

THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM (SISTAN)

The National Statistical System (SISTAN) was established by legislative decree No 322, 6th September 1989, (implementing art. 24 of the delegated Act No. 400/1988), that set out principles and guidelines for the reorganisation of public statistics.

The decree was the starting point for re-engineering national statistical activity, aimed at satisfying - on the one hand - the country's information needs and - on the other - at reducing redundancies caused by lack of co-ordination among producers.

The National Statistical System (SISTAN) is a network of National Statistical Authorities that provide official statistical information.

Within the frame of the National Statistical Program, about one thousand direct surveys or data elaboration projects - both national and local - are carried out every year.

The SISTAN assures the uniformity of direction, the homogeneity of used methods and the rationalization of the processes of official statistics through an organizational and functional coordination plan, involving the entire public administration at central, regional and local levels. The task of coordinating the SISTAN is statutorily held by ISTAT and its president is also the head of SISTAN. Together with ISTAT the other bodies belonging to the National Statistical System, namely their statistical offices, are: public bodies and agencies in charge of providing statistical information; central statistical offices of government's administrations; statistical offices of public bodies and private authorities (these last designated by law); statistical offices of Government's territorial offices; Chambers of Commerce; statistical offices of Autonomous Regions and Provinces; statistical offices of Provinces; statistical offices of principal towns; statistical offices of principal municipal cities, statistical offices of municipalities; statistical offices of small municipalities associated in partnership; statistical offices associated in partnership.

ISTAT is entrusted to rule SISTAN through the Committee for Policy and Coordination of Statistical Information (Comstat). Chaired by ISTAT President, Comstat is a corporate body composed by 21 members: 10 representatives of Public Administrations, one representative for the Regions, one representative of the Union of Italian Provinces (Upi), one representative of the Union of Chambers, three representatives of the National Association of Italian Municipalities (Anci), two representatives of Public Bodies, ISTAT General Director and two professors in statistics and economics. The Committee issues guidelines and policies for SISTAN offices, decides on the National Statistical Programme (PSN), upon proposal by ISTAT President.

SISTAN activity is supervised by the Commission for the Protection of Statistical Information (CPSI) which is an external, autonomous and independent body. In particular, the Commission supervises: the impartiality and completeness of statistical information, the quality of methodologies, the compliance of surveys with EU and international directives. The Commission, established within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, is composed of high-profile university professors, directors of statistical or research institutes and managers of public administrations and bodies, which do not belong to SISTAN.

Although the mentioned offices belong to different administrations, they share the common goal of providing the country with official statistical information. Therefore the assignment of SISTAN is to

ensure uniform policy, homogeneous organisation and rationalised information flows at central and local levels providing Italian and International bodies with official statistical information.

The provision of the official statistical information complies with the following principles: reliability, impartiality, pertinence, timeliness, confidentiality, efficiency and the utmost usability. From the organisational point of view, the System is based on the principles of autonomy, differentiation and appropriateness.

The National Statistical Programme (PSN) is SISTAN's tool for planning statistical activity of public interest; it covers a three-year period and is updated each year.

The PSN defines statistical surveys, data processing and planning studies which SISTAN offices and bodies intend to carry out to satisfy the country's information needs. In drawing up the program, great attention is given to its harmonisation with the programs of other international bodies, especially EU ones. The PSN is the outcome of a complex procedure which ensures scientific autonomy to surveys and the participation of all the subjects responsible to the production of public statistics.

The National Statistical Programme is composed of two parts: the first one, reports the lines that SISTAN follows in its activity, the aims that it wants to achieve and the tasks that it wants to realize in each statistical area in a three year period; the second part contains details for each activity.

PSN is the result of a work which, through the participation of all the responsible subjects, assures survey scientific autonomy and the guardianship of private subjects and agencies. It is formed by the contribution of quality groups to which user representatives and all the system bodies take part.

Fore more information:

<http://www.istat.it>