Sources and Methods:
Labour Statistics

Employment in the Tourism Industries
Special Edition

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The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) are collaborating in the measurement of employment and decent work in tourism. The two organizations have recently agreed upon to formalize and set a framework for their cooperation. This framework has been approved by the Governing Body of the ILO and will shortly be ratified by the General Assembly of the UNWTO.

One of the areas covered in the cooperation framework is the improvement of national methods of data collection of employment in the tourism industries. It is with that objective in mind that the two organizations launched a set of initiatives, one of them being the present joint publication of Sources and Methods, Labour Statistics: Employment in the Tourism Industries (Special Edition).

This pioneering work has been conceived with a view to providing users and producers of tourism statistics, and those interested in labour statistics in general, with a consolidated volume containing descriptions of the methods used by countries on the production of statistics on employment, wages and hours of work in the tourism industries. The definitions refer to all major statistical sources, as well as methods used by countries to compute the above variables.

The information has been collected through a set of specially developed questionnaires sent to the National Statistical Offices and the National Tourism Administrations in more than 200 countries and territories.

In addition to its technical value as an authoritative reference book, this publication can be seen as a useful companion to the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 (IRTS 2008) and the Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008 (TSA:RMF 2008) to improve their understanding and extend their application in the national statistical systems. The publication should also enhance the production of reliable and consistent statistics on employment in the tourism industries in a growing number of countries.

Moreover, this volume complements the ILO’s own ten volumes of the series Sources and Methods, Labour Statistics which document national practices used in the collection of the variety of labour statistics published in the various chapters of the ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics and of the Bulletin of Labour Statistics.

This Special Edition was conceived by and prepared under the guidance of Mr. Igor Chernyshev, ILO Bureau of Statistics, in collaboration with Ms. Marie-Thérèse Dupré, Senior International Consultant, and with assistance from Ms. Andrina Laurie, ILO Bureau of Statistics, and Ms. Azucena Pernia, UNWTO Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account.
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Tourism involves a wide range of different activities, types of establishments, employment contracts and working arrangements. Tourism provides working people with income and working experience and therefore contributes to their social inclusion and personal development. The tourism employment pattern is characterized by notable differences between regions of a country and between seasons of the year.

Employment is a variable of major importance in the economic analysis of productive activities and this is also the case for tourism. However, it should be recognized that the world of work in tourism is generally not well-known because reliable data on employment in the tourism industries are not properly identified separately or poorly done. For this reason, only a limited number of countries produce meaningful statistics on employment in the tourism industries.

The improvement of national methods of data collection of employment in the tourism industries is one of the priority areas of collaboration between the ILO and the UNWTO. It is expected that this would lead to providing users with reliable and consistent information on employment, wages, occupational structure, job qualifications, skills and working conditions of persons involved in tourism characteristic activities.

More specifically, this joint publication contains methodological descriptions of statistical data on employment, wages and hours of work in the tourism industries derived from different statistical sources, as well as methods used by countries to compute the above variables.

The aim of issuing these descriptions is three-fold: (i) to provide users and producers of tourism and labour statistics, in general, with comprehensive descriptions of the latest sources and methods used in countries throughout the world to collect data on various aspects of tourism characteristic activities, so as to enhance their usability for particular needs; (ii) to indicate the differences between various statistical series published nationally and internationally with respect to the concepts and methodologies applied, thereby assisting users in evaluating data quality and cross-country comparability; (iii) to facilitate the understanding of methods underpinning the countries’ Tourism Satellite Account (TSA).

One of the salient features of this publication is that the descriptions of statistical sources of tourism characteristic activities can be linked/related with the corresponding descriptions of the sources in the following companion volumes to the statistical series published in the ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics, entitled ILO Sources and Methods, Labour Statistics:

- **Volume 3** Economically active population, employment, unemployment and hours of work (Household Surveys). Third edition.

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The above makes it possible to complement the present descriptions of country-specific practices and methods of data collection on various aspects of employment in the tourism industries with detailed and consistent technical notes on concepts, definitions and sampling procedures used by countries for measuring total employment, wages and hours of work derived from the same statistical source.

For example, if a reader, working with the methodology on employment in the tourism industries of Australia as measured through the Labour Force Survey (LFS), would like to know about the Australia’s LFS employment concepts and definition or learn about the LFS sample design, that information can be obtained from the corresponding description of the Australia LFS methodology documented in the ILO Sources and Methods, Labour Statistics Volume 3: Economically active population, employment, unemployment and hours of work (Household Surveys).

Another particularity of this publication is that in addition to the descriptions of concepts, definitions and sources of data collection, it presents methods used by countries for the computation of national data on employment, wages and hours of work in the tourism industries.

The descriptions are presented under standard headings to facilitate comparisons of the different characteristics. If a country uses more than one statistical source of data collection, they appear under their ordinal number: e.g., CANADA – 1. Title: Labour Force Survey (LFS). CANADA – 2. Title: Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours (SEPH).

The information has been collected through the following set of specially developed questionnaires sent to the National Statistical Offices and the National Tourism Administrations in more than 200 countries and territories, and reproduced in Annexes 1-4 respectively:

1. UNWTO/ILO Questionnaires: A General Note ;
2. Questionnaire (1): Statistics on employment in the tourism industries and its components derived form labour force and other household-based surveys;
3. Questionnaire (2): Statistics on employment, wages and hours of work in the tourism industries derived from establishment surveys;
4. Questionnaire (3): Statistics on employment in the tourism industries, wages, hours of work and employment-related income of persons employed in the tourism industries from administrative records and related sources.

Each Questionnaire (1-3) corresponds to a different type of statistical sources.

In total, the responses were received from over 100 countries and territories, of which 81 sent their returns with questionnaires completed. According to the information received, out of these 81 countries and territories, only a few produce both comprehensive sets of statistics on employment in the tourism industries and the TSA employment table. As for the others, they collect a limited number of variables on tourism characteristic activities and only a small fraction of them either also produce or have started to prepare for producing the TSA.

It should be noted that Australia, Austria, Canada and New Zealand both have the most comprehensive set of statistical tools for measuring employment in the tourism industries and the most exhaustive list of statistical variables produced.

It is especially of interest to note that countries such as Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and the USA do not compile statistics on employment in the tourism industries, irrespective of their highly developed tourism economy. However, some of them, like Germany and the USA, produce the TSA.
At the same time a number of countries expressed interest in beginning the collection of data on tourism characteristic activities and/or production of the TSA.

The above findings only confirm that the world of work in tourism, in general, and the economic value of tourism in terms of employment, as a source of productive labour in particular, remain inadequately measured and insufficiently studied.

It is therefore hoped that this publication will encourage countries to expand their national statistical programmes so as to make separate collection of data on employment in the tourism industries an integral part of their regular statistical systems. The other group of countries, already producing minimum statistics on tourism characteristic activities, driven by best practices documented in this volume may find it useful and stimulating to widen the coverage of data collected and extend the list of variables produced.

All these efforts should make it possible to upgrade information available on employment and conditions of work in the tourism sector, both nationally and globally, providing governments, policy makers and specialists in tourism development with relevant statistical indicators to measure various dimensions and deficits of decent work in tourism.

**General Note**

The following countries and territories sent their responses but the information received shows that currently they cannot classify the tourism characteristic activities separately: Belarus, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Hong Kong (China), Isle of Man, Oman, Syria, Togo, Sweden and Uganda.

The following countries and territories responded that they were not collecting data on employment in the tourism industries: Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Mauritania, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, St. Helena Island and Uruguay.

The following countries informed that they were in the processes of preparing or implementing the TSA: Panama, the Netherlands and Ukraine.