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**Research on International Experiences in Measuring Visitor Expenditure
Associated with Inbound Tourism**

Prepared by the World Tourism Organization



The World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT) has coordinated a research on international experiences in measuring visitor expenditure associated with inbound tourism, co-funded with Canada (Canadian Tourism Commission), Spain (Instituto de Estudios Turísticos), and Sweden (Swedish Tourist Authority). Apart from the above-mentioned three countries, Finland (Finnish Tourist Board), France (Direction de la Balance des Paiements, Banque de France), Italy (Servizio Elaborazioni Statistiche, Ufficio Italiano dei Cambi), Mexico (Oficina de Servicios no Factoriales, Banco de Mexico) and the United States of America (Tourism Development for Tourism Industries, U.S. Department of Commerce) also collaborated in it.

In some of them, estimating expenditure is the main aim of these operations; in others, this estimation is just one of the uses of a questionnaire basically designed for other purposes.

To carry out this research, the following steps were followed:

- Comparative analysis of the questionnaires (Part I)
- Comparative analysis of methodologies (Part II), and
- Development of WTO/OMT proposal of a model survey (Part III).

Parts I and II are merely descriptive. They include, in comparative formats, data that are representative both of the questionnaires¹ and the methods used to perform the various statistical tasks associated with each one of the surveys analysed².

Part III started with the creation of a unified general framework that incorporates aspects that are common to the different countries, while maintaining, as far as possible, aspects that are specific to them. Based on this general framework, a basic questionnaire on visitor expenditure for inbound tourism was developed, as well as the corresponding general guidelines for its implementation.

¹ Some of the countries participating in this study have sent several model questionnaires. These different models were integrated as a single questionnaire per country, in order to allow the comparative analysis to be undertaken.

² It was agreed to have some kind of information that is not always mentioned in the methodological references normally published. For that sake, the Manual was designed with eight modules (each of them including an explanatory note, the corresponding questionnaire and a brief description of the objectives of each question included in it). The structure of the Manual and the order of importance of its modules meet the concept of *work process* for statistical operations

WTO/OMT proposal for estimating visitor expenditure associated with inbound tourism focuses in the development of the System of Tourism Statistics, identifying the type of traveller and in the case of visitors, establishing a relationship between the estimated expenditure (that is, the average expenditure per visitor) and different characteristics of the trip (such as country of residence and nationality, type of accommodation used, purpose of the visit, etc.).

The design of the proposed questionnaire has taken into account the measurement of the economic impacts of tourism from a macro-economic perspective (of interest for Central Statistical Offices and Central Banks in connection with the estimate of Household final consumption expenditure in National Accounts and the Travel item of the Balance of Payment) as well as the needs of the National Tourism Administrations for marketing and analytical purposes.

The suggested guidelines for implementing the proposed questionnaire³ consider the following scenario:

- (a) a country where inbound tourism is important (not only in terms of number of arrivals but also with respect to the associated expenditure) and, more specifically, where international/non-resident tourists is the relevant subset of visitors; and
- (b) a survey to be implemented at national borders (that is, in the different access routes –air, rail, road or sea–) when the visitor leaves the country.

This project responds to the belief, shared by the four sponsors of the research, that the type of data on tourism required both by the public and the private sectors has changed in nature. Besides quantitative information on the flow of visitors such as arrivals, overnight stays and descriptive information on the conditions in which visitors are received and served, countries now need robust information and new monetary indicators to enhance the credibility of the measurements concerning the economic importance of tourism.

From this perspective, we all agreed about the usefulness of presenting a starting point to those countries willing to undertake a statistical operation on expenditures by non-resident visitors, or to update/revise the one in force in the conviction that this initiative could lead to the use of a common questionnaire by a group of countries, with a similar implementation and, consequently, the data obtained could be, to a great extent, comparable and reliable.

³ The proposal is included in Chapter III of the document "Research on international experiences in measuring visitor expenditure associated with inbound tourism" and is available on the Internet (http://www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame_statistics.html). The complete document can be requested at the following e-mail address: stat@world-tourism.org.