F. Border surveys

7.45.　　　Border surveys count or survey persons who are travelling when they enter or leave the country. Such sources can be used to collect information on the characteristics of trips and travel, and are useful for deriving estimates of travel and tourism expenditures, as outlined in box 7.1. However, they can also be used to collect information to compile data on the number of mode 2 and mode 4 trips/persons. In 2005, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) carried out a study entitled "Tourism as an international traded service" in which 26 out of the 34 responding countries from a sample of 48 countries considered representative of a wider group of countries specified using border surveys. Given the strong link with tourism information needs, it is good practice to identify how stakeholders could cooperate in collecting the details necessary to respond to all information needs. Chapters 2 and 3 provide more information on the legal and institutional arrangements.

7.46.　　　**When to survey?** The circumstances in which information is collected are relevant for the quality of the data. In the case of inbound flows, information must be collected from the person as he/she is leaving the country in which he travelled. In the case of outbound flows, the information can be collected either at the moment of re-entering the country of residence or after the travel is completed within the usual environment of the person. This allows the observation of actual expenditure because persons are interviewed once and only after the expenditure has taken place. If they were asked about their expenditure before their travel ends, upon entry for inbound travel and exit for outbound travel, then only expected expenditure would be observed. The particular case of inbound travel makes the observation challenging, as time is short upon departure, and the person might not be in the appropriate mood to
answer a complicated questionnaire. Additionally, if the flows of certain categories of persons are small, it would possibly require a sample of a relatively bigger size or a deliberate over-sampling with suitable correction methods. It is strongly recommended that a specific set of questions be designed to enhance the accuracy of estimates and break them down into categories.

7.47.　　　UNWTO developed a model border survey that is included in *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 Compilation Guide* .[1]

The model questionnaire includes five sections: (a) travellers, (b) means of transport, (c) about your stay, (d) acquisition of services in your country or other country before arriving in our country and (e) acquisition of goods and services in our country booked or paid either before, during or after the trip. The UNWTO *Compendium of Tourism Statistics* also presents a broad range of data and indicators being collected by a significant number of countries, in line with IRTS 2008, that could give an indication of what data should be collected to compile a basic set of data.

7.48.　　　**Organization of border surveys** Border surveys must be organized differently depending upon whether they refer to airports, land borders, sea ports, ports on rivers or cruises. The more extended practice refers to airports. The organization of the surveys, the sample design and the questions that can be asked also differ extensively because of the different circumstances in which the surveys can be undertaken, in particular the time that can be assigned to the interview or to filling in the questionnaire.

7.49.　　　**Means of conducting border surveys** In the same manner as other surveys, the border survey can be conducted in various manners, including (a) paper questionnaires distributed to preselected persons who fill them out (provided the questionnaires are available in multiple languages, with clear instructions); (b) paper questionnaires filled by an interviewer; or (c) electronic questionnaires filled out by an interviewer using a handheld device that feeds it directly into a validation program. While for a household survey, it is possible to follow up with the informant if information turns out to be inconsistent, it is difficult or impossible to follow up in the same way with a border survey. [2] Consequently, the questionnaires should be clear enough to minimize errors in the provision of the required information. For example, a well-designed electronic questionnaire to be filled out directly on a tablet computer by a person as he/she is leaving the country visited (at some strategic location where he/she has to wait anyway) could facilitate the conducting of face-to-ace border/travel surveys.[3]

7.50.　　　**Treatment of travelling parties** Because visitors often travel in parties, in which the most important expenditures are shared, some countries have tried to use different questionnaires for persons travelling alone and for those travelling in parties to facilitate the collection of information; common expenditures would be collected only once for the whole party, while the personal characteristics of each party member must be collected. This might be good practice, especially if dealing with travel for recreational purposes.

7.51.　　　**Working with specific characteristics** For borders where the flow of persons is almost permanent (land borders, airports), and where it is difficult to maintain the period of observation overnight, it may be useful to work with specific characteristics. In the case of air travel, for example, flights originating in certain locations or terminating in certain destinations are often grouped within certain time brackets.

7.52.　　　Finally, an observation should be made on the survey procedures themselves. When observing flows of persons over the border (with the exception of cruise ships), it is not possible to determine whether the person is a resident (leaving or returning) or a non-resident (arriving or leaving), yet only those who have terminated a trip should be interviewed. The imbalance in questionnaire responses corresponding to the different situations might result in false information.

7.53.　　　Compilers should refer to box 7.1 for information on the characteristics and breakdowns needed. Box 7.1 outlines, in particular, the difficulties regarding the breakdown of expenditures by product as well as the issues of seasonality and the conduct of the survey. Compilers should be aware, nevertheless, that the extent of the information and the type of details that can be collected will depend to a large degree on the length of the interview. For example, in surveys at a land border, interviews must be very short, so the questionnaire should contain only the most essential types of questions.

7.54.　　　It is important to ensure that no category of persons is excluded from the survey (e.g., the survey should cover persons outside the definition of visitors used in tourism statistics), but a clear distinction should be made for each category so that the compiler can select the population of interest to his /her statistical domain.

In this section:

[1] *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 Compilation Guide*, annex 1.

[2] Some countries have tried returnable questionnaires, but this has not proved very useful, because the few who return it may not have the same profile as those who do not return it. However, New Zealand has developed an online questionnaire where random sampling is done after airport security and respondents provide information at a later stage.

[3] The computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) system technique was used in Morocco for the first time in 2013 for the survey on travel conducted by the Ministry of Tourism at borders. The CAPI technique entails conducting interviews by means of tablet computers on which questionnaires are installed. Answers are entered into the computer and data is sent in online to the database after predefined checks and control processes. The tool helps to improve quality, reduce cost and save time.