Concept note

1.5 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded in 2019, globally. Tourism had grown for ten consecutive years, outpacing the growth of the global economy, and was expected to grow another 4% in 2020. But instead the pandemic led to a 74% fall in international arrivals from 2019 to 2020. The related $1.3 trillion loss in export revenues from international tourism is more than eleven times the loss experienced on the back of the 2009 global crisis, affecting all regions and jeopardizing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Covid-19 revealed some painful vulnerabilities of the sector, and some of the unsustainable ways of the old normal. At the same time, countries are seeing what happens when tourism is gone: dramatic social and economic consequences, and millions of jobs and businesses at risk, disproportionally affecting women. In some destinations, natural environments are recovering from the “over-tourism” of the pre-Covid days. In others, the drop in tourism income is making it harder to protect the natural environment and some countries are seeing a rise in harmful practices such as poaching.

Tourism stakeholders have been concerned with the sustainability of the sector for decades, and with how tourism can support or deter efforts towards sustainable development more broadly. Tourism is an important and integral part of economies, of societies, and of natural and built environments.

Statistics are required that expose, and no longer conceal, these connections. To this aim, leading countries with the support of the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Statistics Division, are working towards building consensus around a Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism that integrates data and standards from across measurement domains, identifies relevant data and indicators, and supports international comparability. This session presents country experiences with implementing the MST framework, focusing on real policy implications.
Chairs

First Name: Peter
Last Name: Laimer
Affiliations: Statistics Austria, Co-Chair of the UNWTO Committee on Statistics and Chair of the Working Group of Experts on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism
Topics: The MST process (objective, the need for an integrated approach, governance, progress and way forward); Austria’s MST pilot, regional TSAs and political interest in sustainable tourism; how the different MST pilots support the testing of the framework in terms of both relevance and feasibility and how implementation of the MST framework can be tailored to country circumstances and priorities.
- MST in general, objective, pilots, etc.
- COVID and MST, opportunities
- Experiences in Austria, partnership tourism statistics/policy

First Name: A. H. (Bert)
Last Name: Kroese
Affiliations: Statistics Netherlands, Chair of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting
Topics: Why MST is important beyond the tourism community and to the broader statistical community; why a sectoral approach may be interesting in considerations of sustainability; the role of the UNCEEA and the UN System; The Netherlands’ pilot and its policy relevance, plans for follow-up work (extended MST pilot to ecosystem accounting?).

Speakers

First Name: Vivian
Last Name: Ilarina
Affiliations: Philippines Statistics Authority
Topics: Implementation of MST with perhaps a focus on the links to policy: interest in exploring the social dimension of tourism’s sustainability and how this can be tackled statistically. The good inter-institutional collaboration set-up in The Philippines’ System of Tourism Statistics and how this contributed to developing the pilot could also be mention, along with perhaps communication of the results and policy relevance. Mention any upcoming work to expand the pilot or integrate it in more regular programme of work(?)

First Name: Raúl
Last Name: Figueroa Díaz
Affiliations: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), Mexico
Topics: Implementation of MST and how GIS has been combined with other data to, through an integrated measurement framework based, provide an integrated picture of the economic, social and environmental value of cultural and natural sites (where local data is coherent with national level data). Explain issues in accessing and integrating GIS data; and the advantages of having an integrated measurement framework (MST) to bring together data to tell a coherent and holistic story about (in this case) tourism. Mention policy implications of the pilot results and any plans to build upon this, replicate elsewhere, etc.
First Name: Christina  
Last Name: Leala-Gale  
Affiliations: Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO)  
Topics: Implementation of MST and the governance aspects for implementing an integrated statistical system to support policy and management vision in the area of sustainability: the role of the different stakeholders, the importance of statistical data developments being demand driven and sensible to user needs, the relationship between the different “levels” of governance (regional, national, subnational?) and how this conditions statistical developments, as well as the benefits/challenges in the regional approach to mobilizing/leading this effort and the particularities of Pacific states.

**Discussant**

First Name: Clara  
Last Name: van der Pol  
Affiliations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)  
Topics: why UNWTO is supporting the MST process, real demand for better information on the sustainability of tourism, SDGs, support of UNSC and policy frameworks (statistical and policy communities).

**Questions that the Chairs may wish to touch upon:**

1. The importance of sub-national measurement especially in terms of linking information to decision making at multiple scales. **For Raúl.**
2. The potential role of new data sources such as mobile phone and satellite data, and the connection to business in collecting and using MST data. **For Peter and Raúl.**
3. Governance of sustainability data collection and reporting requiring inter-linkages among institutions (noting that this has been a constant requirement of tourism statistics and the lessons to be drawn). **For Vivian and Tina.**
4. MST is the starting point of partnership between institutions working in different areas (environment, energy, agriculture, tourism, statistics, etc.), and of cooperation with different departments within NSOs (environment, population, agriculture, etc.), extending the (statistical) view on tourism from different perspectives for all involved partners. **For Peter.**
5. The link of integrated frameworks like MST to international reporting, with a focus on coherence across themes and re-use of data and the related role of statistical standards. **For Bert?/Peter? (and possibly Clara)**

**Supporting documentation:**

- Registration: [https://www.isi2021.org/registration/](https://www.isi2021.org/registration/)
- Possibility to publish papers related to this session in Statistical Journal of the IAOS, see: [www.officialstatistics.com](http://www.officialstatistics.com) or [https://www.iospress.nl/journal/statistical-journal-of-the-iaos](https://www.iospress.nl/journal/statistical-journal-of-the-iaos)