

Brief history of National Immigrant Survey 2007

NIS-2007 is another statistical operation within our system (number 30,319 in the Inventory of Statistical Operations) in which the INE has performed the role of implementing body, and which has been carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. The Action Programs from 2006 to 2008 of National Statistical Plan 2005-2008 already include the performance of this statistical operation in its different stages, and was subjected to the judgment of the Permanent Commission of the High Council on Statistics.

In addition to being a *standard* product, it is also an important novelty and has been accompanied by the technical cooperation with which the design was created and by the numerous difficulties it has had to confront. It is important to indicate that the technical initiative began with a tenacious and enthusiastic group of researchers from several universities, centred around the so-called Working Group for the Study of Population and Society, providing the first version of the Draft project and a first draft of the questionnaire, issues that were dealt with between the end of 2004 and the middle of 2005. The first key decision of the survey was to establish the reference population, and from the very beginning, the technical team and the INE leaned toward the definition of those persons born abroad as the operative definition of those, at some point in time, international immigrants and residents in Spain at the time of the survey.

From that moment on, the operation was completely integrated in the INE production system, and as the strategy to access the informants and their results were the greatest concern from the start, the corresponding pilot studies were developed (with 500 interviews each, in the provinces of Madrid, Málaga and Illes Balears) during the months of October-November 2005 and April-May 2006. Qualitative evaluations were also carried out regarding those parts of the questionnaire that were considered to be the most complex or sensitive. An enormous amount of education was extracted from the pilot tests to tackle the final study.

In the meantime, the institutional Cooperation Agreement was formalised in order to develop the studies (16 October 2006), as well as the debates with the statistics offices of the Autonomous Communities. The suggestions were numerous, one of the results of which was the request on behalf of three of them (Navarra, Illes Balears and Murcia) to expand the sample for their respective areas, which was accepted by the INE and included in the development of the studies.

The field work was carried out between November 2006 and February 2007, and due to the size of the questionnaire, it was administered via an electronic device carried by the agent in his/her personal interview.

Beyond the collection of information from the interviewees and the extraordinary cooperation received regarding the size of the questionnaire, the extension and complexity would imply enormous challenges for processing, at the heart of which is the data Detection and Automatic Imputation (DIA in Spanish) system. The number of variables and of logical conditions for consistency in a