



## **7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Editorial Board on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST)**

**12 December 2023, Online**

**FINAL MINUTES**



## Item 1. Welcome Remarks

Mr. Michel Dubreuil, Chair of the MST Editorial Board, welcomed the participants and introduced the [agenda](#). He conveyed that the objective of the meeting was to review and discuss the feedback received on SF-MST through the global consultation carried out in October and November. The Editorial Board was also requested to agree on a way forward on how to address those responses, considering that the final version of the Statistical Framework for MST (SF-MST) should be submitted to the UN Statistical Commission Secretariat by end of January.

## Item 2. Updates on the MST process

Ms. Clara van der Pol shared some milestones achieved in the MST process, since the last meeting of the MST Editorial Board, as follows:

- At the extraordinary meeting of the UNWTO Committee on Statistics (held on 16 October in the margins of the UNWTO General Assembly), leaders from pioneering Ministries and National Statistical Institutes shared their vision on MST and why the time is ripe to aim for global consensus.
- The UNWTO General Assembly adopted the nearly finalized Statistical Framework for MST, marking a consensus by the tourism community. Seven countries—Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Spain—voiced their support during the plenary session and the endorsement of the Statistical Framework was unanimous.
- The global consultation on SF-MST resulted in widespread endorsement of SF-MST both in terms of its measurement ambition and its technical content. It was directed at both the statistical community and the tourism community. The UN Statistics Division and the Chief Statisticians of Austria and Spain, in the representation of Austria and Spain as co-Chairs of the UNWTO Committee on Statistics, addressed the invitation to the global consultation to the heads of National Statistical Offices and the Chief Statisticians of international organizations. The UNWTO Secretary-General together with the Minister of Labour and Economy of Austria and the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism of Spain, addressed the invitation to the global consultation in Ministries in charge of tourism. Over 60 responses were received from different statistical offices, ministries of tourism and international agencies. Countries in all world regions and with different levels of development, economic structure, and degrees of tourism and statistical development have contributed. Organizations such as ILO, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Pacific community also provided constructive and positive feedback. All the comments are available online at the [UNWTO webpage](#).
- Next session of the UN Statistical Commission (27 February – 1 March 2024) includes an [agenda item](#) on tourism statistics (last time was in 2017). UNWTO has submitted the report that covers the description of the process for the development of the Statistical Framework for MST, and in which the UN Statistical Commission is invited to endorse the Statistical Framework. UNWTO also plans to organize a side-event on MST in the margins of the UN Statistical Commission, possibly in collaboration with UN Statistics Division and ILO. More details will be provided to the EB when available.

### Item 3. Results of the SF-MST global consultation

Mr. Carl Obst provided a summary of the comments received. The comments were classified as follows: (i) highly enthusiastic support expressed; (ii) in conformity, without any comment; (iii) request for implementation and compilation support; (iv) suggestions for improved presentation and/or editorial comments; and (v) technical comments. He highlighted that, compared to the numerous other global consultation he has been involved in the past, the SF-MST global consultation counts with a large amount of highly enthusiastic and supportive comments and a large number of contributions without any specific comments showing the respondents conformity with SF-MST and willingness to be on the record as having contributed to the process. The number of comments requesting implementation and compilation support is also a very positive sign. In that sense, chapter 6 has been very much welcome.

The technical comments and proposed solutions on the chapters 2 (key features), 3 (economic), 4 (environmental) and 5 (social) were reviewed by the Editorial Board (see [PPT](#)).

The discussion concentrated on the items below.

#### Chapter 2

- The request to consider the role of digitalisation as part of the sustainable tourism agenda (comment 2.5): Eurostat suggested that digitalisation could be seen from an economic perspective (i.e., the tourism supplier's presence or not on the internet has an economic impact) and a social perspective (in relation to social inclusion and accessibility of tourism for people who have fewer digital skills). Canada added that digitalisation impacts also the world of work and can be seen as a mean to increase labour productivity, including through training and skills development.
- The request to explicitly identify cultural indicators (comment 2.7): Austria recalled that the Expert Group on MST has decided that the development of indicators is a separate process from SF-MST. Nevertheless, the existence of the cultural satellite accounts in countries could be mentioned in the SF-MST. Saudi Arabia suggested to mention in SF-MST the culture indicators developed by UNESCO and their links to Sustainable Development Goals.
- The potential effects of the new ISIC Rev5 and NACE (comment 2.8): Eurostat highlighted that the revision of ISIC does not affect SF-MST, the document could refer to ISIC without specifying any version. Saudi Arabia mentioned that the revision of ISIC is including intermediation services, and this is related to the comment on digitalisation. Canada recognized the revision of ISIC may directly affects the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and more specifically the TSA: RMF 2008, which is an input to the SF-MST. As such, ISIC revisions impacting the TSA may best be dealt through a revision or addendum of the TSA: RMF, rather than the SF-MST.

#### Chapter 3

- The request to reduce the level of granularity concerning number of trips and also focus on arrivals rather than trips (comment 3.3): Canada highlighted that trip is the most appropriate unit of measurement, as it relates to both international and domestic tourism, while arrivals only refer to inbound tourism. Eurostat pointed out that their statistics on arrivals only concern those in accommodation establishments.

- The request to clarify whether large businesses as >100 employees is internationally agreed (comment 3.7): Canada and Eurostat confirmed that there are no internationally agreed definitions of what a large enterprise and a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) are. Eurostat suggested to add a footnote in SF-MST to clarify this issue.
- The request to include reference to management of nature as a tourism industry (comment 3.5): Canada pointed out that the modification of the classification of tourism industries are out of SF-MST scope. Eurostat suggested that management of nature (protection of parks for example), could be mentioned as an example of tourism connected activity relevant at sub-national level. This will also cater to the comment 3.2, on the request to clarify the application of concepts of tourism characteristic and tourism connected activities at sub-national level.

#### Chapter 4

- No particular feedback has been provided by the Editorial Board.

#### Chapter 5

- The request to explicitly recognise indigenous and first nations perspectives and cultural matters generally in relation to host community perspectives (comment 5.2): Canada expressed its support to the comment as it is an important issue not only in Canada but also in other countries.
- The request to clarify the different effects of the extent of the period of reference (comment 5.4) and the request to better consider effects of scale in considering links between local effects and national effects (e.g., in relation to income and employment) (comment 5.5): Eurostat suggested that these comments could relate to granularity of the indicators (temporal and spatial). SF-MST should recognize that some indicators are more relevant at the sub-national level than at the national one, and considering tourism seasonality, some indicators are more relevant at monthly (or quarterly) level than the annual one.

*The Editorial Board took note of all the comments received through the global consultation, supported the solutions proposed by the Editor and agreed to provide additional written comments by 20 December.*

### Item 4. Key dates and wrap up

The Chair highlighted the key dates and next steps of the MST roadmap. The comments received through the global consultation as well as those from the Editorial Board will be incorporated in late December and early January into SF-MST. The Editorial Board will receive a new version in the week of 10 January 2024 for any final adjustments. The SF-MST will be subsequently submitted to the UN Statistical Commission Secretariat in the second half of January.

With regards to the UN Statistical Commission (27 February – 1 March), the Chair encouraged the members to act as MST ambassadors and to promote a country statement to support the endorsement of SF-MST.

The Chair warmly thanked the Editorial Board for its fruitful discussions.

## List of participants

Austria	Mr. Peter Laimer Vice Director of the Directorate Spatial Statistics Statistics Austria
Cabo Verde	Ms. Ana Angelina Gomes Furtado Coordinator Economic Statistics Division National Statistics Institute
Canada	Mr. Michel Dubreuil Senior Manager Destination Canada
Saudi Arabia	Mr. Munthir Al Ansari Senior Consultant Tourism Intelligence Center Ministry of Tourism  Mr. Faisal Al-Sleemi Senior Information Researcher Tourism Intelligence Center Ministry of Tourism
Spain	Mr. Julio López Astor Deputy General Director Subdirector General for Tourism Knowledge and Studies Tourism Institute of Spain (TURESPAÑA)
Eurostat	Mr. Christophe Demunter Directorate G: Business and trade statistics Unit G-2: European Businesses
ILO	Mr. Rafael Diez de Medina Chief Statistician
UNWTO	Ms. Clara van der Pol Acting Director, Statistics Department  Ms. Leandry Moreno Officer, Statistics Department  Mr. Carl Obst Expert