based on the above, several population groups emerge as of particular interest. Specific groups could be identified making reference to: gender, for both visitors and host communities; visitor race; ethnicity of local people. Disadvantaged groups would be a broad category to be considered as concerns visitors, within which a number of main subsets could be distinguished: people with disabilities; low-income families; women, especially mothers. A specific group of population would correspond to the case of social tourism. The importance of distinguishing urban, rural, coastal and mountain tourism also suggests to take into account specific population groups corresponding to this articulated reality.

4.3 Perspectives that take into account the different actors involved in tourism activity

Different perspectives have been identified in Chapter 4 of SF-MST as particularly interesting when dealing with the social sustainability of tourism, namely the visitor, the host community and the tourism business perspectives. With reference to this, several aspects are noted. They are discussed hereafter by making reference to the perspectives as they are labelled in Chapter 4.

The visitor perspective discussed here can be seen as part of the broader demand perspective as presented in IRTS 2008²⁰: it relates specifically to the social dimension of the sustainability of tourism, as far as residents' tourism experience is concerned.

Also the host community perspective, relevant when the destination of a trip is the matter, can be seen as part of the broader demand perspective, considering that for the national statistical system of the country where the destination is located the focus would be on impacts exerted on local people by the activity of inbound visitors.

The tourism business perspective is understood as relating to businesses in destination countries. For the national statistical system of a given destination country, this perspective can be seen as part of the supply perspective, in the sense that it focuses on changes in the supply of products and in employment that are directly made by enterprises and only indirectly induced by the activity of inbound visitors. On the other side, these latter are outbound visitors for the country in which they are residents. For the national statistical system of this country, the tourism business perspective as understood here can be seen – again – as part of the broader demand perspective, as it focuses on the impacts of visitor activity indirectly affecting people employed at the businesses in the destination country.

In the light of these considerations, it seems appropriate to qualify the third perspective among the three ones recalled above in terms of tourism/ local businesses and employees perspective.

As concerns the visitor perspective, the important point is that tourism is an occasion for a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience, available to all visitors with no discrimination by e.g. gender, race, disability.

Turning to the host community perspective, it is important to take into account that locals' life may be affected in several ways by tourism activities, both in positive and negative sense.

For example, in order to better meet visitor needs, host communities may try to modernize their facilities; in this sense, essential services such as water and energy supply or health services, as well as transport infrastructure may be involved. Host communities may modernize even their culture, and also the emotional and psychological dimensions of their well-being may be affected by inbound tourism to some extent. Not only individuals that directly interact with visitors but all people living in the neighbourhood of tourism areas can benefit from inbound tourism.

On the other hand, when host communities begin to modernize their culture in order to accommodate visitors, this may result in a loss of culture, identity and traditional customs. An excessive presence of visitors can put pressure on facilities and services, reducing the enjoyment of them by local people, as access to them can be made more difficult or even impossible. All this can compromise the quality of life of host communities. A particular situation is when tourism marketing favours some cultural identities and in so doing exclude others. In the worst situations, tourism can even violate human rights of the host communities.

²⁰ International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008.

With regard to the tourism/ local businesses and employees perspective, some aspects seem to be of particular interest. In destination countries, some changes in product supply by the businesses serving visitors – from which everyone can benefit – may benefit the poor local communities. Furthermore, tourism can provide jobs for locals, which results in the elevation of person's status and economic well-being. In contrast, businesses which build e.g. resorts in developing countries may adversely affect the local people.

All the above suggests to design an organization of measurement in the social dimension which, while reflecting the relative importance associated with the different themes, is also articulated on the basis of which perspectives among the three main ones that have been considered here are relevant. The aim would be to encourage the production of statistics focused on specific aspects such as: visitor satisfaction and discrimination; connections between tourism and standards of living for locals; violation of human rights induced by tourism; changes occurring on the side of tourism businesses in destination countries that positively or adversely affect local people.

5. Concluding remarks

Not all observations referred to the social dimension that have resulted from the consultation with the WGE-MST pose conceptual issues. Rather there were a few that are very interesting points to consider for the implementation phase of SF-MST, possibly when preparing compilation guidance documents. In general, difficulties were highlighted concerning the collection of data in relation to the need to separate tourism and non-tourism activity, while a more specific case of difficulty concerned host communities that are nomads. One point concerned the data by population groups, considered very difficult in general and the more so if the data should be referred to tourism activity.

The focus of the sub-group on the social dimension was how to approach the consideration of the social sustainability of tourism and the areas of specific interest that should guide the way in which SF-MST is structured as regards this particular sustainability. Some reflections have been made that are preliminary to this, regarding the statistical character of SF-MST and indicators.

It has been stressed that SF-MST should provide in the first instance methodological guidance to the national statistical systems, obviously taking into account the demand expressed by society for official statistics. Indicators have been discussed as part of a structured supply of official statistics, highlighting in particular that in order to construct indicators, it is necessary to consolidate a system of basic official statistics. Furthermore, the development of lists of indicators is usually the result of an active process of discussion and consultation across stakeholders. This is particularly important in the field of sustainable indicators, where the normative dimension is essential. SDGs indicators are a crucial recent example in this regard.

The possibility has also been stressed in the sub-group of integrating the indicators into a multiple capitals-based approach, as demonstrated by the system of sustainable development indicators developed inside the German official statistics. Despite a standard accounting system is not available for social capital, the general concept seems to be very

appropriate also for integrating the social dimension of the sustainability of tourism into the multiple capitals-based approach, since the integrated decision-making typical of sustainable development policies requires great integration of the data that informs such policies.

As concerns the conceptual approaches to consideration of the social sustainability of tourism, all those referred to in SF-MST have been considered relevant in the sub-group. In particular, the social capital approach can play a crucial role as a fundamental conceptual reference, even if there is no international standard on the measurement of social capital. By linking the other approaches to the social capital approach, all of them as a whole would be conceptually aligned to some extent with the broader multiple capitals-based approach.

In terms of accounting tools, the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) could be mentioned. It is officially considered as a response, to some extent, to the possible lack of consistency which is observed within social statistics due to the use of a range of different sources. Indeed some non-monetary socio-economic indicators that are relevant from the point of view of the social sustainability of tourism could be fed into a SAM, which could be used as a reference approach for analytical application exercises. Despite not regularly implemented world-wide yet, perhaps some reference could be done in SF-MST to SAM as a useful accounting tool aligned with the multiple capitals-based approach.

With reference to the areas of interest for measurement, the themes identified so far in SF-MST allow a broad coverage of the relevant social aspects, for which the data available world-wide perhaps could allow international comparability, as pointed out by one country in the consultation on SF-MST with the WGE-MST. Other themes that emerged as important include the ownership of the projects on tourism by the host community and the access to basic rights such as sickness pay and sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

Starting from the consideration of the social capital approach as an overarching approach, the identification of the main overlaps between the themes focused through the different approaches has been considered in the sub-group as a means to link all approaches to one another and – through this – a first step towards the organization of the scope and articulation of statistical information in SF-MST.

In considering the three perspectives on the social dimensions that have been identified – visitors, host community and tourism/local businesses and employees – a clarification has been put forward in the sub-group on how these perspective can be understood as connected with the demand and the supply perspectives of the IRTS 2008, also depending on the observation points of the different national statistical systems – those of the countries of departure and destination of visitor trips.