

Information and Communication Technology in the local government administrations Year 2009

Istat presents the main results of the survey on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) usage in local public administrations (Regions, Provinces, Municipalities and Mountain local government authorities). The survey is one of the best sources to observe how ICT technologies have spread in the local government authorities and, as a consequence, to evaluate the process of updating and the development of electronic services for citizens and enterprises.

The survey has been carried out in 6,146 local government administrations and the data are about: organisation, computerization of activities, ICT usage, connectivity (broadband, LAN, etc.), the use of on line services, the web site, the relationship with users and the ICT expenses. The reference period is mostly September 2009 and the year 2008 for more detailed data.

ICT Organization

There are remarkable differences among local public administration in the way they are organized to use ICT. In the year 2009, 20 Regions out of 22 and 85.3 per cent of Provinces had one or more autonomous offices in charge of ICT, while for Mountain local authorities and Municipalities the percentages were respectively 21.8 and 15.3 per cent. The highest rate of ICT staff on the total amount of employees of local public administration was recorded in Regions (2.9 ICT employees on 100 employees), followed by Mountain local authorities and Provinces (respectively 2.3 and 2.0 per cent of ICT employees) and the Municipalities with 1.6 per cent.

The development of software and the ICT training were two of the areas where the Municipalities with more than 60,000 inhabitants intensively looked for outsourcing activities. 84.3 per cent of large Municipalities outsourced the development of software and 68.8 per cent outsourced the ICT training. For small Municipalities the same percentages were lower, that is, respectively 50.7 and 31.2 per cent.

During the year 2008, 21 Regions out of 22 organized training courses on ICT (all the Regions in Northern-Central Italy) and 61.8 per cent of Provinces. On the contrary, only 19 per cent of Mountain local authorities and 17 per cent of Municipalities held ICT training activities.

With reference to the computerization level of management activities, for all the local administration in the year 2009, an extensive use of network computerization for accounting, protocol and payments functions was recorded. On the other side, public relation office, call for tender management and staff selection procedures turned out to be the least computerized activities for all local administrations.

ICT infrastructure

Computer servers were used by 86.7 per cent of the local administrations during 2009. More than 90 per cent of Regions and Provinces used Smart card technologies, GIS and CAD devices too whereas in the Municipalities such use was done at a lesser extent.

PC (desktop and laptop) were widely spread among the employees of local administrations. The number of PC every 100 employees was equal to 84.8 PC in the Municipalities and 103.6 in the Provinces. The LAN connection was available in 95.6 per cent of all local administrations: 32.2 per cent of them used local wireless connections. 90.3 per cent of PC was connected to the local network. 41.7 per cent of the all the local administrations had an Intranet network which was accessed from 75 per cent of staff. All Regions and 92.2 per cent of Provinces implemented open source solutions, while in the Mountain local authorities

and Municipalities the percentages were respectively 52.8 and 48.1 per cent.

Internet usage

The Internet connection was available in almost all the local administrations (99.9 per cent) and 75.2 per cent of them had a broadband Internet connection. 72.9 per cent of employees of local administrations had an Internet access. In the year 2009, 98.0 per cent of local administrations was provided with e-mail system and 62.6 of them used certified e-mail system with some differences among local administrations: the diffusion of a certified e-mail system was recorded in every Region, 85.3 per cent of Provinces, 62.6 per cent of Municipalities and 50.8 per cent of Mountain local authorities. The VoIP technology is a tool which could lead to a reduction of phone expenses and it was implemented by 16.1 per cent of local administrations with Internet connection.

The opportunity to exchange messages with legal value by digital signature was adopted by 56.6 per cent of Municipalities, 95.5 per cent of the Regions and 98.0 per cent of Provinces.

The use of E-procurement procedures during the year 2008 seemed to be linked with the type of local administration, its size and location: overall 22.9 per cent of local administrations used e-procurement procedures, with meaningful percentages for the Regions (77.3 per cent) and the Provinces (79.4 per cent).

The Website of local public administrations

The Web site was available for 91.3 per cent of local administrations and it was present in all the Regions and Provinces which answered to the survey. The existence of an institutional website was nearly complete in the Municipalities with more 5,000 inhabitants too, while it was 11 percentages points lower in the smaller ones (87.7 per cent). Concerning available on line services, in the year 2009 67,8 per cent of local administrations which owned a web site stated that users were allowed to download forms, 15,6 per cent stated about the possibility for the user to forward the request on line and 7,6 stated that the entire administrative procedure could be concluded on line. 13.0 percent of local governments with the website allowed citizens and businesses to make on line payments. The local administrations limited capacity to use information collected on users through direct multi-channel front office activities: only 2.4 per cent of local governments used applications software such as Citizen Relationship Management, although 50.0 per cent of Northern-Central Regions used it.

ICT Expenditure

In 2008 the ICT expenditure of all local administrations was estimated around 1.3 billion euros, which corresponds to around 0.5 per cent of total expenses of all the public administrations involved in the survey. This percentage was equal to: 0.96 per cent in the Mountain local authority, 0.93 per cent in the Municipalities and 0.82 per cent in the Provinces while for the Regions it was around 0.3 per cent. The ICT expenditure was mainly focused on Municipalities (49.7 per cent) and in the Regions (40.9 per cent)

In 2008, the overall ICT expenditures were divided as follows: 62.1 per cent in current expenditure, and 37.9 percent in capital expenditures. The costs for hardware, software and ICT services accounted for more than 80 percent of the total ICT expenditure in all types of local administrations. Considering the ICT spending per employee, there is a marked difference between regional administrations and all others: on one hand there is an estimated cost of around 6,200 euros per employee for Regions and Autonomous Provinces, on the other significantly lower values were registered in the Municipalities (1,500 euros), in the Provinces (1,800 euros) and the Mountain communities (2,200 euros).

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