



Saudi Arabia: Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) Statistics Assessment

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***A COUNTRY COULD EXHAUST IT'S
MINERAL RESOURCES, CUT DOWN ITS
FORESTS, ERODE ITS SOIL, POLLUTE ITS
AQUIFERS, AND HUNT ITS WILDLIFE TO
EXTINCTION BUT MEASURED INCOME
WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED AS THESE
ASSETS DISAPPEARED”***

Repetto et al



Project Objectives

- assess the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges for implementing a MST statistical framework;
- tourism statistical tables/indicators that could be generated to support the measurement of the sustainability of tourism in line with the UNWTO SF-MST; and
- develop a set of practical measures that Saudi Arabia can undertake in the short to medium term to improve their statistical information base around the sustainability of tourism.



Work to Date



- Tourism Satellite Accounts produced for 2005 and 2013
- Saudi Arabia is a member of the UNWTO Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) Working Group
- MT initiated a MST pilot study in 2017 that evaluated the development of environmental measures about the tourism sector. The study developed measures of the amount of energy and water used by international and domestic tourists in the commercial accommodation sector and the amount of CO2 emissions generated by land transport from domestic tourism
- In February 2020, the UNWTO conducted a mission to evaluate the National Tourism Statistical System focusing on the methodology used to measure Inbound Tourism

Project Methodology



- Stakeholder analysis (both data producers and users of statistics) through desktop work/research and engaging them in discussion through consultations undertaken via teleconference;
- Analysis of the institutional arrangements in producing tourism statistics;
- Data assessment to establish the extent of data availability, identify data gaps vis a vis data needs in the tourism industry based on national plans (such as *Saudi Vision 2030*) and other relevant development agendas; and
- Identify existing statistical capacity and constraints both at the national and regional levels.

Consultations

- Ministry of Tourism
- General Authority for Statistics
- Ministry of Investment
- Ministry of Finance
- Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority
- Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development
- Saudi Human Resources Development Fund
- Ministry of Economy and Planning,
- Public Investment Fund
- Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Energy
- Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture
- Ministry of Culture



Project Recommendations



Governance and Coordination

Recommendation 1:

Establish a Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism Statistical Data Committee to lead the implementation of recommendations from this report as well as addressing the measurement issues in the key sustainability objectives set out in Saudi Vision 2030, the agenda items for the upcoming G20 meeting and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Project Recommendations



Data Management Practices

Recommendation 2:

Information from the General Authority of Zakat and Tax should be utilised by GASTAT to establish a Business Register for economic surveys of establishments to improve the quality, coverage and consistency of the collection of economic data related to tourism

Recommendation 3:

Make better use of available data sources and evaluate alternative data sources to improve the timeliness and reliability of tourism statistics

Project Recommendations



Data Management Practices

Recommendation 4:

The Ministry of Tourism, GASTAT and the Ministry of Culture work together to identify the key policy issues and develop methodologies to measure the social and cultural impacts of tourism

Recommendation 5:

Build technical statistical skills and capabilities, especially in regards to developing expertise in the production of Tourism Satellite Accounts and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Frameworks

Project Recommendations



Data Quality

Recommendation 6:

Ensure the production of the Tourism Satellite Accounts aligns with the international standards set out in the Tourism Satellite Accounts: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008 and the System of National Accounts

Recommendation 7:

Ministry of Tourism, GASTAT and the Saudi Arabia Monetary Authority continue to collaborate to enhance the quality, consistency and timeliness of visitor expenditure data

Project Recommendations



Data Quality

Recommendation 8:

Implement an environmental accounting program to assess the impact of tourism activity on the environment using the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Central Framework and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Experimental Ecosystem Accounting

Recommendation 9:

Determine the main sub-national tourism destinations/regions and evaluate the availability of data for these levels



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