

Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism

Towards a core set of indicators for international comparability

UN Tourism Committee on Statistics
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Ms. Clara van der Pol
Director, a.i.,
Statistics, Standards and Data Department



UN Tourism
26th General Assembly

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA 7 - 11 NOVEMBER 2025

An essential MST line of work: Building a core set of indicators



Under the mandate of the
Expert Group on MST

(a) Development of the technical content of the statistical framework for measuring the sustainability of tourism **ACHIEVED!**



Agreed at the Manila
Conference

(b) Engagement and consensus-building across statistical and tourism communities with a view to presenting the statistical framework to the Statistical Commission for its endorsement **ACHIEVED!**



Recognized by the UN
Statistical Commission

E/CN.3/2024/17 Report of the World
Tourism Organization on tourism statistics

(c) Support for piloting and implementing the statistical framework in Countries **ONGOING!**

(d) Development of a core set of indicators derived from the statistical framework for international comparability purposes **ONGOING!**

(e) Setting up of a global data set and country data reporting processes **ONGOING!**

Building on a strong governance

National Tourism Administrations

UN Tourism General Assembly

UN Tourism Executive Council

UN General Assembly

UN Economic and Social Council

United Nations Statistical
Commission

National Statistical Institutes

UN Tourism Committee on Statistics

Co-chaired by Austria and Saudi Arabia, vice-chairs: Costa Rica and Portugal

Expert Group on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism

Chaired by Austria

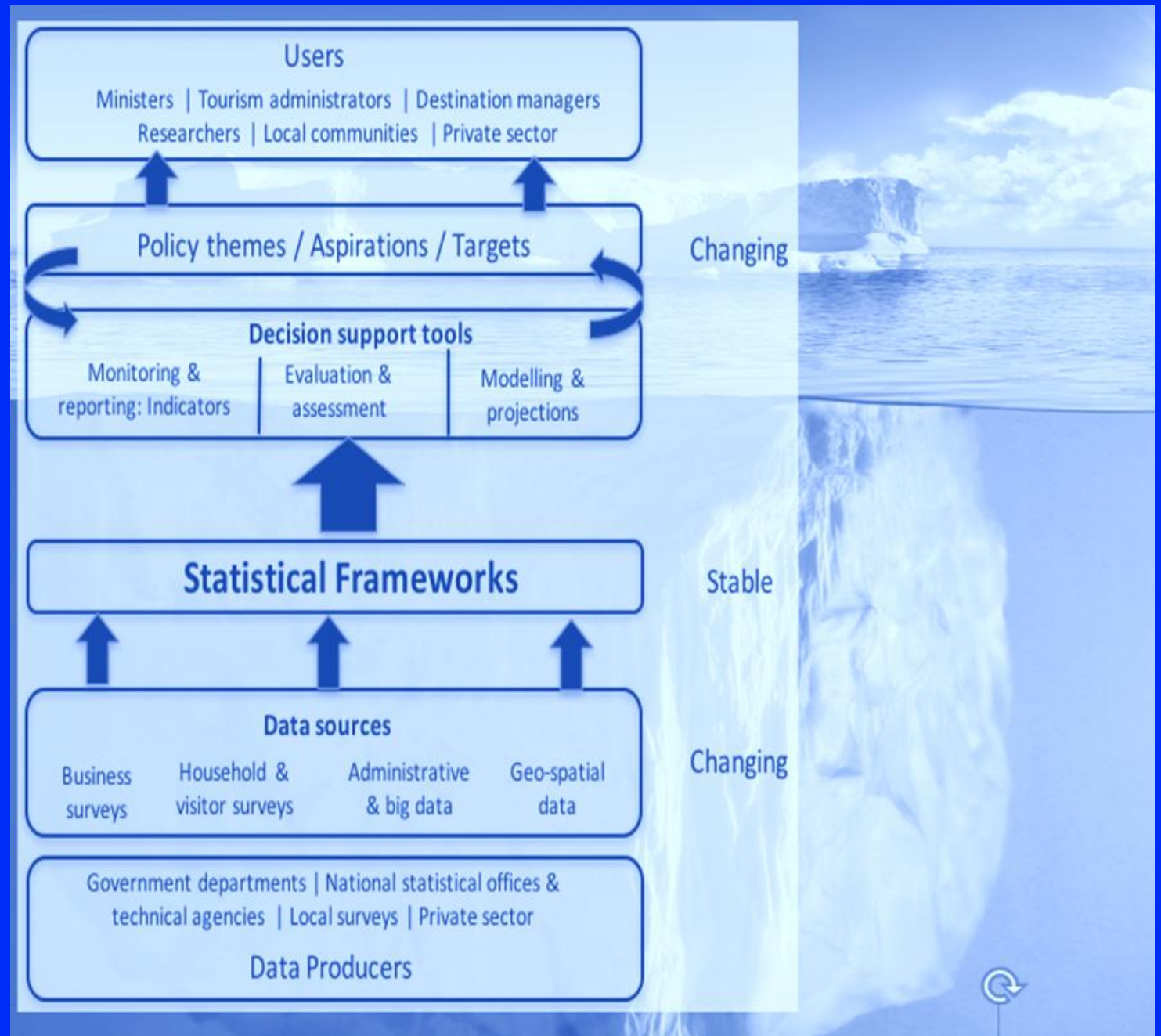
Task Team on a core set of MST-based indicators

Led by IN2destination, Government of Andalucía and University of Málaga



UN Tourism

How the Statistical Framework for MST guides the identification of sustainable tourism indicators



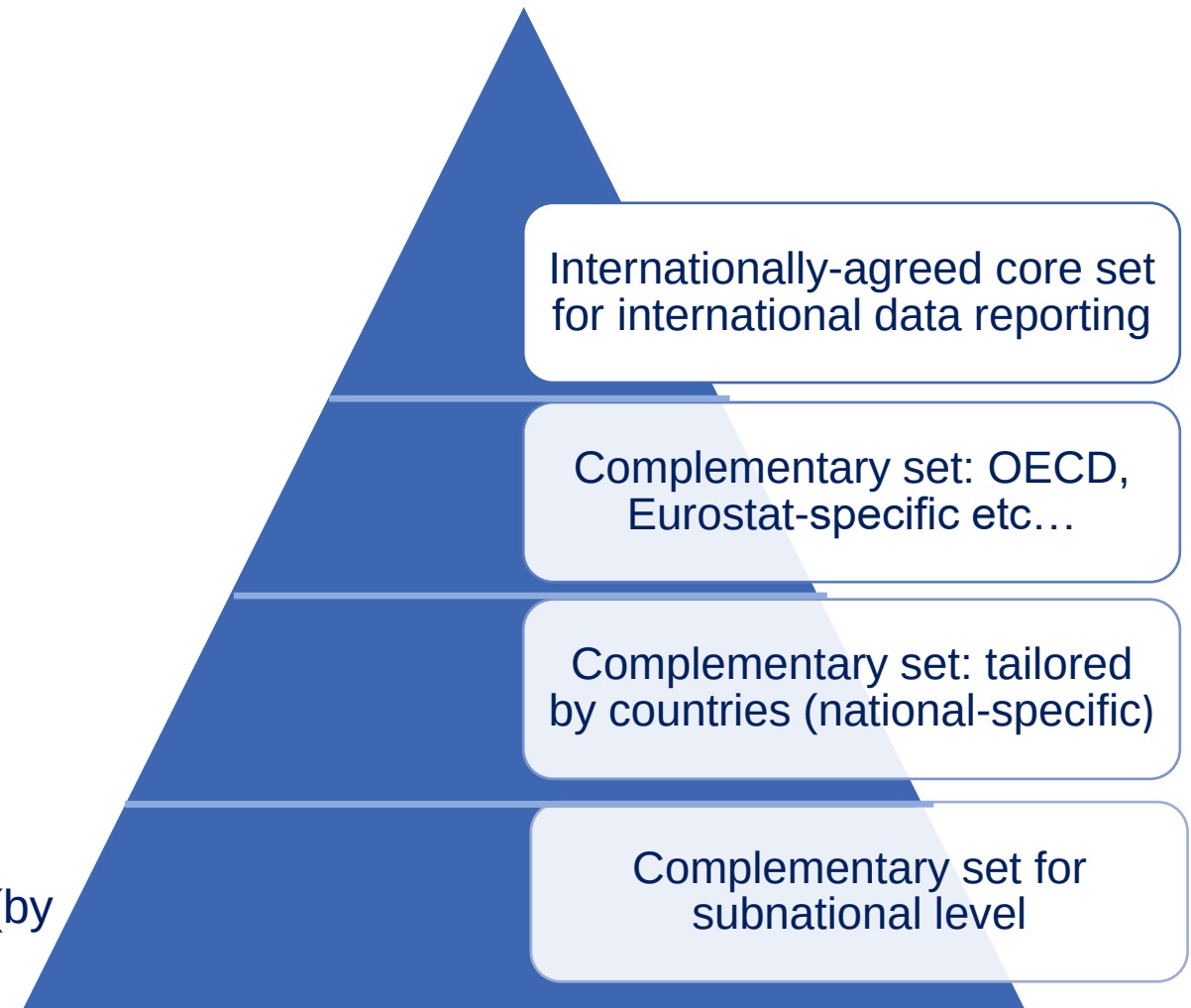
MST-based indicators: approach agreed by the Expert Group on MST

Core set of MST-based indicators:

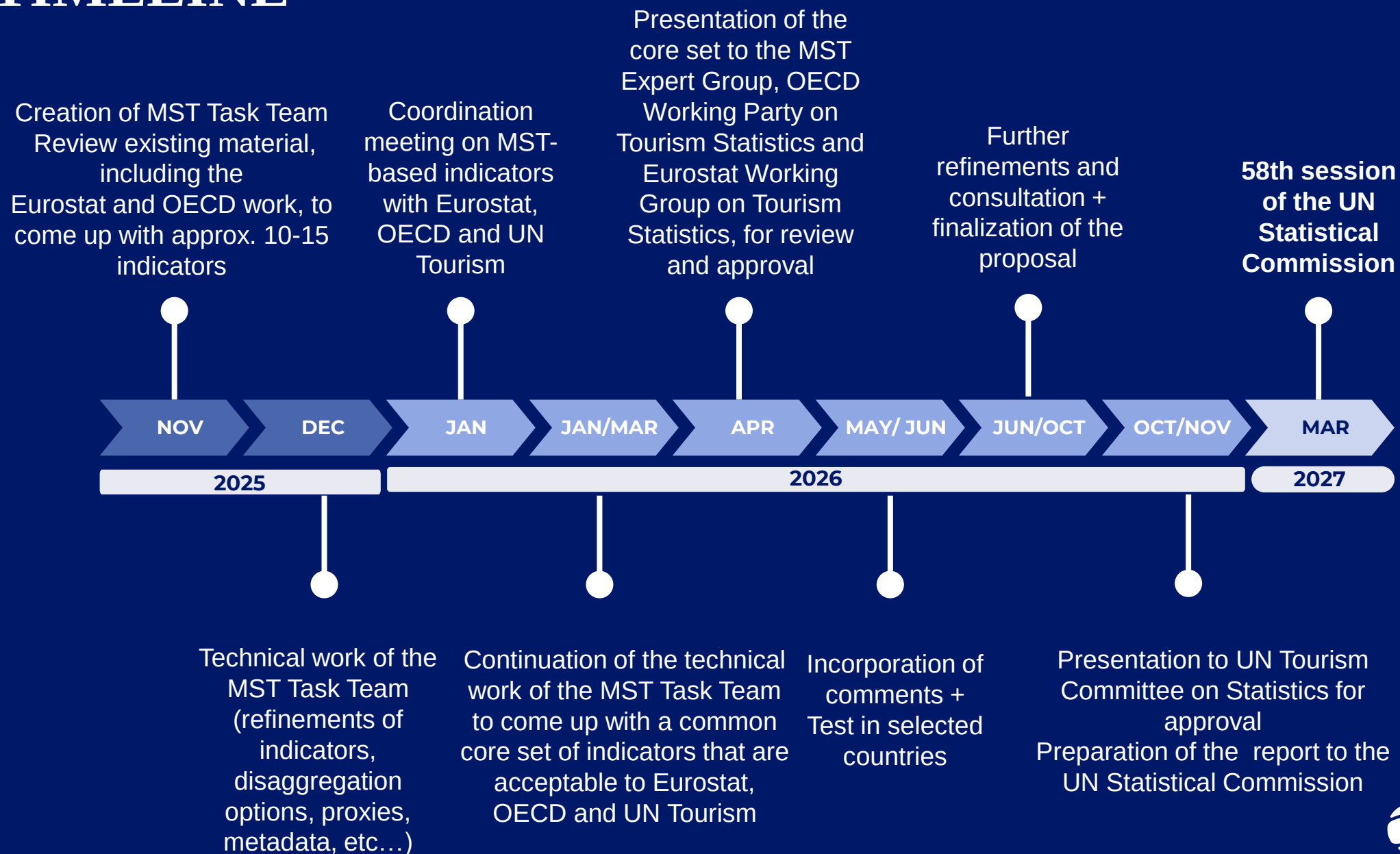
- ❑ One common list of 10-15 indicators covering the 3 dimensions in a balanced way
- ❑ For international comparability purposes
- ❑ to **expand** UN Tourism's **statistical database**
- ❑ Feasible in a majority of countries in the short to medium term, while **maintaining a certain aspiration**
- ❑ Work with proxies

Complementary sets of MST-based indicators:

- ❑ **Tailored** to regional, national and subnational policy priorities
- ❑ Allows greater richness in terms of **disaggregation** (by industry, etc) **and granularity** (spatial/temporal)
- ❑ May allow/require **more sophisticated data sources**



TIMELINE



Work in progress

Some examples of potential indicators

ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Theme	Indicator	Metric	Proxies
Visitor expenditure	Average tourism expenditure	Average internal tourism expenditure per tourist	
		Average internal tourism expenditure per same day visitor	
		Average internal tourism expenditure per domestic visitor	
		Average internal tourism expenditure per inbound visitor	
		Average internal tourism expenditure per visitor	
	Total tourism expenditure per day	Domestic tourism expenditure per day	
		Inbound tourism expenditure per day	
Employment in Tourism	Employed persons (employees and self-employed) in the tourism industries (SDG 8.2.)	Employed persons (employees and self-employed) in the tourism industries	
		Share of employed persons in tourism industries relative to total economy	
Visitor Dependency	Dependency ratio	Share of the nights spent from the top three regions or countries of residence of tourists relative to the total number of tourist arrivals.	
		Ratio of domestic tourist overnights versus inbound tourist overnights	
Tourism economic performance	Contribution of tourism to GDP	Tourism Direct GDP as % of total GDP	Gross Value Added of the tourism industries as % of total Gross Value Added
		Tourism Direct Gross Value Added as % of total Gross Value Added	Gross Value Added of the tourism industries as % of total Gross Value Added
		Tourism GDP/ TOTAL GDP	Gross Value Added of the tourism industries as % of total Gross Value Added

Work in progress

Some examples of potential indicators

SOCIAL DIMENSION

Theme	Indicator	Metric	Proxies
Decent work	Average hourly earnings	Average hourly earnings of direct employed persons in tourism relative to average earnings of employed persons economy wide and for the services sector.	Average hourly earnings of employed persons in tourism industries relative to average earnings of employed persons economy wide and for the services sector. (Labour force surveys)
	Tourism Employment conditions	Share of direct tourism employed persons who are informally employed	Share of employed persons in tourism industries who are informally employed. (Household conditions surveys)
		Tourism direct full-time equivalent employment as % of full-time equivalent employment economy wide	Full-time equivalent employment of the tourism industries as % of full-time equivalent employment economy wide
	Participation of women in employment	Women employed in the tourism industries relative to total persons employed in the tourism industries	
		Share of women in managerial positions in the tourism industries relative to total managerial positions in the tourism industries	
	Women average hourly earnings	Average hourly earnings of employed persons in tourism industries relative to average earnings of employed persons economy wide and for the services sector by sex	
Host community perception	Perception of host communities of visitors	Overall perception of host communities of visitors.	
Visitor satisfaction	Satisfaction of visitors with their experience in the destination	Share of visitors satisfied with overall experience at destination	
		Share of employed persons in tourism industries relative to total economy	

Work in progress

Some examples of potential indicators

ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION

Theme	Indicator	Metric	Proxies
Emissions	Internal GHG emissions	Share of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from tourism industries to total national GHG emissions	
	GHG emission territorial principle/ Sustainable mobility	Share of tourist arrivals to destination by plane	
		Share of nights spent at accommodation establishments by inbound tourists arriving from locations that are geographically distant from the destination (considering distant the countries of origin that are at a distance of 2000 km or more from the destination)	
		Share of tourist arrivals to destination by more sustainable transport modes: (train, bus or non-motorised transport ,bike, walking...)	
Energy flows	Tourism energy consumption	Tourism ratio of total energy consumption	Expenditure on energy by accommodation establishments (Structural Business Statistics in the Service Sector (annual energy expenses in euros for 551 Hotels and similar accommodation, 552 Holiday and other short-stay accommodation, 553-559 Camp sites and other type of accommodation activities))
Solid waste flows	Solid waste generated by tourism activity	Tourism ratio of total Solid waste generated	Volume of solid waste by accommodation establishments (Structural Business Statistics in the Service Sector (annual volume for 551 Hotels and similar accommodation, 552 Holiday and other short-stay accommodation, 553-559 Camp sites and other type of accommodation activities))
Water resources	Tourism wastewater	Tourism ratio of total wastewater generated	Volume of wastewater by accommodation establishments (m3 calculated from Structural Business Statistics in the Service Sector (m3 annual for 551 Hotels and similar accommodation, 552 Holiday and other short-stay accommodation, 553-559 Camp sites and other type of accommodation activities))
	Tourism water flows	Tourism ratio of total water consumption	Expenditure on water in accommodation establishments by number of beds (Structural Business Statistics in the Service Sector (annual water expenses in euros for 551 Hotels and similar accommodation, 552 Holiday and other short-stay accommodation, 553-559 Camp sites and other type of accommodation activities))
Visitation to protected areas	Visitation to protected areas	Visitor number to protected areas	
		Tourism Direct Gross Value Added as % of total Gross Value Added	Gross Value Added of the tourism industries as % of total Gross Value Added
		Tourism GDP/ TOTAL GDP	Gross Value Added of the tourism industries as % of total Gross Value Added

For feedback

- **Suggestions for additional MST Task Team participants**
- **Comments on the proposed process?**
- **Any other considerations?**

Please provide your written input before 30th November to Imoreno@untourism.int



“If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.”

Thank you!



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