

## Foreword

Now in its seventh edition, the Bes Report proceeds from a permanent work of updating, analyzing as well as disseminating indicators on equitable and sustainable well-being. As usual, the Report has been conceived as a set of tools to help both collective and individual choices – at the national and local level – to be designed to foster well-being in all its multiple dimensions.

At all government levels, evidence-based and transparent decisions in the processes of both ex-ante and ex-post policy monitoring and evaluation have increasingly gained momentum. In this perspective, a few years back the Italian legislator established that selected indicators of equitable and sustainable well-being were to be included among the planning and evaluation instruments of national economic policy. These indicators are now regularly published in a dedicated annex to the Economic and Financial Document. This practice makes Italy a pioneering country as far as the adoption of a Beyond GDP policy-evaluation approach is concerned.

At the same time, the progressive growth in the autonomy and responsibility of local authorities in our country requires an increasing ability to describe and monitor our territories. This calls for our statistical information to be increasingly capable of representing heterogeneous contexts, supporting the decision-making processes of local administrators and providing citizens with information apt to sustain their active part in the growth of their communities. This is why Istat is particularly committed to release data with a high territorial detail. We invest on methodology and thematic research in order for these statistical details to be so flexible as to enable us to produce “variable-geometry” territorial information. Going beyond conventional administrative borders and adopting functionally-defined areas will make it indeed technically possible for us to design, each time, an ad hoc geographical perimeter, depending on the specific topic of interest.

Refining the territorial representativeness of statistical indicators – especially those covering income and poverty – is a shared priority also at the EU level. Thematic and methodological innovation greatly benefits from the activity of the existing international research networks. Istat is an active partner in various projects, and is carrying out, together with other NSIs and European Universities, the project MAKSWELL (MAKING Sustainable development and WELL-being frameworks work for policy analysis). MAKSWELL has already produced results in this specific field. Another relevant international project about well-being is GROWINPRO (GROWth, Welfare, INnovation, PROductivity): an international consortium, involving prestigious European universities, Istat and other NSIs, with the task of studying the determinants of sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

The strong synergy between the academic world and public statistical institutions arises from the common goal of providing, in addition to quantitative information, also visions and analyses apt to decipher an increasingly complex socio-economic reality. The outcomes of such an endeavor are visible in the publications of Istat, which - in addition to describing phenomena - are progressively oriented to propose ways of “understanding” them. The Bes Report is a perfect example of this philosophy.

Consistent with this approach, in this seventh edition of the Bes Report we have strengthened the analytical approach to measure how the selected well-being domains have evolved over time. We also have extended our territorial analysis, thereby including performance measures based upon the regional distribution of indicators. Whenever possible, we integrated gender-, age- and geographically-based analysis with data by educational attainment, in order to better describe how different population groups do differ in their well-being outcomes. The Report finally benefits from the analysis carried out in two special

sections of cross-cutting nature, which, respectively, focus on the well-being of the young segment of the population, and on the relationship between subjective well-being and other individual and context indicators.

To conclude, it is important to remember that national well-being goals represent an essential part in the process of achieving the Global Sustainable Development Goals, which accompany the 2030 UN Agenda. In this integrated perspective, and given the natural overlapping of these two frameworks, while publishing the Bes Report, Istat also releases an updated version of the SDGs indicators for Italy.

My wish is that this Report, and more generally all the activities carried out by Istat, may contribute to a better understanding of the complex and fast-changing world that surrounds us, thereby allowing the design and implementation of good, evidence-based, sustainable and equitable, public policies.

The President of Istat  
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