



World Tourism Organization

UNWTO

Tourism Statistics and the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)

Decision taking requires good quality data to guide policies, drive change and understand the progress of our societies. Yet **the measurement of tourism is relatively recent** when compared to other significant economic sectors such as agriculture or manufacturing.

Previously, tourism measurement was based mostly on approximations from related areas of measurement (migration or Balance of Payments statistics). In 2008, however, the United Nations approved the **International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 (IRTS 2008)**, which provided the main concepts, definitions and classifications for the measurement of tourism and enabled the gathering of basic statistics and indicators about tourism activities.

Did you know?

- Statistics on inbound tourism are relatively well developed in many countries and statistics on domestic and outbound tourism, employment and the tourism industries are becoming increasingly available.
- The TSA generates economic aggregates for tourism, like GDP and employment, that are comparable to those of other economic activities such as agriculture, mining or financial services.
- Around 60 countries either have a consolidated TSA or are in the process of developing a TSA exercise.
- There are several Satellite Accounts (education, health, unpaid household activity) but the TSA is the only one approved by the UN Statistical Commission.

In the same year, the UN approved the **Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008 (TSA:RMF 2008)**, to relate these statistics to their economic context, through the **Tourism Satellite Account**, providing figures on the GDP or employment attributable to tourism.

Data compiled according to these two frameworks is comparable between countries, groups of countries and over time. Today, many countries have developed or are developing systems of tourism statistics based on these frameworks, enabling them to better address tourism analysis and policy.

The work of UNWTO

The United Nations recognizes UNWTO as **“the appropriate organization to collect, to analyze, to publish, to standardize and to improve the statistics of tourism, and to promote the integration of these statistics within the sphere of the United Nations system.”**

To fulfil this role, UNWTO gathers statistics from over 212 countries and territories into a regularly updated database.

The **UNWTO Compendium of Tourism Statistics**, produced annually since 1975, provides data and indicators on inbound, outbound and domestic tourism, as well as on the number and types of tourism industries, the number of employees by tourism industries, and macroeconomic indicators related to international tourism. This data is complemented by the **UNWTO Yearbook of Tourism Statistics**, which provides data, by country of origin, on arrivals and overnight stays related to inbound tourism.



89	1.40	0.9207	1.90	0.9713	2.40	0.9918	3.30
86	1.41	0.9207	1.91	0.9719	2.41	0.9920	3.32
12	1.42	0.9222	1.92	0.9726	2.42	0.9922	3.33

The Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)

Tourism is not considered an industry in National Accounts which define industries according to 'what' they produce and 'how', whereas tourism needs to be defined by 'who' (i.e. only when an economic activity caters directly, and in a significant degree, to visitors can it be considered tourism).

Against this background, the UN developed the term Satellite Account: accounts able to measure economic activities that are not defined as industries in National Accounts, such as the environment, information and communication technology (ICT), or tourism. The **Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)**, advanced by UNWTO, makes the link between industry supply and visitor demand, generating economic aggregates on tourism comparable with those of 'traditional' sectors, like agriculture or manufacturing, but also between countries and over time.

The TSA is composed of a set of ten tables, each representing a different aspect of tourism's economic contribution: inbound, domestic and outbound tourism expenditure, internal tourism expenditure (inbound plus domestic), the production accounts of tourism industries, Gross Value Added (GVA) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) attributable to tourism demand, employment, investment, government consumption, and non-monetary indicators.

By allowing tourism to be understood in the same way as other sectors of the economy - demonstrating its contribution to GDP in the same way that is done for agriculture or construction, for example - the TSA represents a powerful instrument for designing policies related to tourism development.

In its work to further the understanding of tourism's potential, UNWTO reinforces and promotes the international comparability of basic tourism statistical and TSA data; disseminates basic tourism statistical and TSA data and fosters the macroeconomic analysis of tourism; cooperates on statistics within the UN system; and provides capacity building for Member States to develop their national Systems of Tourism Statistics.

Tourism direct contribution in selected economies*

Countries	GDP(%)	Employment(%)
Australia	2.6	4.5
Brazil	3.6	6.2
Canada	1.9	3.6
China	4.2	2.3
Germany	3.2	4.7
India	2.8	4.6
Indonesia	2.5	3.5
Japan	1.9	2.9
Republic of Korea	1.5	2.0
Saudi Arabia	2.9	6.6
South Africa	3.0	4.3
Spain	6.4	5.1
United Kingdom	3.8	14.2
United States of America	2.7	3.7

*Source: UNWTO

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES:

UNWTO Statistics & Tourism Satellite Account Programme - [statistics.unwto.org](https://www.unwto.org/en/statistics)

Understanding Tourism: Basic Glossary - [media.unwto.org/en/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary](https://www.unwto.org/en/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary)

Compendium of Tourism Statistics - [statistics.unwto.org/en/content/data-and-indicators](https://www.unwto.org/en/content/data-and-indicators)

TSA Data around the World: Worldwide Summary - [statistics.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/tsa_data.pdf](https://www.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/tsa_data.pdf)

International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 -

[statistics.unwto.org/en/content/international-recommendations-tourism-statistics-2008-irts-2008](https://www.unwto.org/en/content/international-recommendations-tourism-statistics-2008-irts-2008)

Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008

[statistics.unwto.org/en/content/tourism-satellite-account-recommended-methodological-framework-tsarmf-2008](https://www.unwto.org/en/content/tourism-satellite-account-recommended-methodological-framework-tsarmf-2008)