

International Visitor Survey review 2018

Progress report 3

This is the third progress report of the International Visitor Survey (IVS), initiated by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

In this report we focus on progress in the past month and the upcoming draft report of the review, due for release to key stakeholders in May 2018. We plan to publish the final report in July 2018. This was originally scheduled for June, but has been extended to July to allow sufficient time for key stakeholders to provide feedback on the draft report.

Key stakeholders, as listed in the [Terms of reference for a review of the International Visitor Survey \(PDF\)](#), are Kantar-TNS, Tourism Industry Aotearoa, Regional Tourism NZ, Tourism NZ, Department of Conservation, and Tourism Research Australia.

Engagement

The initial stakeholder engagement round was completed in March 2018.

We continue to engage with experts as and when we need specific information. During April we met with ORC International. It runs the Australian IVS survey on behalf of Tourism Research Australia, who we had met with earlier in March. We also met a former manager of COVEC, the company responsible for the IVS data collection from 2008–2013. We are summarising information received from a number of other countries that run an IVS - including Australia, Canada, Ireland, and the UK.

Progress

As we bring our findings and thinking together, seven themes have emerged. These will provide a useful narrative for the draft report and allow us to address all key elements of the Terms of Reference.

The seven themes are listed below with some comments on the likely content.

Governance and stakeholder engagement

This will describe and evaluate arrangements for governance of the survey and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

Survey design and initial implementation

This will describe the original design features of the survey and evaluate the completeness of the design criteria and how effectively they have been implemented. The New Zealand survey will be compared to similar surveys in other countries.

To date we have identified improvements that should be made to the sample allocation to improve the representativeness of the achieved sample. MBIE has agreed and these were implemented by

Kantar-TNS from 1 April. We expect that these changes, which will be described in the draft report, will reduce the variation in expenditure estimates for most of the main markets.

We have also examined how a number of other countries conduct their surveys and produce expenditure estimates to provide context.

Survey operation

This will examine and evaluate the technical operation of the survey, considering the sample allocation, data collection initial data processing by Kantar–TNS, subsequent processing by MBIE, and the overall performance of the survey operation. We will also consider the pros and cons of the online and personal interview methods of data collection.

Working together

Successful operation of the survey requires well-coordinated engagement between all parties, MBIE, Kantar –TNS, and Stats NZ. It has been acknowledged there is a requirement to improve a shared understanding of each party’s roles and responsibilities.

MBIE has convened a regular meeting of the other parties involved in the survey operation to tighten up the end-to-end operation of the survey, implement improvements, and monitor performance. MBIE is also leading documentation of roles and responsibilities and a quarterly production timeline.

Explanation of the IVS results

Stakeholders have signalled that they want the IVS results to be presented in a broader context, relating them to other results and providing better explanation of the drivers of change in the expenditure series.

MBIE is developing additional data packs to release alongside the quarterly IVS results.

Need for revision to IVS series

The review team is still investigating this, based on what it has learnt under the survey design and operation topics, and its own analysis of previous results. Our approach has been to systematically investigate the possible sources of error and rule them in or out.

The possible sources of error include:

- Kantar-TNS or MBIE changes to the processing systems
- errors in the exchange or use of data
- changes in the compositional mix of travellers and spend drivers
- errors or changes in statistical estimation and benchmarking
- errors or changes in outlier treatment.

We have identified some areas where statistical estimation should be improved and we are currently looking at outlier treatment. We have yet to assess the impact of these changes on the published series.

Further investigations

The review will identify specific issues that require more investigation and determine how they can be addressed.

Appendices

The draft report will include a series of appendices that will, among other things, provide more detail of our technical analyses and evaluations.

Ian Cope returns to the UK

On 27 April the review project leader, Ian Cope, will complete his secondment to Stats NZ and return to the UK Office of National Statistics. Ian has agreed to review the final report. The Review Governance Committee thanks Ian for the great leadership he has shown and his sterling contribution to the review. Paul Brown, a current member of the review team, will lead the project after Ian's departure.

Next steps

A draft report of the review is being compiled with the intention of distributing it to key stakeholders in May. A final report will then be compiled in July, incorporating key stakeholder feedback.

Signed 27 April 2018 on behalf of the governance committee of the International Visitor Survey review 2018:

Gary Dunnet
Acting GM Products, Services & Insights
Stats NZ

Eileen Basher
GM Research, Evaluation & Analytics
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment