FOCUS

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN TUNE WITH THE TIMES:
FOR THEM THE CENSUS IS EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE

Around **13,000** public institutions are involved in the census. They include, specifically, all constitutional entities and entities of constitutional status, revenue agencies, administrative authorities, agencies providing market services, the Regions and autonomous Provinces, local authorities and other types of institutions such as Chambers of Commerce, regional agricultural development agencies, consortiums between public bodies, universities and research Establishments and Institutes, and professional associations.

Responses to the census must refer to the situation as of **31 December 2011**, the census reference date.

The census began on 26 July when the dedicated website went online at the following address: https://indata.istat.it/cis2011ipfase1 It contains the documentation and access to online completion of the electronic questionnaire, which constitutes the only way to complete and return the questionnaire.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the survey is to provide an accurate **statistical picture** of the structural and organisational peculiarities of the public sector in Italy, with particular attention to local units and decentralised branches.

To this end, Istat collects not only traditional information but also data concerning new issues of interest to the sector, such as sustainable governance/administration, ICT and means of local service provision.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire focuses attention on **modernisation processes** in public administration, in view of future challenges in the broader context of transformations in the economic and service system. Specifically, the questions it contains relate to the organisational structures of the various institutional and local units, human resources, the behaviour adopted by public institutions with regard to sustainable governance/administration, technological innovation and means of service provision.

The innovative feature of the census is without doubt the exclusively online **procedure for completing and returning** the questionnaire:

• a two-phase structure: the first for updating information on the general details of the institutions and acquiring a list of the local units belonging to each institution, the second for learning about the characteristics of the institutions and the local units belonging to them;

• continuous monitoring and management of operations for returning questionnaires;

• a survey network characterised by two geographical levels (national and regional);

• no enumerators, as the reporting units are assigned the roles of coordinating and supervising census operations within their own ambit.

PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES

The census commenced with the sending of an information letter signed by Istat's President, Enrico Giovannini, to the legal representatives of the institutions (for example ministers, mayors, secretaries-general or presidents), followed by Istat Circular no. 1 of 16 July 2012, signed by the Director of the Census Department, Andrea Mancini, containing the technological and methodological provisions and details for personalised access to the census system.
The census of public institutions is divided into two phases, each one distinct in terms of procedures and deadlines:

• the first phase began on **26 July** and ends on **20 September 2012**;

• the second begins on **1 October 2012** and ends on **20 December 2012**.

During the first phase each public institution is asked to complete an initial questionnaire in order to update general information about the institutional Unit contained in the pre-census list, to collect the names of the managers or officials responsible for coordinating the census survey and to acquire a list of the local units with the reference names of each of them.
During the second phase Istat will provide each manager or official assigned the task of coordinating the census survey with a more complex questionnaire, which has a two-form structure:

• a form for the institutional Unit asking for information about the institution as a whole;

• a form for the local Units asking for information about each of them.

The results will be published by the **second half of 2013**.