VOORBURG GROUP ON SERVICE STATISTICS

THIRTEENTH MEETING

THE INTERMEDIATE CENSUS ON ENTERPRISES.

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The 1996 intermediate census has two main aims:
- to check on the territory the quality of the business register by a *short form* questionnaire;
- to collect qualitative items on enterprises by a *long form* questionnaire.

The 1996 intermediate census has been conducted in two steps, varying the reference data: 31 December 1996 for the *short form* survey and 31 December 1997 for the *long form*.

The *short form* survey

The *short form* survey is carried out on several ways, according to the different external nets to which the enterprise is connected for administrative implementations (fiscal, security, etc.) and for the access to public services (electric net). The intermediate census has the purpose to check the information on economic active units and also to carry out a survey which supplies a wide information on the economical structure of the country. The short-form survey is the last operation to realize the Italian business register "the ASIA project".

The units are checked through four different techniques, in order to

preprinted character in order to correct possible errors or variations (writing also the date of such variations). The information collected with this survey has been reported in the ASIA register.

The short form survey, compared to the traditional census, should give the following advantages:
- a major coverage, thanks to the previous integration of administrative data;
- a minor burden for the enterprises, thanks to the use of innovative techniques of survey and check;
- a major timeliness, thanks to the telematic techniques of survey, check and data dissemination.

The *long form* survey

The *long-form* survey represents the prototype of the structural multipurpose surveys that can be realized each year or every two years. This survey can be considered additionally to the consolidated surveys on enterprises. ASIA updating and to the rotation of the enterprises can avoid the statistical burden to the same enterprises.

This questionnaire will be sent to the greater enterprise in each group of economic activity and region. A sample of smaller enterprises are added in order to get information on all size of enterprises. A complex net of interviewers in each municipality and interviewers at central office for recall the enterprises, if they don't answer, is organized.

In December 1998 about 350.000 questionnaire will be sent to the enterprises. The answers will return at ISTAT in six mounts. The publication is expected eight mounts later. It is necessary a lot of time for the registration, the coding and the control quality of the answers received.

The pilot survey has been performed in June 1998. The main results of pilot survey are:
- updating the business register, in order to know the last address where the enterprises are localized when interviewed,
- redesign the network of interviewers,
- redesign the questionnaire.

For the long-form survey a unique questionnaire has been prepared, both for industry and for services. A large number of information is required through this survey as follows :

- the use of technologies;
- professional training for their employment;
- scientific research and technological development;
- collaborations and agreements with other enterprises (in order to get better condition on prices when they purchase their input or sell their output, or in order to organize their production or products development - cooperation for scientific and technologic research);
- market of origin and destination of goods and services purchased and sold;
- usual or unusual customers;
- structure of employment by typology of contract and worked hours;
- services inputs from other enterprises.

The questionnaire is carried out using filter questions in order to avoid an excess of questions or questions concerning only a low number of enterprises. The main filter questions are:

- membership to group of enterprises
- availability of an environmental accounting
- enterprises interested in merger and demerger

All enterprises, which will answer positively to the filter questions, will receive an additional part of questionnaire.

The last section of the main questionnaire concerns the weight of the statistical burden.

Since the long-form survey is carried out one year later the short-form survey, it is necessary to ripropose the short-form survey in order to update the statistical business register (ASIA).

By the long-form survey is expected:

1. a greater coverage of medium-large sized enterprises fixing a minimum threshold, varying with sectors;
2. information also on small and very small sized enterprises scarcely investigated with other statistical surveys.