



Tourism Statistics Improvement Initiative

Review of Tourism Statistics – Executive Summary

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Review of Tourism Statistics

This is the fourth review to be published under the National Statistics Travel, Transport and Tourism theme. It is the 33rd report in the National Statistics Quality Review Series.

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Executive Summary

“Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.”

Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework – published by the UN in 2001

Summary view of the Review Steering Group

Following discussions at the last Steering Group meeting, the group arrived at this summary:

“Due to the sheer diversity of tourism services, and the unique challenge of measuring a consumer-defined industry, we have come to believe that there is no other sector in the UK economy as significant as tourism in which the key strategic and management decisions are so hampered by a lack of adequate data. Existing sources are no longer fit for purpose and the potential economic, social and environmental contributions of the tourism sector will only be realised if priority is allocated to better measurement.”

Introduction

1.1 Tourism data and statistics represent key management information for tourism decision purposes, for overall national and regional policy formulation, targets and monitoring. They are required for use in:

- Economic evaluation of tourism and monitoring of trends within both the national and regional economy – now and looking ahead to Tourism Satellite Accounting options;
- Planning -identifying the overall volume and forms of tourism to be supported and other forms to be discouraged through strategic and other planning guidelines for tourism;
- Marketing -targeting segments, targeting products and themes, campaign plans and monitoring systems to record progress;
- Sustainable development – meaning assessing tourism volume and value trends, product development trends and the use of indicators and benchmarks to monitor and guide progress on the environmental and social impacts of tourism;
- Advocacy -the use of data for demonstrating the economic, social and environmental values of tourism, especially in debates in which tourism priorities are established in comparison with other obligations of government.

We stress that although the bulk of the thrust of this report relates to national and regional data, exactly the same decision processes have to be undertaken at local level requiring equivalent data inputs. Such data also contributes to the needs of the private sector, especially in relation to investment and marketing decisions.

- 1.2 The importance of the sector is illustrated by its accounting for over 4 per cent of UK GDP. The review concludes that significant developments are necessary if the available statistics are to adequately support the purposes listed above for this important industry.
- 1.3 This review takes the UN-endorsed World Tourism Organisation (WTO) definition of tourism reproduced on the previous page of this report as given. It concentrates on statistics of tourism activity in the UK, by UK residents and others. It does not address in any detail UK residents' tourism outside the UK. The review was conducted by an independent consultant working with a small team from DCMS and with a steering group representing a wide range of tourism interests and with extensive relevant experience. It involved widespread consultation through interviews with a substantial number of interested parties, an invitation to a larger number to participate in writing – including by responding to a questionnaire – and the public availability, on the web, of that questionnaire and details of the review. Annex 1 contains details of those involved.

Summary

- 1.4 Major gaps identified by users include:
- Good quality lists of accommodation providers and other tourism businesses
 - Frequent and timely statistics of day visitors
 - Frequent and timely indicators of short term market trends
 - More detailed statistics of tourist expenditure
 - More comprehensive and robust local statistics.
- 1.5 The review also found that significant further resources need to be devoted to the main established surveys (and in particular the UK Tourism Survey (UKTS) and the Leisure Day Visits Survey (LDVS)). This is necessary if the surveys are to produce statistics, for the countries of the UK and regions of England, which are fit for purpose and warrant the reliance that those monitoring, allocating resources to, planning, developing, marketing and evaluating tourism need to place on them.
- 1.6 The broader development of panel surveys, of the type conducted for example by some trade associations, offers an opportunity to gain timely indications of short term trends of the type which many users indicated they would find valuable. These would cover a wider range of data than can be collected from statistically selected samples of businesses, and would provide a valuable addition to the range of available statistics. The value to users of these, and existing, statistics would be significantly enhanced if a wide range of relevant official and unofficial statistics were collated and disseminated in readily accessible, and actively promoted, formats – including through the web. While these developments do not represent a substitute for the improvement of the main surveys, they would cost considerably less and could be undertaken separately.
- 1.7 Local (and outside England, regional) area statistics cannot realistically be obtained from surveys of the type used nationally. An alternative approach to addressing this important user need (based on the development of an adequate list of accommodation providers) is suggested. The development of this list, which would be a substantial task, would also contribute to the improvement of one of the key national surveys, namely of accommodation occupancy. It would

also benefit the quality of the results obtained from the models used to estimate the volume and value of tourism for local areas. Furthermore it might also provide a base to help implement policy, in respect of improving accommodation quality.

- 1.8 Other important issues raised by the review include the needs to:
- Involve businesses and trade associations as partners in developing tourism statistics;
 - Coordinate data collection from businesses so that – as far as possible- one request and return can serve many uses;
 - Ensure that responsibility and accountability for statistical development is clearly allocated, and adequately resourced, in a manner which does not make the development of tourism statistics subsidiary to, or unduly influenced by, the wider objectives of the organisation(s) within which the relevant individuals work.
- 1.9 The main themes of the recommendations arising from the review relate to:
- Basic monitoring for the UK, its countries and the regions of England;
 - Development of panel surveys giving timely indications of short-term trends;
 - Local statistics;
 - Statistical requirements of, and issues affecting, tourism businesses and their associations;
 - Timeliness of tourism statistics;
 - Dissemination of statistics;
 - Organisational responsibility for tourism statistics.
- 1.10 Major expenditure is necessary to improve the main surveys – and in particular UKTS and LDVS – to make them fit for the purposes for which they are required. This could amount to an additional £7m to £8m per annum, though detailed investigations recommended in this report might arrive at a lower cost estimate. Such costs should be seen in the context of the contribution reliable statistics could make to improving the efficiency and productivity of a sector generating an estimated £76 billion annually and making a commensurate contribution to the Exchequer's tax income. Some of these developments would also necessarily be long-term – for example UKTS and LDVS could not realistically be merged with the Continuous Population Survey before 2009 and the establishment of a good quality accommodation register may take some years.
- 1.11 However, very valuable progress could be made meanwhile in other areas at considerably less cost – in the order of £0.5m to £1m per annum; and useful short-term progress could even be made with an immediate investment in the order of £0.1m. Neither of these two lower cost options would yield the improvements in the UKTS and LDVS that are needed.

Basic monitoring for the UK, its countries and the regions of England

- 1.12 Five main surveys are used to assess the volume, value and nature of tourism at this level:
- United Kingdom Tourism Survey (UKTS);
 - Leisure Day Visits Survey (LDVS);
 - International Passenger Survey (IPS);

- United Kingdom Occupancy Survey (UKOS); and
- Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions (SVVA).

The first three of these collect data from individuals rather than from businesses. The importance of such surveys reflects the definition of the sector by reference to the activities of consumers rather than the products of producers.

1.13 These surveys seek to collect much of the appropriate key data for:

- Tourism monitoring; and the related issues of
- Resource allocation to, and within, tourism; and
- The planning, development, marketing and evaluation of tourism activities.

However, there are some gaps in their coverage, including:

- Expenditure by those receiving visits from friends and relatives
- Some aspects of business tourism
- Business day trips qualifying as tourism.

1.14 More important than these gaps are inadequacies in the statistical quality such as the quality of the samples and the level of the response rates of the surveys. These prevent the surveys providing adequately robust key statistics for the uses listed above. The issues that need to be addressed include the following:

- a) The sampling frame used for UKTS is incomplete to a significant and biased extent and its response rate is inadequate. While a larger sample size is also desirable, remedying these faults is more important to the quality of the survey's results, and hence the first priority.
- b) The response rate for the most recent LDVS was poor and appears to have contributed to an inconsistency with previous surveys. Also, there is user demand for more frequent results from this survey – which covers a significant proportion (in the order of 40%) of tourism expenditure – implying that it should be conducted continuously with monthly, or at least quarterly, results for at least the UK. Third, the significant element of business tourism should be covered. One way of reducing the cost of such improvements could be to cover non-tourism trips (if at all) for only part of the sample and/or in less detail than at present.
- c) The national results from IPS are, if less timely and more subject to revision than some users would wish, of proper statistical quality. The regional results are not; they suffer from interviewing being focused on an inadequate breadth of ports and the lack of a regional element in their grossing. This survey would also be considerably more useful if questions about expenditure, and some others, were asked more frequently and some further questions were added.
- d) The fundamental deficiency of UKOS is the list of accommodation from which respondents are identified. The list is confined to serviced accommodation and, within that constraint, is incomplete and unrepresentative. The samples from which responses are obtained are then not statistically representative and the response rate, even from accommodation providers who have agreed to take part, not uniformly high.
- e) The main concern with SVVA is the level of non-response, including from some of the largest attractions.

- 1.15 One approach to achieving the improvements in the first two of these surveys (UKTS and LDVS) may be to make them, in the longer term, part of the Continuous Population Survey (CPS) being developed by ONS. This possibility should be investigated in detail.
- 1.16 For UKOS and SVVA there could be considerable advantages in using an IT network such as Englandnet for the collection and dissemination processes. This would yield benefits in terms of:
- Efficiency
 - Convenience for respondents
 - Rapid data sharing and hence reduction in the number of overlapping surveys
 - Speedy production and dissemination of provisional and final results (both national and regional/local)

The Englandnet approach might also efficiently extend to the panel surveys described below in 1.21. The detailed investigation of this possibility should include a cost benefit assessment.

- 1.17 In very broad terms, and subject to review and revision as detailed plans for the improvement of these surveys are developed, the costs of these improvements may be of the following orders:
- a) UKTS and LDVS – with LDVS sample size broadly equal to that for UKTS, and UKTS sample size unchanged: £7m p.a. in addition to the current expenditure on the two surveys, though this cost:
 - i. could be reduced substantially if it were possible to combine the two surveys into a single survey, and
 - ii. would depend on the extent to which the length of the interview could be reduced without losing essential information.

If insufficient resources can be made available, then a reduction in UKTS sample size should be accepted as a cost of improving the quality of the sample frame and response, and hence of both the national and regional results. If further resources, in addition to those needed to improve the underlying statistical bases of the surveys, can be made available, then an increase in the sample size would further improve the quality of these statistics, particularly at regional level.

- b) IPS:
 - i. Increasing the number of ports at which IPS interviews take place might cost in the order of £10,000 per port in set up costs and £20,000 per year per port. The number of ports required would depend on which regions regarded such an improvement as worthwhile and the international travel patterns in those regions. In addition, there would be a relatively small cost for analysing the additional data along with the main IPS data.
 - ii. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) are considering incorporating a regional element into the survey's grossing – if they decide to do so there should be no cost to the tourism community; if they decide against, their work reviewing the possibility should provide the basis for estimating the cost of a special analysis.
 - iii. The inclusion of detailed expenditure questions would cost in the order of £150,000 for each year they were included; the other questions might cost £35,000.
- c) UKOS: the main initial additional cost would be the development of an adequate register of accommodation; this has been very broadly estimated at £300,000 per annum. The ongoing

cost of improved surveys based on this would depend on factors such as the successful exploitation of IT networks for data collection and dissemination, and the extent to which local, and other partial coverage, surveys could be subsumed.

- d) An initial approach to improving the SVVA response could be to drop the questions on income and employment – for which the response rate is very poor – and use the resources thus freed to increase the effort put into persuading operators of the value of the visitor number data to them. One could also usefully seek to reduce the overlap between the 30 requests for similar data that are reportedly addressed to operators. The net cost should be small if not nil.

- 1.18 More detailed recommendations about these developments are made in the first and fourth sections of Chapter 6. It may be noted that, in addition to the value of such developments for tourism purposes, they would lead to significant improvement in the statistics available for English regions which is of wider concern – see for example the review by Christopher Allsopp of Statistics for Economic Policymaking. The first section of Chapter 6 also includes less fundamental proposals relating for example to additional survey questions and development of more detailed classifications of e.g. resorts, accommodation, attractions, and tourists.
- 1.19 The development of Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSAs) will represent an important improvement in the national and regional tourism information base. This review identified the main priority for the development of valid TSAs for the regions of England as the production of well-based input-output tables consistent with one another and with the Regional Accounts. ONS should be further encouraged to produce regional Input-Output tables (which would be of value to other user constituencies as well as tourism). Only if that fails should the RDAs' England Regions TSA Project commission the production of tables in some other way. The second priority is the collection of more detailed data from a sample of businesses (as has been done in Wales). The production of the input-output tables and the collection of the additional data will incur substantial costs. The proportion of these costs to be met by the regional TSA Project will depend crucially on the extent to which:
- ONS can be persuaded that these are basic regional economic statistics which they have a responsibility to provide, and
 - Other potential users are willing to contribute to meeting the cost.
- 1.20 Many of the other recommendations of this review would also improve the data base for the development of TSAs. The review has also identified a number of other developments which different consultees see as important to TSA development. The UK TSA Project led by DCMS and the RDAs' England Regions TSA Project should agree prioritisation of these.

Development of panel surveys giving timely indications of short-term trends

- 1.21 There is a range of indicators for which regular collection from a statistically determined sample of businesses would be impracticable but which could still be usefully collected from panels of businesses. Many of these indicators involve financial data from businesses. Evidence on short-term trends in such indicators would be valuable, particularly for businesses, for marketing and for monitoring the impact of a crisis. These include:

- The rates at which accommodation is let
 - Business confidence
 - State of the market indicators of a broader nature than counts of bed-nights or visitors (e.g. including some financial measures)
 - Forward bookings
 - The Best Practice Forum's Key Performance Indicators
 - Visitor attraction information.
- 1.22 Many, if not all, of these could be built on existing sources such as
- Data collected by trade associations
 - Data collated by the Best Practice Forum
 - Business confidence surveys recently introduced by the National Tourist Boards (NTBs)
 - The Visitor Attraction Barometer conducted in Scotland.
- 1.23 The cost, at least of initial progress and in particular consultation, should therefore be small in relation to the costs of improving the main surveys. It will to a degree depend on the extent to which the active involvement, and leadership, of trade associations can be achieved. In that context it will be important that existing data collections are not duplicated.
- 1.24 More detailed proposals for these developments are in the second section of chapter 6.

Local statistics

- 1.25 Local users require statistics for their area, and sometimes for comparable areas, similar to those provided for larger areas by UKTS, LDVS, and IPS. However, there is no realistic prospect of those surveys having a sufficiently large sample to provide such statistics. This review recommends addressing this need through
- Local surveys with samples defined by those using particular accommodation on particular nights
 - Inclusion in household surveys interviewing in the locality of questions about friends and relatives staying
 - Inclusion in national or regional household surveys of questions about day visits.
- 1.26 The costs of obtaining such data should fall to the local organisations requiring it. The cost of the underpinning improvement to the register of accommodation is addressed in the context of the basic UK monitoring surveys. However, it is very important to the quality and efficiency of the local statistics, and especially their comparability between areas, that clear guidelines and standards are produced for such work. This may cost in the order of £40,000 for those types of survey listed in the previous paragraph.
- 1.27 Models producing local estimates of the volume and value of tourism will continue to have a major role to play. Recommendations made in this review for other reasons would each improve the quality of the output of these models, for instance:

- The widespread use of nationally set definitions and standards to maximise consistency with the national/regional data
- The availability of local data for exploitation by others, and
- The improvement of the lists of accommodation stock as a basis for improved local and national statistics of occupancy.

Statistical requirements of, and issues affecting, tourism businesses and their associations

- 1.28 Many of the improvements proposed elsewhere would be of particular value to businesses, especially those relating to:
- Local statistics
 - Panel surveys:
 - Ready and timely access to a wide range of statistics (official and not, specific to tourism and not), and
 - The efficient use of IT for data collection and dissemination
- 1.29 Trade associations should be actively involved in, and indeed encouraged to take a lead in and contribute to the funding of, these improvements. They should be encouraged to see themselves as partners in the development of improved statistical information for the sector.
- 1.30 It is also important that business representatives are involved in the planning of the recommended improvements to UKOS and SVVA, in particular, and the development of classifications and questions for the other main surveys.
- 1.31 Businesses would, of course, also emphasise the importance of the recommendations relating both to reducing the number of requests for data, actively pursuing the ‘collect once, use many times approach’, and the speedy feedback of results. The importance of this to other users lies in the impact on businesses’ willingness to respond to the main surveys.
- 1.32 The gross cost to the public sector of involving trade associations actively as partners in the improvement of the statistics would be relatively small, and the net cost – if associations were to take an active lead – could be negative. The positive impact on quality could be substantial.

Timeliness of tourism statistics

- 1.33 Many users wanted the statistics to be more timely. This in part reflected a lack of knowledge of when, and where, the statistics are first available. Priority should be given to better dissemination of this information. In the longer term, development of a comprehensive website should help.
- 1.34 Unless the quality improvement programme leads to a reduction in the recall period used in the survey, it is not realistic to expect UKTS results to be available appreciably earlier than they now are.
- 1.35 Improvement in the timeliness of LDVS results is essentially dependent on it becoming a continual survey.

- 1.36 The timing of IPS results, and the need for subsequent revisions, is essentially determined by the availability of various data used in the grossing of the survey data. ONS have achieved some improvement in this and periodic attempts should be made to achieve further progress.
- 1.37 For UKOS and SVVA the time taken to obtain responses is a major determinant of the timing of the results. Closer involvement of trade associations and the use of EnglandNet or a similar network may reduce such delays. The possibilities of making local data and/or results, for their areas and comparator areas, available to local tourist boards (TBs) and others, and producing provisional results before the slowest returns have been received, should be considered in detail.
- 1.38 The availability of results is not necessarily the same as the availability of tables of key importance to users, e.g. tables required by the EU are not available with the first UKTS results. A key set of tables, to be produced with the first survey results, should be agreed with users for each of the main surveys.
- 1.39 None of these actions should be very costly, over and above the costs of underpinning developments allowed for elsewhere.

Dissemination of statistics

- 1.40 To meet the needs of users, the following information should be made available on line – perhaps by enhancing scotexchange.net and www.staruk.org:
- A wide range of official and unofficial statistics, specific to tourism and more general
 - Publication schedules for those statistics
 - Readily accessible meta data describing those statistics (including information about their coverage, quality and reliability) and outlining what more may be available from the sources
 - Access to micro data for secondary analysis and/or advice on how secondary analyses can be obtained
 - Summary interpretive analyses of the data.
- 1.41 The annual cost of developing and maintaining such a site depends on the rate at which sources and services are added to the site. It is suggested that initially a full time site developer and half of a junior statistician might be appropriate – a cost of perhaps £60,000 p.a. This is included in the estimated cost of a Tourism Statistics Unit (TSU) below.
- 1.42 In addition it would be:
- Consistent with good statistical practice,
 - Welcome to many of the users consulted in this review, and
 - Likely to increase media – and hence public – interest
- for key results from each of the main surveys to be published promptly in a widely publicised Statistical Release. In the interests of demonstrating the independence and integrity of the statistics, the Release should follow the relevant National Statistics (NS) standards about neutral presentation, pre-announced publication dates and restricted access to the statistics in advance of publication.

Organisational responsibility for tourism statistics

- 1.43 As was mentioned or confirmed by a number of consultees, no one organisation exercises overall responsibility for tourism statistics. Consequently there is little strategic approach to the development of those statistics. This has resulted in:
- The lack of a strong voice for tourism needs in the consideration of the development of wider statistics; and for statistical needs in the consideration of the allocation of government funds for tourism
 - Under-resourcing of tourism statistics
 - Piecemeal decisions about tourism statistics with some decisions thought to be unduly influenced by the objectives of a particular organisation
 - A lack of co-ordination, and standardisation
 - Under-exploitation of data, from all sources, through secondary analysis
 - An unnecessary number of data requests addressed to tourism businesses
 - Relevant skills being thinly spread
 - Users not having a recognised, authoritative, “one stop shop” source of a full range of statistics, authoritative descriptions of the nature of those statistics, analysis and advice
 - Most tourism statistics not benefiting from being produced under the National Statistics Code of Practice.
- 1.44 It is essential to:
- Implementation of improvements of the type described in the review;
 - The ongoing strategic development of tourism statistics; and
 - The development and maintenance of improved arrangements for disseminating tourism and related statistics
- that:
- Responsibility for such activities is clearly allocated and resourced (in terms of skills and people as well as funds);
 - These responsibilities are not limited by the other responsibilities and interests of the organisation(s) within which the responsible individuals work; and
 - Those with the responsibilities are accountable to users – probably through an influential Advisory Group – and not only to their line management.
- 1.45 In the interests of the effective and efficient development and maintenance of adequate tourism statistics it is recommended that the relevant responsibilities be brought together into a single Tourism Statistics Unit (TSU). Such a unit would need appropriate resources and skills together with the authority to develop the national sources and the capacity to influence, and set standards for, data collection by local organisations and trade associations. It would also be essential for it to work closely with NTBs, DCMS, RDAs and other regional tourist organisations- including Regional Tourist Boards, Regional Observatories, trade associations and others.

- 1.46 A TSU's responsibilities should include:
- Development and maintenance of a strategic programme to ensure the production, dissemination, and exploitation of a sufficient range of statistics of adequate quality;
 - Clear, timely and neutral dissemination of tourism statistics and indicators;
 - Commissioning, and quality controlling, efficient national data collection producing statistics for the countries of the UK and regions of England;
 - Facilitating secondary analysis of statistical data by NTBs and others;
 - Establishing, and disseminating, best practice standards for local and sectoral data collection;
 - Influencing local, regional and sectoral data collection to maximise the:
 - Use of best practice standards, perhaps supplemented with a quality kite-mark
 - Use of single data collection for more than one purpose
 - Availability of the data for secondary analysis;
 - Challenging press and other comments based on partial or inaccurate information; and encouraging media use of the statistics it disseminates;
 - Representing UK at international meetings concerned with tourism statistics and for compliance with EU Directives;
 - Enhancing the perception of tourism statistics, by ensuring that appropriate parts of the National Statistics Code of Practice are followed, and by seeking National Statistics status for the main series.
 - Acting as a central focus if additional data needed to be collected in times of emergency.
- 1.47 Subject to the more careful consideration that will be necessary if a decision to create such a unit is taken in principle, the unit might consist of three statisticians of different grades, a website developer and maintainer, and some administrative support. This might imply a staffing cost of some £250,000 p.a (including £60,000 recorded at 1.41). Some of this resource might be transferred from DCMS and NTB resources devoted to statistical work but a clear net addition would be required. The unit would also need the funds to commission the main surveys listed in 1.12; the existing funds should be transferred to the unit together with the additional funds to improve the surveys which are required whether or not a TSU is created.
- 1.48 While a case can be made, primarily in terms of closeness and sensitivity to the industry and its needs, for locating such a unit in DCMS or a NTB, the review – and many of those it consulted – would see a number of advantages in it being located in ONS. These include:
- It would be easier for the unit to have a UK remit
 - The independence and integrity of the unit, and the statistics it produced, would be more readily recognised
 - Ready access to senior experienced government statisticians as and when the need for such access should arise
 - Readier access to relevant data that ONS collects for other purposes
 - Clear indication that no change is implied regarding the location of responsibilities for tourism policy and delivery.

Summary of recommendations

1.49 This review makes fourteen major recommendations.

1.50 **Recommendation 1:** UKTS and LDVS should be subject to a major redesign which should inter alia:

- Ensure adequate sample frames and response rates
- Consider a merger of the two surveys
- Consider merging the surveys with ONS's planned Continuous Population Survey
- Produce more frequent statistics for day tourism
- Cover those business trips that qualify as day tourism.

1.51 Full implementation of this recommendation, which is important to the fundamental quality of the basic statistics of tourism activity, will be both relatively long term and expensive: perhaps up to 5 years and, when the new surveys are implemented, an additional £7m per annum. However, detailed consideration could lead to some reduction in the additional cost (e.g. if the two surveys can be successfully combined).

1.52 **Recommendation 2:** Some interim improvements should be made to the LDVS so that:

- More frequent statistics are produced
- A higher response rate is achieved
- Business trips qualifying as day tourism are covered
- The survey focuses more tightly on tourism and less on other leisure activities

Such development could to some extent be tailored to available resources. A significantly improved survey should be achievable with about £2m per annum.

1.53 **Recommendation 3:** The IPS should be improved as a source of tourism statistics. In particular:

- The analysis of the survey should more closely follow standard tourism definitions
- The expenditure trailer should be included more often
- The sample structure and grossing methodology should be revised to provide viable sub-UK statistics.

The second of these would cost about £150,000 for each year in which the trailer was included while the third might cost in the order of £100,000 per annum, plus some set up costs, for interviewing at additional ports.

1.54 **Recommendation 4:** The registers of accommodation and other tourism businesses should be improved to provide:

- Valuable information in their own right
- An improved basis for UKOS
- A basis for proposed development of local statistics
- Improved input to models of local volume and value of tourism.

It is estimated that this might cost in the region of £300,000 (plus annual maintenance costs).

- 1.55 **Recommendation 5:** UKOS should be improved to cover all types of commercial accommodation and provide viable statistics of occupancy and visitor nights.
- 1.56 **Recommendation 6:** SVVA should be amended to focus more on the quality and completeness of its statistics of visitor numbers.
- 1.57 **Recommendation 7:** Regional input-output tables of the best possible quality, and supplementary statistics from relevant businesses, should be produced as key input to the proposed development of TSAs.
- 1.58 **Recommendation 8:** Panel surveys should be developed to provide timely short-term indicators of trends for a range of relevant indicators.
- 1.59 **Recommendation 9:** Methods for producing local tourism statistics should be developed and piloted. These should include surveys based on the improved registers of accommodation and the use of additional questions in household surveys to cover types of tourism that could not be captured in the accommodation-based surveys.
- 1.60 **Recommendation 10:** Arrangements should be established for tourism interests to influence the development of employment and related statistics; also the exploitation of employment and economic statistical data for the production of tourism statistics should be increased.
- 1.61 **Recommendation 11:** The dissemination of tourism statistics, and information about the basis and quality of those statistics, should be improved. The same applies for other statistics of value to tourism. This should include the development of a high quality one-stop web-site and the development of release practices for statistics taking account of NS standards.
- 1.62 **Recommendation 12:** Various steps should be taken to improve the quality of statistics of Business Tourism.
- 1.63 **Recommendation 13:** The review also makes a number of other, relatively minor, recommendations; these are listed in chapter 8.
- 1.64 **Recommendation 14:** An effective organisation should be established and resourced to develop and maintain tourism statistics of appropriate quality. There is a fundamental need for such an organisation. This would most effectively take the form of a Tourism Statistics Unit, specifically accountable for the delivery of tourism statistics for the tourism community as a whole. It would probably be most appropriately located in ONS. Without some such clear allocation of relevant responsibilities, and the provision of appropriate resources, it is unlikely that adequate tourism statistics will ever be developed. As an immediate interim measure, it is recommended that resources should be sought to allow immediate progress, without awaiting the completion of the Action Plan, on a number of the relatively inexpensive and short term improvements recommended in this review. This could involve the appointment of a statistician in DCMS, (pending the establishment of a TSU); or a one year contract with a suitably experienced private sector statistician.

Priorities

- 1.65 The relative priorities of these developments, and specific elements of them, are considered in Chapters 7 and 8. It is clear that achieving a basis of national and regional statistics adequate for the purposes described above will require substantial additional resources – perhaps of the order of £8m p.a. Some 85% of this cost relates to securing the quality of UKTS and LDVS, and the scale and coverage of LDVS. These developments would also take a considerable time to design in detail and then implement; however, a significant interim enhancement of day visits statistics could be achieved quite quickly if resources (perhaps £2m p.a.) were made available.
- 1.66 In any case, a wide range of valuable – if less fundamental – improvements could be made more quickly and at substantially less net cost. A considerable number of the review’s recommendations could be implemented quickly – or in some cases a useful start made – if a statistician were now appointed to progress them. In this way, at an initial cost of under £100,000 p.a. (allowing for some spend in addition to salary and T&S costs), important improvements could be achieved quickly and a clear signal given of the intention to achieve improvements to tourism statistics. Deployment of resources at this level would make major contributions to:
- The timely availability of relevant statistics to the tourism community;
 - The improvement of IPS-based tourism statistics;
 - The production and dissemination of additional relevant employment and related statistics;
 - Maintaining the momentum towards, and beginning to lay the foundations for, major improvements to national, regional and local tourism statistics.
- 1.67 Additional expenditure in the order of £500,000 p.a. would permit:
- Establishment of a TSU, giving an important firm foundation for the ongoing development and maintenance of tourism statistics;
 - Introduction of panel surveys providing valuable timely indicators of short-term trends in various elements of the tourism sector;
 - Collection of expenditure detail in the IPS in alternate years;
 - Production of much improved regional statistics from IPS;
 - The development, on a pilot basis, of a more comprehensive register of accommodation providers and other tourism businesses;
 - The detailed development and piloting of the proposed methods for obtaining local tourism statistics;
 - The development of a relatively comprehensive one stop web-site for tourism statistics;
 - Detailed investigation of the costs and benefits of specific actions to improve UKTS and LDVS.

If additional resources on this scale cannot be provided in one step it would be possible to phase these developments.

- 1.68 If resources of the order needed to fully implement this review's recommendations cannot now be made available, the Action Plan to be prepared in response to this report might usefully:
- Report the work schedule for any statistician appointed in response to 1.66, or, if no appointment has been made, present a plan for the relevant developments
 - Present a plan for the developments summarised in 1.67
 - Present alternative scenarios – dependent on different patterns of resource availability – for the detailed planning, piloting and implementing of the fundamental improvements to the main statistical sources