



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

On the occasion of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017, the Government of the Philippines and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) are organizing the 6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics to be held in Manila from 21 to 24 June 2017 with the primary focus on the measurement of sustainable tourism: <http://www.tourism4development2017.org/>.

Sustainable tourism is increasingly relevant in national agendas and also recognized at the highest international level with the UN General Assembly having adopted several resolutions acknowledging the role of tourism in sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The previous five conferences on tourism statistics in Ottawa (1990), Nice (1999), Vancouver (2001), Iguazu (2005) and Bali (2009), have driven the establishment of the core components of the System of Tourism Statistics. They have been 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.

However, 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. A gap that is acknowledged by Member States and various stakeholders.

In order to fill this statistical gap, UNWTO, with the support of UNSD, has 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, UNWTO aims to develop an international statistical framework that supports the measurement of sustainable tourism in its various dimensions (economic, environmental and social) and at different 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 Manila Conference will be a landmark opportunity to discuss methodological advances and explore emerging issues in this area of measurement. UNWTO recognizes that, apart from being a technical exercise, the development and implementation of a statistical framework for sustainable tourism is very much a strategic endeavor that will require stakeholder engagement, inter-institutional coordination and political leadership. Consequently, the Manila Conference will incorporate a Ministerial Roundtable involving leaders from Ministries of Tourism, Environment and National Statistics Offices. These leaders from all over the world are expected to show their commitment to Measuring Sustainable Tourism.

The Conference will be structured in two parts and will last four days (from Wednesday 21 to Saturday 24 June 2017). It will start on Wednesday morning with the Ministerial Roundtable that will lead to the adoption of a Declaration. From Wednesday afternoon to Friday, there will be various technical sessions. A technical tour for all participants will be held on Saturday.

The technical sessions will encompass the following topics:

- Towards a statistical framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism
- The voice of data users
- Linking the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism
- Employment and other aspects of the social dimension of sustainable tourism
- Sub-national measurement and addressing spatial scales
- Tourism indicators for monitoring the SDGs
- Sourcing data on sustainable tourism: survey, administrative and big data

Registration will be free of charge, but participants will be required to cover their travel and accommodation expenses.