



Submission to CSO

2021 Census of Population Questionnaire Content

**from the
Western Development Commission
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Introduction

The Western Development Commission welcomes the invitation for submissions on the Public Consultation on Questionnaire Content Census 2021. Outlined below are proposals for the inclusion of two questions in Census 2021.

The WDC (www.wdc.ie) is a statutory agency with responsibility for promoting economic and social development in the Western Region¹. One of the WDC's key roles is to advocate policy for the region, based on robust evidence and in doing this the WDC regularly analyses Census data. Of particular importance are the following variables; Population by area, Demographic results, Ages, Occupation and Industry, Migration, Education, Employment, Transport, Travel and Commuting.

WDC outputs which have drawn exclusively or heavily from recent Censuses include publications, WDC Board briefing papers, county profiles for WDC and Look West websites (www.wdc.ie, www.lookwest.ie) and general data analysis to support and inform policy development.

The WDC region does not correspond to NUTS 2 or NUTS 3 regional classifications, therefore the availability of county level data is critical to measuring the WDC Western Region. The Census is one of the few data sources which provides information at county and sub county levels and is therefore a very important source for assessing the economic and social situation of the Western Region.

The WDC proposes inclusion of the following two questions, explained in detail below.

1. Working from home/ e-working

Q1. Do you ever work from home?

A. If so, on average how many days per week? _____ No. of days

The purpose of the user need and description of the analysis required

Current Census data inadequate

A question is needed to more accurately measure the incidence of working from home. The need for this arises due to the inadequacy of the current Census question 'how you usually travel to work?' with one of the answers being 'work mainly at or from home'. This is limited as it only captures those that work from home most of the working week and excludes those who work from home one or two days per week, which some studies suggest is the most common pattern of working from home. For example:

- In 2016 a report², found that nearly one in four broadband users in rural Ireland use the internet at home in relation to their work and one third have remote access to their company network for work purposes³. An estimated 150,000 workers avoid commuting some or all of the time because they can connect to work remotely.

¹ Counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare.

² Amárach Research, 2016 <https://www.vodafone.ie/connected-futures/>

³ These e-Workers report that e-Working means they can avoid commuting to work, typically about two days a week. <https://www.vodafone.ie/connected-futures/>

- In 2015 a survey⁴ found that 59% of the working population now do some form of their work at home (e.g. check emails, bring work home etc).
- In 2014, a survey⁵ reported that 47% of Irish employees use the internet at home in relation to work, up from 45% in 2012.
- According to a survey conducted by Ericsson, 44% of Irish workers work from home once a month and 76% of companies anticipate more remote working in the next 2-3 years⁶.

Incidence rising but too hard to measure

What is clear from the Census is the incidence of working from home is rising. There were 94,955 persons who stated they worked 'mainly at or from home' in 2016. While this was still below the 2006 peak of 105,706, it represents an increase of 14 per cent on the 2011 figure of 83,326⁷. A more accurate baseline is needed for measuring trends.

The specific need for the data at a small area level

Ideally these data would be available at the lowest spatial level, subject to confidentiality constraints. At a minimum these data need to be available at county level. As the WDC region does not correspond to NUTS 2 or NUTS 3 regional classifications, the availability of county level data is critical to measuring economic and social change in the WDC Western Region.

The requirement for cross tabular analysis

Ideally the data on working from home would be available by

- Industry – the data already available⁸ indicates that working from home is more prevalent in some sectors than others.
- Occupation – the range of occupations that engage in working from home is very broad - childminders, home-based GPs, farmers , IT professionals.
- Employment Status– employment status will distinguish between employees and the self-employed
- Age – the data already available suggests different rates of working from home by age.
- Education levels – the extent to which there is variation by education levels may be related to speciality and levels of independent working.

Co-working spaces

Just as there has been a rise on working from home there is increasing availability of co-working spaces. It would be useful to have a measure of the incidence of this activity which is separate from working from home, or the office. It is appreciated that not every question sought can be asked, but in devising new questions it would be useful to try and capture as much relevant information as possible. For example, a supplementary question as follows would also be useful, or there may be alternative ways of integrating all possible answers in the one question.

Q1b. Do you ever work in a location other than your office or home? (e.g. co-working space) If so, on average how many days per week? _____ No. of days

⁴ Eir Connected Living Survey 2015 https://www.eir.ie/opencms/export/sites/default/content/pdf/pressreleases/eir-connected-living_survey.pdf 48% of workers specifically check work email at home, up from 42% in August 2014.

⁵ The Second UPC Report on Ireland's Digital Future https://www.virginmedia.ie/pdf/UPC_2014_report.pdf

⁶ Research cited in Department of Communications commissioned research for the National Broadband Plan.

See footnote 4. <http://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/PwCCostBenefitAnalysisSupplementaryReport.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp6ci/p6cii/p6noc/>

⁸ http://www.wdc.ie/wp-content/uploads/WDC_Policy-Briefing-no-7.pdf

2. Household renewable energy supply

Q. Does your accommodation connected to any form of renewable energy source?

Mark as many as apply

1. None
2. Solar panels
3. Wind turbine
4. Geothermal
5. Air Source Heat Pump
6. Ground Source Heat Pump
7. Wood Boiler
8. other- please state _____

The purpose of the user need and a description of the analysis that will be required

Current Census data inadequate

As data on household energy installations is limited (and renewable energy microgeneration does not appear to be covered under the Domestic Building Energy Ratings survey unless it is the main energy source) a question is needed to more accurately measure the incidence of domestic renewable energy installations. This is particularly important for planning renewable energy policy and understanding the incidence of re development and use at a domestic scale.

The specific need for the data at a small area level

Ideally these data would be available at the lowest spatial level, subject to confidentiality constraints. At a minimum these data need to be available at county level. As the WDC region does not correspond to NUTS 2 or NUTS 3 regional classifications, the availability of county level data is critical to measuring the WDC Western Region. The Census is one of the few data sources which provides information at county and sub county levels and is therefore a very important source for assessing the economic and social situation of the Western Region. This level of information would also be very important for local authority planning and development of local renewable energy use.

The requirement for cross tabular analysis

Ideally the data on renewable installations would be available by

- Type of accommodation
- Main form of central heating.
- Water and Sewerage connections

- Broadband connection
- Age
- Education levels

We hope that these suggestions are useful and will be taken on board. We would be happy to discuss any of the points raised. If you have any queries please feel free to contact us at 094 986 1441 or deirdrefrost@wdc.ie or helenmchenry@wdc.ie

Regards

Kind Regards



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