

**Open public consultation
Making European tourism statistics fit for the future**

**NECSTouR contribution to the Call for Evidence on the revision of Regulation
(EU) No 692/2011 on European tourism statistics**

Better tourism governance requires better tourism data.

Purpose of the Paper

NECSTouR welcomes the European Commission's initiative to review the regulatory framework for European tourism statistics. As the Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism, we recognise the crucial role of robust, timely and relevant tourism statistics in supporting evidence-based policymaking and enabling destinations to successfully embed sustainability across their ecosystem. In particular, the transition towards more sustainable tourism requires new and more comprehensive data capable of measuring tourism's environmental, social and economic impacts at destination level.

This position paper constitutes NECSTouR's contribution to the Call for Evidence launched as part of the revision of Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 on European tourism statistics. Drawing on the experience of regional tourism authorities, which are both key users and important providers of tourism data within the European statistical ecosystem, this paper presents the collective views and recommendations of NECSTouR members. It identifies the main challenges of the current statistical framework and proposes recommendations to ensure that future tourism statistics better respond to the evolving needs of destinations, policymakers and the tourism sector.

NECSTouR welcomes the European Commission's commitment to engaging stakeholders throughout this review process and appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the development of a more comprehensive, timely and future-proof framework for European tourism statistics. We remain available to further discuss the recommendations outlined in this paper and to continue supporting the European Commission in shaping a statistical system that effectively serves Europe's destinations and contributes to more resilient, competitive and sustainable tourism policies.

Better tourism governance through better data

NECSTouR welcomes the European Commission's initiative to revise Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 on European tourism statistics. This revision is timely and necessary. Since 2011, tourism activity, business models, policy needs and data sources have changed substantially. European regions and destinations now need tourism statistics that are not only comparable across Member States, but also sufficiently timely, granular and actionable to support sustainable destination governance.

Moreover, there is a substantial need for the European tourism statistics to provide the necessary data to support destination management and go beyond monitoring the tourism volumes. Indeed, the OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2026 recently published report highlights a fundamental shift in tourism policy: The need to move from the focus on increasing visitor numbers towards managing destinations in a more balanced and sustainable way. Therefore, tourism success should no longer be measured solely by arrivals and overnight stays, but to monitor the value created for local economies, residents' well-being, quality employment, environmental sustainability and cultural heritage. Additionally, the OECD underlines that tourism operates in an increasingly uncertain environment characterised by geopolitical tensions, inflationary pressures, transport disruptions, climate change and rapidly evolving traveller behaviour. This reinforces the need for timely, reliable and policy-oriented tourism statistics capable of supporting anticipatory decision-making and strengthening destination resilience.

From the perspective of European regions and destinations, the revised regulation should move from a framework mainly focused on accommodation flows and resident trips towards a more integrated, multi-source and policy-relevant statistical system. This system should support the measurement of tourism's economic, environmental and sociocultural dimensions, while preserving the core principles of the European Statistical System: professional independence, reliability, objectivity, statistical confidentiality, proportionality and cost-effectiveness, which implementation will need to be gradual, as data access and availability differ very much across territories.

NECSTouR supports continued coordination between Eurostat, UN Tourism and the OECD on tourism statistics and sustainability measurement. This coordination is important to keep European work aligned with international frameworks such as TSA, SF-MST and SEEA.

NECSTouR also supports using these frameworks as references for the revised regulation. The regulation should provide the core statistical foundations needed to produce comparable sustainability indicators, while leaving enough flexibility to adapt them to different regional and destination contexts.

Regions occupy a unique position within the European tourism data ecosystem: we collect, produce, integrate and use tourism data to design, implement and evaluate tourism policies.

For regional destination authorities, the priority is to have reliable and usable data: harmonised variables, territorial breakdowns, metadata, access rules and quality standards. These building blocks are essential to move from general frameworks to practical measurement and better decision-making.

The experience of NECSTouR, through its [Tourism of Tomorrow Lab](#), shows that European destinations need high-quality, timely and granular data to support better decision-making. The Tourism of Tomorrow Lab is NECSTouR's operational department for data-driven destination management. It supports regions and destinations in using data, indicators and digital tools to improve tourism governance, monitor sustainability and address practical challenges such as visitor flows, seasonality, environmental pressures, resident sentiment, mobility, digitalisation and value-driven tourism strategies.

This is especially important because tourism governance is often exercised below the national level. Regional authorities, DMOs, municipalities and local observatories are frequently responsible for managing visitor flows, monitoring pressures on local resources and designing destination strategies. By contrast, official statistical programmes are generally designed, negotiated and implemented at national level. This creates a structural gap between where tourism is statistically organised and where tourism is often managed. The revised regulation should help reduce this gap by ensuring that regional and destination-level needs are systematically considered when defining European tourism statistical priorities.

The revised regulation should improve the coverage of platform-based accommodation. Short-stay rentals are now a structural component of tourism supply in many destinations. Their measurement is necessary to understand real accommodation capacity, territorial pressure, seasonality, housing-related tensions and interactions with local communities. Integration should avoid double-counting, ensure consistency with regulated accommodation statistics and provide clear metadata on coverage, limitations and quality.

The revised regulation should also progressively improve the measurement of same-day visitors. Excursionists can represent a significant share of visitor pressure in urban, coastal, rural, cultural and natural destinations, yet they are often insufficiently captured by accommodation-based statistics. Their measurement should be developed through a combination of demand surveys, mobile network data, transport data and administrative sources. Initial outputs could focus on volume, origin, destination, mode of transport and, where feasible, expenditure.

The revised regulation should also progressively improve the measurement of specialised hospitality sources of information: Travel registry like [SES.HOSPEDAJES](#), which centralises data collection through the unified web application of the Spanish Ministry of the Interior's Electronic Office, MICE, CRUISES, RAIL TRAVEL, etc., through information from tour operators, with the appropriate level of disaggregation.

Multi-source data for better territorial granularity

The future framework should better support territorial and temporal granularity through a multi-source strategy: NUTS2 and NUTS3 and rural destinations/cities or postal code granularity outputs remain important for European comparability and regional policy. However, many destination management questions require more granular evidence. This does not mean that all Member States should be required to produce municipal data for every variable from the outset. A proportionate approach is needed: stronger NUTS2 and NUTS3 outputs, selected sub-regional breakdowns where feasible, and progressive development of city, tourism-area or LAU-level estimates when data quality, confidentiality and cost-effectiveness allow.

Traditional surveys should remain part of the system, but their territorial and temporal usefulness can be enhanced by combining them with auxiliary sources such as mobile network data, platform data, card transaction data, transport data and administrative registers. These sources can support calibration, spatial disaggregation, small-area estimation, nowcasting and validation of survey-based statistics. They should not be treated as simple substitutes for surveys, but as complementary inputs that can improve precision, timeliness and territorial relevance when used under transparent statistical methods.

Regular and harmonised inbound visitor surveys are essential to complement accommodation statistics. They provide critical information on travel patterns, transport modes, visitor behaviour and expenditure that cannot be captured through accommodation data alone. Some NECSTouR regions lack this data and stand ready to collaborate with their respective national statistical organisations to produce it in an harmonised way for the benefit of the whole country.

Mobile network data can support the measurement of visitor presence, spatial distribution, mobility patterns, day visits and temporal concentration. Platform data can improve the coverage of short-stay accommodation and support territorial estimates of accommodation pressure.

Financial transaction data may help estimate the spatial distribution of tourism expenditure, although payment behaviour biases, commercial confidentiality and cross-border comparability issues must be carefully addressed.

Transport data can improve the measurement of modal split, accessibility, connectivity and dependence on long-distance markets.

Administrative registers can support statistics on establishments, employment, business demography, licences, accessibility and other relevant variables, such as data from smart electricity meters that can support the completion of statistics notably related to secondary homes consumption by tourists.

Digitalisation and the European Tourism Data Space

The European Tourism Data Space is meant to enable data sharing flows in a secured environment ruled by strict governance principles serving the interests of public and private tourism stakeholders. Beyond statistical reporting, tourism data should increasingly support operational destination management. High-quality, timely and interoperable data can help destinations monitor visitor flows, anticipate congestion, encourage the redistribution of tourism demand, improve visitor experiences and support evidence-based policy interventions.

Tourism enterprises increasingly use **digital operational systems** such as **Property Management Systems, channel managers, booking engines** and other **data-generating tools**. These systems can support more automated, timely and granular data collection if they are connected to clear statistical definitions, metadata and quality requirements. Their use should be linked to the development of the **European Tourism Data Space**, so that digital data-flows generated in the tourism ecosystem, where legally and methodologically appropriate, can contribute to public-interest statistics and destination intelligence.

The integration of Property Management Systems and other digital accommodation management tools is a particularly relevant use case. It can reduce the burden on accommodation providers while improving the timeliness and quality of accommodation data. This approach is consistent with the Commission's objective of producing more complete, timely and cost-efficient tourism statistics without increasing the net burden on respondents. It also illustrates why the European Tourism Data Space should not be developed only as a general innovation infrastructure, but as a trusted data-sharing environment connected to official statistics, semantic standards and public-interest governance.

Official statistics as the foundation of innovation

Official statistical institutes, and Eurostat in particular, should play a highly relevant role in the definition, development and deployment of the European Tourism Data Space. This role

should be made more visible and structurally embedded. Official statistics have long operated within trusted environments for data sharing with enterprises, individuals and organisations, using clear governance schemes, confidentiality safeguards, harmonised definitions and semantic standards. These assets are directly relevant to the success of the Tourism Data Space.

A stronger role for official statistics in the Tourism Data Space would benefit both sides. The Data Space would gain from the methodological robustness, trust, semantic clarity and comparability principles developed by the European Statistical System. Public statistics would benefit from new data-sharing infrastructures that can facilitate access to privately held data, automate reporting, reduce respondent burden and improve timeliness. This should not be understood as replacing official statistics with a data space. Rather, the Tourism Data Space should become an enabling infrastructure through which trusted public and private data sharing supports official statistics, analytical platforms, DMOs and SMEs.

Measuring tourism sustainability

As already stated, tourism statistics should enable the measurement of tourism value creation including local economic benefits, business performance, quality employment and broader contributions to regional development and, as recommended, allow destination authorities to measure tourism performance beyond the volumes.

The revised regulation should strengthen the statistical inputs required for **Tourism Satellite Accounts**. This includes visitor flows, expenditure, accommodation supply and use, transport, employment, tourism industries and relevant non-monetary variables. The priority should be to improve the completeness, consistency and accessibility of the primary statistics needed for TSA compilation.

The revision should also take into account the transition to NACE Rev.2.1 and its national adaptations. This transition is relevant for tourism statistics because business statistics, employment statistics, national accounts and Tourism Satellite Accounts depend on the classification of economic activities. It may affect the statistical treatment of tourism industries, platforms, intermediation services, mobility services and digital tourism activities. The revised framework should ensure clear correspondence tables, metadata, backcasting where feasible and guidance to preserve comparability over time, while making better use of the improved classification of new tourism-related activities.

In line with the European climate policy, and as highlighted by the OECD in its recent report, climate-related hazards, including heatwaves, floods, wildfires and droughts, are increasingly influencing travel patterns and destination attractiveness. Tourism statistics should therefore support not only the measurement of tourism's environmental footprint but also destination adaptation by identifying climate vulnerabilities, changing visitor behaviour and resilience needs.

The revised regulation should also facilitate the **implementation of SF-MST**. This means ensuring that the basic variables needed to analyse the economic, environmental and sociocultural dimensions of tourism are progressively available. Environmental variables should be developed in **coherence with SEEA**, focusing initially on energy use, water use, waste generation and greenhouse gas emissions linked to tourism industries and tourism demand, where feasible.

NECSTouR welcomes Eurostat's first set of harmonised European indicators on the sustainability of tourism as an important step towards the European implementation of SF-MST. This first set shows that comparable indicators can be built from existing official statistics without creating additional burden. At the same time, it also confirms the need to strengthen the underlying statistical building blocks, since some indicators are proxies and existing data may lack geographical, temporal or sectoral granularity, especially for regional and destination-level use and for the environmental dimension.

The social dimension should be strengthened. European tourism statistics should progressively include the measurement of residents' attitudes, perceptions and acceptance of tourism. This is not a marginal issue. The capacity to **understand how residents perceive tourism's benefits, pressures and trade-offs** is increasingly relevant for balanced tourism governance, social sustainability and destination legitimacy.

There is already evidence and methodological work that can be used. The Joint Research Centre has analysed residents' perception of tourism, including a mapping of European initiatives, comparative analysis and econometric work. This shows that resident perception can be approached as a measurable component of tourism intelligence, although methods and implementation are still uneven across countries and destinations. Austria also provides a relevant example through its legally embedded tourism acceptance survey, implemented by Statistics Austria as an additional module linked to the travel behaviour survey. This model shows that a **resident-attitude measure can be incorporated into official tourism statistics** with limited additional burden, using a concise questionnaire and linking results to existing socio-demographic and territorial variables.

NECSTouR therefore recommends that the revised framework support a concise and harmonised approach to resident perception. This could begin as an optional or pilot module, with a small number of comparable variables on perceived impacts, perceived volume of tourism, perceived importance of tourism and economic dependence on tourism. Territorial detail should depend on sample size, quality and statistical confidentiality. Resident perception should be interpreted together with objective data on visitor pressure, accommodation density, housing, employment, mobility and environmental use.

Employment quality should also be progressively developed as part of the social dimension. Existing labour market statistics, social security records and business statistics can provide relevant inputs, but better linkage to tourism industries is needed. Where feasible, data should allow analysis by sex, age, occupation, contract type, working time, earnings and seasonality. Accessibility should also be considered, but with realistic expectations regarding data availability and reporting burden.

The Joint Research Centre can play a complementary role by supporting analytical innovation, territorial indicators and multi-source integration, as illustrated by the EU Tourism Dashboard. The Dashboard demonstrates the value of combining official statistics with complementary data sources to monitor the green and digital transition of tourism at national, regional and local level. However, the production of official statistics and the definition of core statistical building blocks should remain anchored in Eurostat, national statistical institutes and the European Statistical System. The most effective model would combine the strengths of official statistics, the analytical capacity of the JRC, the experimentation and destination engagement capacity of the Tourism of Tomorrow Lab and the data-sharing infrastructure of the European Tourism Data Space.

NECSTouR Recommendations

NECSTouR recommends that the revision of Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 explicitly supports a multilevel statistical governance approach. European tourism statistics should be designed not only for national reporting and European comparability, but also for regional and destination-level decision-making. This requires a stronger dialogue between Eurostat, national statistical institutes, regional authorities, DMOs, observatories, the JRC, OECD, UN Tourism and the European Tourism Data Space.

NECSTouR recommends that the revised framework follow a modular approach. Core European statistics should remain comparable and feasible. New modules should be introduced progressively where policy demand, methodological maturity and data access justify them. Experimental or voluntary modules should be used for topics such as local

tourism pressure, resident sentiment, climate vulnerability, complete carbon footprint measurement, indirect environmental flows and housing impacts.

NECSTouR believes that the European tourism statistical framework should be conceived within a whole-of-government framework, recognising tourism's strong interconnections with transport, regional development, housing, environment, digitalisation, labour markets and investment policies. This is why qualitative tourism data should support more integrated policy making across these sectors, enabling coherent and evidence-based decisions that maximise tourism's contribution to sustainable territorial development, in line with the OECD report, which identifies tourism as a cross-cutting policy areas whose governance requires stronger coordination across policy domains and levels of government.

In this sense, the European tourism statistical framework should increasingly support evidence-based policy making by enabling destinations to identify emerging risks, monitor changing visitor behaviour and detect long-term structural trends before they become critical challenges. Beyond measuring past performance, tourism data should help policymakers anticipate future pressures, strengthen preparedness and improve the resilience of destinations. This way European tourism policies would progressively become more forward-looking, flexible and capable of anticipating geopolitical, economic, climatic and societal changes.

NECSTouR proposes the following priorities to be embedded in the regulation's revision:

1. The revised regulation should provide the basic statistical building blocks that regions and destinations need to turn TSA, SF-MST and SEEA into practical measurement and better decisions, while maintaining coordination with UN Tourism and the OECD on the selection of core indicators for measuring the sustainability of tourism.
2. It should improve the coverage of short-stay accommodation platforms and develop a stable, transparent and comparable framework for integrating these data into European tourism statistics.
3. It should enable the progressive measurement of same-day visitors and visitors not captured through rented accommodation statistics, using multi-source methods.
4. It should improve the territorial and temporal usefulness of tourism statistics through calibration, spatial disaggregation and small-area estimation supported by mobile network data, platform data, card transaction data, transport data and administrative registers.

5. It should connect tourism digitalisation with statistical modernisation and the European Tourism Data Space, including the potential use of PMSs, channel managers and other digital business systems to reduce reporting burden and improve

data quality. The European Tourism Data Space should be developed in close connection with official statistics, ensuring a visible and structured role for Eurostat and national statistical institutes in its governance, standards development and implementation, so that trusted public and private data sharing can support both official statistics and destination intelligence

6. It should strengthen the link between tourism statistics, labour market statistics, business statistics, environmental statistics, environmental-economic accounts and national accounts.
7. It should progressively incorporate the social dimension of tourism, including resident perception, tourism acceptance, employment quality and accessibility, with realistic methodological and territorial expectations.
8. It should recognise the role of regions, DMOs and observatories as key users and implementation actors, not only as passive recipients of national or European statistics.
9. A robust tourism statistical framework should support public and private investment decisions by identifying infrastructure needs, destination carrying capacity, connectivity gaps, skills requirements and long-term resilience priorities. Reliable data can help direct investment towards projects that strengthen competitiveness, sustainability and resilience while delivering greater benefits for destinations and local communities.
10. It should make room for methodological experimentation through pilots, voluntary modules and cooperation with the JRC, OECD, UN Tourism, the Tourism of Tomorrow Lab and regional observatories.

The objective of the revision should be clear: European tourism statistics should provide the statistical foundations needed for better destination governance, stronger resilience, balanced tourism development and evidence-based sustainability policies. This can be achieved without creating disproportionate burdens for Member States or businesses if the revised framework is modular, multi-source, interoperable and grounded in the trusted principles of official statistics.

How NECSTouR can support

The Tourism of Tomorrow Lab can contribute to this transition as NECSTouR's operational platform for data-driven destination management. It works with European regions and destinations to test indicators, identify data gaps, build capacity, develop dashboards and translate statistical outputs into decision-making. Its work on the Sustainable Indicators Platform, data infrastructure, benchmarking, AI-enhanced analytics and capacity-building for

DMOs and SMEs can help ensure that the revised regulation responds to the practical needs of regional and destination authorities.

The Tourism of Tomorrow Lab can also help test feasibility. They can identify which variables are already available, which require methodological development, which depend on access to private data, and which are not yet realistic as mandatory statistical requirements. This is important because destinations may identify datasets as potentially useful, but actual data sharing is often constrained by ownership, governance, interoperability, quality and technical limitations. The future regulation should not only ask destinations to measure; it should also help equip them with the data foundations, governance arrangements and capacity-building mechanisms required to do so.

NECSTouR stands ready to contribute to this process by mobilising the experience of European regions and destinations, the Tourism of Tomorrow Lab and its wider network of members and partners.