

Methods and Sources: Methodological Notes

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Survey on International Tourism

The survey

Since 1996 the Bank of Italy has been conducting a comprehensive survey on international tourism for the purpose of compiling the 'Travel' item of Italy's monthly balance of payments. The main objectives of the survey are to obtain high-quality statistics on tourism expenditure for balance of payments purposes (in keeping with the recommendations of the international organizations) and to gather data on the characteristics of the tourism services market for a better understanding of the phenomenon.

The survey uses a two-stage sampling design. The sampling is done separately for the different types of border points, although the same general principles apply. Nearly 70 border points were selected among those most representative in terms of flows, in order to cover a high share of the international travellers crossing Italy's borders. To estimate the size of the target population, in the absence of a sampling frame giving a breakdown of international travellers' by country of residence or destination, it is necessary to carry out qualified counts of travellers.

Data on tourism expenditure and other variables of interest are collected by conducting 120,000 interviews at the border points listed in the sampling design. Travellers are approached by interviewers, who conduct face-to-face interviews using a structured questionnaire. Thus, the survey focuses on the demand side of tourism services. The interviews are conducted at the end of the trip in order to capture the expenditure actually incurred and not potential or planned spending.

Further details on the methodology employed in the survey are available on the Bank of Italy's website (only in Italian):

http://www.bancaditalia.it/statistiche/tematiche/rapporti-estero/turismo-internazionale/Metodologia_Turismo_internazionale_dic_2015.pdf

The microdata relating to the survey are available at:

<http://www.bancaditalia.it/statistiche/tematiche/rapporti-estero/turismo-internazionale/distribuzione-microdati/index.html>

The main findings of the survey are published monthly on the following webpage:

<http://www.bancaditalia.it/statistiche/tematiche/rapporti-estero/turismo-internazionale/index.html>

Overnight stays in Italy by foreigners: a comparison with Istat data

Istat also gathers data on tourism by conducting two separate surveys: the census survey on 'Occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments' and the sample survey on 'Trips and holidays in Italy and abroad', which since 2014 has been merged into the final interview for Istat's Household Budget Survey. The census survey collects data on the number of travellers (Italian and foreign) and their overnight stays in registered establishments in Italy. It therefore considers foreigners visiting Italy but also domestic tourism (trips made within Italy by Italian residents). The survey census looks at the supply side of tourism services, drawing on the reports of the tourist accommodation establishments. It is, therefore, unable to collect data on travellers staying in unregistered facilities (private homes) and on same-day visitors. Moreover, it does not collect data on travellers' expenditure. The sample survey on 'Trips and holidays in Italy and abroad', by contrast, collects data on the trips of Italian households, both within Italy and abroad, and does so through computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI).

Owing to the different classification systems used for accommodation facilities, comparing the findings of Istat's survey on 'Occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments' with those of the Bank of Italy's survey is only possible in the case of overnight stays at hotels by foreign tourists. The difference between the surveys (of 1.4 per cent in the last five years) has narrowed over time. Compared with Istat's sample survey on 'Trips and holidays', the Bank of Italy's survey gives a higher number for both the trips made by Italians abroad and their overnight stays. For further details, see [Alivernini, Breda and Iannario \(2014\)](#).

The Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)

The Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) is the internationally recognized and recommended tool for mapping the tourism sector. It brings together information on tourism demand and supply in a coherent framework. Therefore, the data presented in the TSA tables make it possible to evaluate the overall economic dimension of the tourism industry in a harmonized statistical setting by combining information coming from various sources.

The TSA for Italy was estimated for the first time in 2010 by a task force coordinated by Istat and comprising the Bank of Italy, the International Centre of Studies on the Tourism Economy (CISSET) and the Department for the Development and Competitiveness of Tourism' of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The TSA is composed of ten statistical tables. By combining demand and supply data on tourism, a supply-and-use table is obtained, from which it is then possible to calculate the value added of tourism, i.e. that stemming directly from tourism consumption. According to TSA estimates, in 2010 tourism generated 6.0 per cent of Italy's value added, and this is without taking account of indirect value-added activation. Further details are available on Istat's website: <http://www.istat.it/en/archive/71012>.

The publication of the 2015 update of the TSA is expected by the second half of 2017. The Bank of Italy participates in the process together with Istat (coordinator) and CISSET.