

Guidance for the first Stakeholders' Workshop

This guidance has been created to support local stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of the first stakeholder workshop that is a crucial part when establishing an observatory within the INSTO network. In order to ensure a participatory approach from the beginning on, the stakeholder workshop lays the foundation for cooperation and effective monitoring in the destination.

Through the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the destination, the goal of the workshop is to enable these stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the needs for the observatory, its vision and value, the approach and methodology, creating a common understanding and gain their adherence to and commitment towards the initiative.

While the preliminary study already submitted to UNWTO is useful as a starting point for understanding key sustainability issues for the destination and to ascertain the availability of baseline data, the workshop will allow to share this already gathered information and to then continue discussing a variety of different technical and operational aspects that are important for the future success of the observatory (see below for more details).

From experience, the recommended length of the workshop is a three to four-day training workshop, which can include field visits in order to familiarize the participants with the local conditions of the destination site. This experience, in combination with the results from the preliminary analysis, will create a good foundation for the following discussions in the workshop regarding the different issues in the area, the impacts and needs for measurement as well as the possible prioritization of issues and activities. In order to facilitate the review and discussion regarding the existing and missing data (which is also a crucial aspect for the workshop; see below), it is furthermore recommended to prepare as much detailed information as possible for this discussion point in order to allow for tangible outcomes such as the agreement on specific indicators in the end of the workshop (know exactly what data is needed for which issue, what is existing, what are the possible sources, what can be possible alternatives or additions to current information etc.).

The following list presents a proposed list of discussion points for the workshop that have shown to be of relevance. As this is only a general guidance, this list should only be seen as such and can be adapted and extended depending on the destination's needs. Similar to that, the structure and timing of the workshop should be chosen by the initiators, depending on the local necessities. Please also note that if the new INSTO Observatory is an entity that already existed before joining the network (hence an observatory with already existing structures and processes), the workshop content should be adapted accordingly. For example, issue areas or specific indicators may already be clear, as well as roles and responsibilities. In these cases, it is important to talk about needed adjustments of the already existing format of the observatory in order to align with the network's framework.

Finally, while UNWTO may support the prospective Observatory in finding an external consultant to conduct the workshop (if needed) and through possible interventions during the workshop, the main responsibility for identifying and/or providing required financial means for the holding of the workshop remains with the initiator.

Box 3: Proposed list of discussion topics for the Stakeholders' Workshop

- Introduction to sustainable tourism (if necessary) and to INSTO.
- Introduction to issue areas and indicators and their role in the destinations' planning processes.
- Discussion and identification of local key issues, risks and factors which affect, or are likely to affect the sustainability of tourism in the destination (situation analysis of impacts).
- Review of the existing efforts and information at national/regional/local level, to address data availability.
- Prioritisation and selection of issue areas for the destination to be monitored, covering all mandatory and any other voluntary issue areas.
- Identification of potential indicators and measurement methodologies for the selected issue areas, including those from official national statistics as well as those to be agreed by a participatory approach.
- Identification of the responsible entities for collecting data/information on each issue area/indicators (desirable with official commitment by the stakeholders).
- Discussion on information sharing mechanisms: how is the information to be used and communicated among levels of users; which data and in what detail will data be shared; with whom will it be shared and how frequent will it be shared etc.
- Discussion and agreement on the overall objectives, mission and long-term vision for the Observatory as indicated on the Membership Application Form.
- Discussion and agreement on specific objectives for the first reporting year, based on the preliminary objectives presented in the preliminary study
- Identification and creation of possible members for a multi-stakeholder committee/ local working group, if not already existing.
- Next steps are identified, and where possible commitments made to follow up through the establishment plan of the observatory.

Whenever possible, at the end of the workshop or succeeding the workshop and prior to the acceptance by UNWTO, all stakeholders shall express their commitment to the implementation plan, monitoring and responsibilities.

Recommended (generic) list of participants for the first stakeholder workshop:

At the national and regional level

- Ministries in charge of tourism, environment, cultural and natural heritage, transport, land use planning, statistics, and their regional bodies. National and regional tourism boards as well as national statistical offices
- Private sector: tourism and trade associations, hotel as well as other service provider associations, tour operators etc.
- NGOs that deal with conservation of natural and cultural sites
- Academic institutions that conduct research on relevant topics related to tourism, preservation of natural and cultural heritage, sustainable development, particularly those who may be involved in studies at the destination

At the local destination level

- Local authority (municipality) and their departments and officials dealing with tourism, environment, land use planning, natural resources, cultural heritage, transport, etc.
- Offices/organizations managing cultural sites monuments (e.g. monuments, museums) and natural sites (e.g. national parks), and other attractions (e.g. theme parks, beaches)
- Local tourism board and tourism information offices

- Private sector tourism companies, hotels, tour operators, service providers (e.g. transportation, guides) and their associations, chambers of commerce
- Local NGOs and conservation organizations
- Other users of the destination (e.g. fishermen, hunters, traditional occupants, etc.)
- Academic and research institutions (particularly those who may have studies and data sets relevant to the destination)

Past experience has shown that it is of great value to gather on-site information during the week prior to the workshop, through interviews with key local stakeholders (if not done so already through the preliminary-study). The interviews are usually scheduled and coordinated by both parties, the hired external consultant and by the initiator. Because the workshop is an important training opportunity for officials and managers of the destination, strengthening collaboration between them, it is recommended to inform and invite all relevant actors at an early stage of the workshop preparation.

Sharing of workshop results

An overview of the workshop agenda, the participants and the results such as, for example, agreed indicators, roles and responsibilities, agreed timeline and communication mechanisms and the most important aspects related to the availability of data can be submitted to UNWTO after the event. Otherwise, it should be included in the subsequent annual report allowing for transparent reporting on the progress made, the remaining challenges, achievements and other important aspects.