

IVS methodology

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Technical Description

The purpose of this document is to provide details of the survey methodology for the International Visitor Survey. Please note that it is intended as a description of the methods. The structure of the document does not necessarily reflect the structure of the survey processing.

Survey purpose

The purpose of the International Visitor Survey is to provide accurate, quarterly national information on the characteristics, behaviour and expenditure of international visitors.

In particular:

- To measure the amount of expenditure of international visitors.
- To determine the activities international visitors participate in, the transport and accommodation types used, and places visited.
- To provide data for determining the travel credits component in the Balance of Payments, and tourism expenditure in the Tourism Satellite Account.
- To provide demographic information about international visitors, their motivation for visiting New Zealand, and their satisfaction with their visit to New Zealand.

Survey type

The International Visitor Survey is a sample survey of approximately 9,800 international visitors to New Zealand aged 15 years or older per year, excluding individuals whose purpose of visit to New Zealand was to attend a recognised educational institute, and are foreign-fee paying students.

Sampling

The International Visitor Survey draws its visitor sample based on measures of the actual number of target population visitors who departed New Zealand from our international airports over the survey time period in the previous year. Using actual historical visitor departure information, time periods are randomly selected with the probability of being selected based on the number of flights during that period – periods with no flights will have no probability of being selected while those with a high number of flights have a high probability. For Auckland, Wellington and Queenstown airports two hour time periods are used, while for Christchurch airport it is a four hour time period.

Prior to July 2013, the sampling of the International Visitor Survey was 'Flight based' - a stratified cluster sample of departing international flights with quota sampling of individual respondents.

Collection process

The International Visitor Survey uses a two part collection process. The first part involves screening departing visitors during the selected time periods for eligibility and collecting email addresses. The second part, where the bulk of the information is captured, is via an on-line survey, a link to which is sent to those eligible and agreeing to participate.

Weighting

Each respondent within the sample is weighted to represent their fraction of the total number of all international visitors departing New Zealand within the survey's target population.

Survey response weights are adjusted to reflect the unequal probabilities of respondent selection from the composition of the target population, and known discrepancies between the sample and the population definitions.

Survey responsibility

TNS New Zealand limited is responsible for data collection and processing.

The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment is responsible for analysis and disseminates the survey results.

The survey is carried out with the assistance of the airports, security staff, airlines and Statistics New Zealand.

Survey history

The International Visitor Survey started in 1984 with the International Survey of Visitor Expenditure. Prior to 1984, international visitor expenditure information was collected from the Bank of New Zealand travel receipts. From 1984 onwards, the International Visitor Survey was conducted at varying intervals, becoming a bi-annual survey through the late 1980's and early 1990's.

In January 1995, the International Visitor Survey became a continuous ongoing survey, with the questionnaire changing in January 1997 to accommodate more expenditure details as well as activity and attraction information. Throughout this time various market research companies have been contracted to conduct the International Visitor Survey. NFO New Zealand Limited conducted the survey from 1997 through to 2002 in conjunction with the then client, Tourism New Zealand. In July 2002, in line with the New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2010, responsibility for the International Visitor Survey was transferred to the Ministry of Tourism (currently the Ministry of Economic Development).

The Nielsen Company took over the contract at the beginning of 2003 and ran the survey to June 2008. From July 2008 the Ministry of Economic Development has directly managed the International Visitor Survey, with the data collection outsourced to Covec Limited.

Responsibility for the International Visitor Survey passed on to the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment when it was formed on 1 July 2012.

In July 2013 the current version of the International Visitor Survey was adopted after an 18 month redevelopment process.