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## **CENSUS 2021 –Portuguese Data Collection experience**

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### ***Abstract***

The Population and Housing Censuses are fundamental statistical operations. The exhaustiveness of the collection and processing of Census data gives this statistical operation, which takes place every ten years, a unique role in the knowledge of the housing stock and the demographic, social and economic reality of the country, also producing essential information for investment decision-making by the public and private sectors. The execution of the 2021 Censuses comes after a rigorous analysis and assessment of the feasibility by Statistics Portugal, which defined a Contingency Plan in order to guarantee the quality of the Census execution and to avoid the risks for the population and the data collection structure that the operation entails in the current epidemiological context. This Contingency Plan includes, among other measures, the observance of a strict Public Health Protocol under the rules issued by the health authorities, a strategy that reinforces the option for collecting information through the internet and supporting population through a telephone line, and the strengthening of mechanisms for controlling fieldwork and validating the information collected in the context of a pandemic crisis.

In the 2021 Census and in order to minimize personal contacts with the population, Statistics Portugal, outlined a data collection strategy based on three phases: Phase I – Distribution - From April 5th, all households received a letter to respond to the 2021 Census (with a unique code and password) for preferential response through the internet (or telephone), distributed by the enumerators. The distribution of each letter was recorded in a mobile app that each enumerator had installed on their own mobile phone; Phase II – Response - The response to the 2021 Census began on April 19th, and the population was recommended to respond preferably by May 3rd; Phase III – Conclusion - It began on May 31st and from that date onwards the response resulted essentially from the door-to-door contact that the enumerator establish with all households that have not yet responded and make a final appeal to the response via the Internet or Telephone and, only in cases where this is not possible, do they collect the information directly by filling in the paper questionnaires.

With this approach, which we will be presented in more detail, at the end of two weeks we collected about 6.3 million households' responses (89.7%) and in the final the electronic response component received almost all of the responses: % Paper Response - 0.4%; % telephone response - 0.3%; % of electronic response - 99.3%.

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