2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Field work

Data were collected during one whole week for each month of the year 2002. The survey weeks were chosen on a rotative basis, the first one being chosen at random. Thus if the first week was chosen in January, the second week in February would be chosen, the third week in March and so on. This ensured representativity of all weeks and all months in the sample, at the same time taking care of seasonality and other fluctuations.

A trained team of ten Interviewers, two Supervisors and a Senior Supervisor was responsible for the interview of departing tourists at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolum International Airport. The field staff worked in two shifts of five interviewers each. The target population was all outgoing tourists except members of diplomatic corps and visitors holding working permits.

Practically all departing flights were covered during the selected weeks.

In order to ensure that tourists from the major generating countries were adequately covered, the questionnaire, originally in English and French, was translated into German, Italian and Japanese.

2.2 Response

The response rate was very high (around 94%). In fact those few who declined to co-operate just could not do otherwise because of their late arrival for check-in formalities.

2.3 Sample covered
No “a priori” sample design was established in the sense that the number of interviews to be conducted was not calculated on any pre-determined quota based on the country of residence or any other basic profiles of the tourist such as sex, age, purpose of visit or travel arrangement.

Interviews were conducted on a “first available” basis, that is tourists were approached for interview as they entered the departure lounge after check-in formalities, depending on the availability of the Interviewer. The Supervisor had to closely monitor the situation and ensure representativeness among all departing flights by later directing interviewers to those departing visitors who had not yet been interviewed.

Globally, 15,907 interviews were conducted, covering 32,966 tourists when considering the party size. Therefore, the number of tourists interviewed represented around 2% of total tourists visiting Mauritius for the year 2002. Table (i) shows the distribution of respondents by country of residence compared to the distribution as obtained from embarkation and disembarkation cards.

Table (i) - Distribution of parties and persons by country of residence
When comparing the proportions of tourists from the two sources, we noticed that they are slightly different. Such differences may be due to sampling or the practice of tourists from certain countries to check in at the last minute.

### 2.4 Processing

The completed questionnaires were scrutinised on the spot by the two Supervisors for completeness and consistencies. Further editing and coding were performed at the Statistical Unit of the Ministry of Tourism & Leisure.

The data were then captured and processed using the Integrated Microcomputer Processing System (IMPS) version 3.1, a statistical package developed by the US Bureau of Census.