The Italian survey

Matteo Bartolomeo and Rita Canu

1 Description of the sample

The universe of Italian establishments has been derived from data collected by Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (ISTAT, the National Statistical Office) through the Censimento Intermedio dell’Industria e dei Servizi (Intermediary Census on Industry and Services) that has been recently published. The definition of the sample has been implemented with reference to the structure of industry and service sectors as they were at December 31st 1996.

The IMPRESS survey for Italy considered 8 cells, created according to 3 dimensions (see Table I): geographical location (North vs. Centre-South); size of the business (from 50 to 199 employees and 200 and more employees) and kind of activity (industry vs. service).

According to the Census, for the 8 cells considered in the IMPRESS survey, there are more than 23,000 establishments situated in Italy. Total employment is around 3.5 mln. More than 14,000 of them are active, at 31 December, 1996, in manufacturing (2.2 mln employees), while the number of the establishments active in the service sectors is around 9,000 with 1.3 mln employees.

Due to the limited size of most of Italian firms, the exclusion of firms with less than 50 employees has dramatically reduced the reference universe and therefore the sample: this represents just 0.6% of establishments active in the sectors considered. Employees working in establishments that are part of the universe considered by the IMPRESS survey are 26% of total employees in sectors taken into account (69% in electricity, water and gas distribution; but only 7% in construction and wholesale/retail trade).

The Italian sample has been also specified in terms of geographical location of the establishments considered. These have been divided in two different groups: North of Italy (Piemonte, Valle d’Aosta, Liguria, Lombardia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Emilia Romagna) and Centre-South of Italy (Toscana, Umbria, Marche, Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicilia, Sardegna). The distinction has been considered relevant for the well-known difference in the distribution of activities between the two geographical areas. Around 2/3 of innovative companies are located in just four regions of the North (Piemonte, Lombardia, Veneto, Emilia Romagna). Con-
sidering investments for innovation, 71% of them are also concentrated in the North. The result complies with similar findings of a survey conducted in 1985.

The geographical distinction between North and Centre-South, also underlines that 66% of establishments are located in the North, with quite a difference between industry (71%) and service (59%).

Also in terms of employment, the distribution among North and Centre-South follows a similar structure (56% north and 44% Centre-South).

In order to carry out the 400 interviews, a stratified sample has been extracted from the universe with a sampling fraction of around 0.017. The extraction has been implemented randomly from the Registro delle Imprese (Register of firms) updated in 2000. The definition of the activity code is normally carried out by the personnel of Chambers of Commerce (where the Registro delle Imprese is maintained) while the number of employees is declared by the firms themselves on a regular basis. These discrepancies, together with the fact that the data set, with data on the establishments, used for conducting the survey is updated on 31 December, 1998, has induced researchers to clean the final data base with interviews. 16 records have been deleted, thus reducing the total number of interviews (400) to 384. This difference then created some minor errors in the proportionality of the sample that required the attribution of weights as indicated in the right column of Table 1.

The total response rate has been close to 15%, relatively high in Italy for such a survey.