

11. The 2021 Census in Malta - Modernization and Innovation

Silvan Zammit, Malta

The theme characterizing the 2021 Census of Population and Housing (CPH) in Malta is inclusiveness since the census project purports to cover all groups in the population. The salience of the theme is reflected in the choice of the slogan: “Everyone Matters”.

The 2021 CPH will be marked by important innovations in terms of field operations, aiming for a significant improvement over previous censuses in terms of timeliness and data quality. More use of register data will be made at various stages, including planning, data collection and analysis, in line with the Maltese National Statistics Office’s objective to move towards a fully register-based census in the years to come.

For the first time, people have the option to fill in the census questionnaire through an online form. In a step towards a fully digitalized census, enumerators visiting households will record the information on tablet computers, rather than traditional paper questionnaires. Data collection by means of telephone will also be possible. This method of collection is considered necessary for this census round due to the unprecedented situation brought on by the ongoing pandemic. Forms and questionnaires will, however, still be made available in the traditional printed format to cover all possible exigencies of the households. Geocoding will also be used for field operations to optimize the allocation of enumeration areas. These changes are expected to bring more efficiency, as well as enhanced information security and a reduction in the reliance on and use of paper.

The enumeration process will include geocoding at single point reference and will allow the studying of census results on a 1 km² grid. This will allow a geospatial element at analysis stage, resulting in the compilation and publication of first ever geospatial census results by the National Statistics Office.