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UNECE

Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Collection

COMMUNICATION PROCESS WITH RESPONDENTS THROUGHOUT INSTITUTIONS SURVEYS

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Work Objectives

Analyze the methods of communication with respondents of surveys concerning the Institutions

Surveys on Institutions are mainly conducted by web and involve Institutions with different characteristics: local institutions such as municipalities, provinces, regions or institutions operating in the social-health sector such as hospitals and schools or social-assistance centers.

Outline the various communication strategies used during data collection phase

- *Start up phase*
- *Fieldwork phase*
- *Recovery of non-responses phase*

Communication with respondents

*The role of respondent in a statistical process has changed from a data provider, obliged to submit data by law, to a **partner** for the system of official statistics.*

Dlugosz A., 2017

This type of relationship requires:

- *a good communication*
- *cooperation*
- *mutual trust*

Good communication is not just about providing respondents with information about their obligations and deadlines. Respondents need to be sure that data **really matters for statistics and community**.

Start up phase

How do we communicate the start of the survey to the respondents?

➡ The first step is to send an informative letter to the respondent with these characteristics:

- ✓ An essential text that focus attention on:
 - objectives
 - data acquisition procedures (link to the website, ID and password, IT equipment required)
 - deadline for sending questionnaire
 - channels to support the respondent
- ✓ Highlighting the importance of the **respondent's contribution**: his role as an active and not passive subject, stimulating his participation which is fundamental for the success of the survey.

Fieldwork Phase ^{1/2}

How do we communicate with respondents during the access phase to the questionnaire?

➔ Through a data acquisition website.

Survey on Institution's data are acquired by different data portal as:

- ✓ **GINO** for survey on social health service and social assistance and many others: text and graphic choices to facilitate access to the online questionnaire and its contents;
- ✓ **ARCAM** for survey on road accidents with injury to persons: it has been developed to offer ISTAT greater autonomy in terms of access, safety standards, automation of the annual planning and acquisition monitoring phase;
- ✓ **STARLAC** for survey on municipal master lists: this portal uses strict data quality controls, and it allows to send quickly and easily information;
- ✓ **INDATA** for survey of building permits: this portal increase the timeliness and quality of the statistical information produced and reduce the statistical disturbance.

Fieldwork Phase ^{2/2}

How do we support respondents during the data collection process?

➔ Using different methods according to the type of survey:

- ✓ ***Institutional email, telephone assistance***: for the the type of strictly confidential issue concerning the health surveys (*spontaneous abortion, voluntary interruptions of pregnancy*) and the surveys on social services (*women's shelters, anti-violence centers*);
- ✓ ***PEC***: an e-mail system that provides the sender with the certainty of sending and delivering messages (thanks to the receipts) with maximum security and the same legal value of the registered letter with acknowledgment of receipt (*for survey on building permits*);
- ✓ ***External Contact Center***. to facilitate communication and speed up response times to requests for assistance due to the large number of structures involved in survey.

Phase of recovery of non-responses

How do we stimulate the respondent's participation in the survey?

➔ Sending them reminders and notices during the survey.

- ✓ **Survey residential socio-assistance and social-health services:** up to two or more reminder letters were sent. The first reminder letter is usually sent around two or three weeks after the initial invitation; the second reminder letter is sent to all non-responding addresses, two to four weeks after the first reminder letter.
- ✓ **Surveys on building permits:** we send a reminder close to the deadline of the dispatch of the monthly supply (7 days before that date) and a shortly reminder after the expiration date (7 days after the deadline) and a last notice close to the final date to avoid incurring a penalty (14 days after the deadline of the supply) via PEC and mailbox of institutional e-mail.

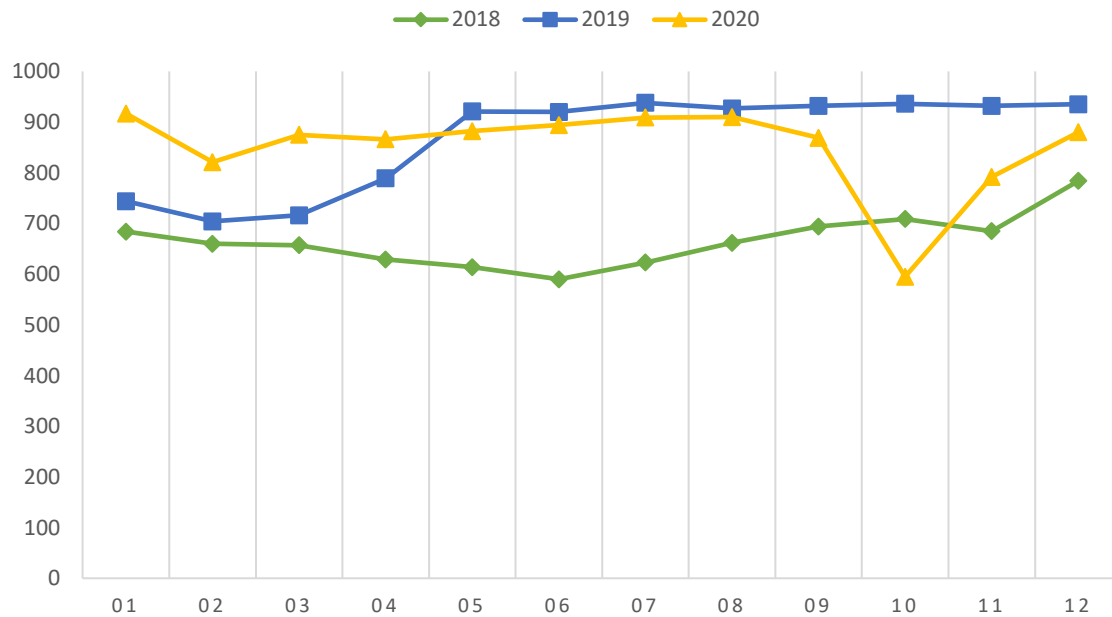


Sanctionability of the survey units is carried out at the end of the survey period and to implement this operation and the sending reminders, a standardized process has been developed to allows us to know in real time which municipalities are in default and which may be penalised.

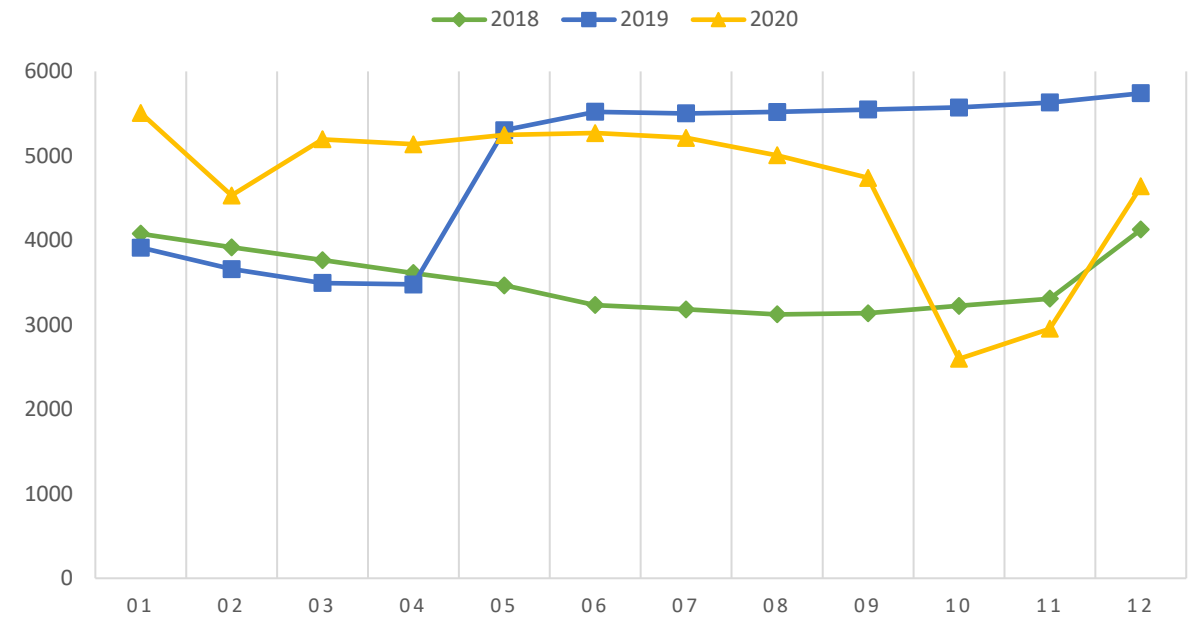
Survey on building permits (PDC)

The two graphs show an improvement in *response rate* recorded starting from May 2019, year and month in which we began to adopt the techniques of sending reminders to municipalities. If we observe the trends over time, we can also see that the system developed stabilize the data delivery process thanks to the use of this data processing and monitoring system. **The entire process aimed at acquiring greatest number of information and has led to a net decrease in the number of non-responses and units sanctioned.**

RESPONSE RATE PDC_RAP (IST-01675)



RESPONSE RATE PDC (IST-00564)



Future developments

How could we improve and develop new methods of communication and cooperation with respondents?

- ✓ Redesign of websites, improve information letters, establish studies on statistical call centres;
- ✓ Creating more effective communication through the website improving the visual aspect of the information (order of information, use of font colours, use of icons);
- ✓ Improving the text sent to non-respondents during the recovery phase to give the respondent greater motivation to fill in the questionnaire.

Thank you

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