



Methods and Sources: Methodological Notes

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Banks and Financial Institutions: Branch Network

The report *Banks and Financial Institutions: Branch Network*, published yearly, contains structural information on the banking and financial system which, up to the December 2016 issue, was included in 'Statistical Bulletin – Structure and Operations of Banks and Other Financial Intermediaries'. Specifically, it comprises data on the number of financial intermediaries, branches and employees, broken down by geographical location and type of intermediary.¹ To facilitate the correct identification and interpretation of the tables, a map of the concepts illustrated in the report may be accessed using the following [link](#).

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¹ For further details on the content of the report, please contact statistiche@bancaditalia.it.

Notice to readers

The tables in the report in PDF format normally contain the data for the last two years. The complete time series and other data on the same phenomena are available in the [BDS database](#).

The data may be revised over time if corrections are submitted by the reporting intermediaries.

The information provided in the report *Banks and Financial Institutions: Branch Network*² regarding the number of active branches is based on a legal definition of whether a branch may be defined as such and considered active. The definition includes all the branches operated in Italy by banks listed in the Register of Banks that are not being wound up, but excludes representative offices. Owing to exceptions and special transitional arrangements, the number of active branches under this definition may differ from that resulting from 'Supervisory reports (statistical reports and Accounts Matrix reports)', which, to accommodate the operational needs of intermediaries and for a limited period, may include branches that from a legal standpoint are no longer active.

The data on the number of employees reported in the tables may not match the totals because the figures are rounded up to the nearest whole number (since June 2010 the number of employees has been reported with one decimal place).

As for the geographical aggregates, account is taken of the regions listed in Article 31 of the Italian Constitution. As regards provinces, up to September 2008 the situation as at 1 January 1996 was used for statistical continuity. Since October 2008 the breakdown has incorporated the newly established provinces identified in the [updates to Circular 154](#) (only in Italian).

Publication of the data

The report is published yearly, usually no later than 31 March. The data are those as at 31 December of the previous year. The time series in the BDS database are updated concurrently. The data reported in the PDF version of the report are aligned to the latest available on the date of publication and are not revised. Conversely, the data in the BDS database are revised if corrections are submitted by the reporting entities.

The date of publication is disclosed in advance in the Statistics Release Schedule published on the Bank of Italy's website (<https://www.bancaditalia.it/statistiche/calendario-pubblicazioni/calendario-pubblicazioni.html>). The date refers to the day on which the information will be made available in the BDS database; the report in PDF format normally follows within a few days.

The data on the number of branches provided in the report on *Banks and Financial Institutions: Branch Network* could differ from those published at a given moment in the Supervisory Registers and Lists, because the latter are continuously updated while the data in the BDS are static. To download the full list of Italian bank branches for a given period, log on to the [Supervisory Registers and Lists](#) web page and click on 'Branches'. For the most recent list, click on 'Download Page'.

Main methodological revisions

The data on the phenomena contained in the report 'Banks and financial institutions' for dates prior to 31 December 2015 have been incorporated into the tables of the BDS, at various levels of detail depending on the availability of the relevant information. Previous data, which are not included in the tables, are in any event available in the BDS database under 'Tables no longer updated –

² The title of the report will in some cases be abbreviated to *Banks and Financial Institutions* throughout this publication.

Banks and Branches’, which can be accessed from the content contained in the ‘Statistical Bulletin – Structure and Operations of Banks and Other Financial Intermediaries’.

Table 1 summarizes the main statistical and methodological innovations that were introduced and the changes that were made to the definitions of the phenomena under observation.

Table 1 - Timeline of the main methodological revisions, by month and scope³

Date of the methodological revision ⁴	Scope	Description
January 2005	Classification by type of bank	The ‘Central credit and refinancing institutions’ category was eliminated and merged with the ‘Public limited (Spa) banks’ category.
June 2007	Classification by bank size	The classification by bank size was revised and, consequently, so were the relevant time series, which were reconstructed backwards for the previous three years. The break caused by the adoption of new classification criteria therefore lies between 2004 and 2005.
November 2007	Activities performed by securities firms	The transposition of Directive 2004/39/EC on markets in financial instruments (MiFID) and the implementing Legislative Decree 164/2007, which entered into force on 1 November 2007, widened the range of investment services that may be offered by authorized providers. As a result, two new types of investment services, namely, investment advice and the management of multilateral trading facilities (MTFs), were added to the list of activities performed by securities firms.
December 2008	Technical standards for supervisory statistical reports	Bank of Italy Circular No. 272/2008 (Accounts Matrix) redesigned the technical standards for the supervisory statistical reports submitted by banks.
September 2009	Securitization firms	Decree 29/2009 issued by the Ministry of Economy and Finance provided that securitization companies were no longer obliged to enter the register of authorized intermediaries pursuant to Article 107 of the Consolidated Law on Banking. In this connection, the number of securitization companies fell sharply between June and September 2009.
June 2010	Number of employees	Since this date, the number of employees has been reported with one decimal place. The data in the tables may not match the totals because the figures have been rounded up to the nearest whole number.
December 2011	Payment institutions	For the data referring to December 2011, the table on financial companies includes the number of payments institutions.
September 2013	Electronic money institutions (ELMIs)	For the data referring to September 2013, the table on financial companies includes the number of electronic money institutions.
December 2014	Main activity of financial intermediaries	The table on financial companies now includes ‘bad finance’ as a separate item, which used to be included under ‘factoring’ by convention.
January 2015	Classification by bank size	The classification by bank size was updated.
May 2016	Single Register	Since the reform of Title V of the Consolidated Law on Banking enacted through Legislative Decree 141/2010, the financial companies operating under Articles 106 and 107 of the old version of the aforementioned law have been included in a Single Register, and the old specialized registers have been discontinued.

³ Note that the revisions retroactively affect only the time series published in the BDS database; no updates are made to the report in PDF format after its publication.

⁴ When the date of the methodological revision does not coincide with the reference date included in the publication, the break in the time series is visible in the first subsequent release period. For example, for the new tables that are updated yearly, a revision made in April 2017 will be visible for the first time in the yearly data published in December 2017.

Data confidentiality

The Bank of Italy takes all the measures necessary to ensure the data are published in aggregate form so that they may not be traced back in any way to the individual reporting entities. For the report on *Banks and Financial Institutions*, this means that any published data must be drawn from at least three reporting entities.

This rule does not apply to cases in which the reporting entities that could be identified agree to the publication of their individual data and to the information obtained from the Supervisory Registers and Lists.

Sources and legislation

The information contained in the report *Banks and Financial Institutions* draws on the periodic reports that banking and financial intermediaries must submit to the Bank of Italy as mandated by law, namely:

- Supervisory reports;
- The intermediaries' master datasets

Furthermore, ISTAT administrative data on the Italian population by province of residence is used.

1. Supervisory reports

Banks must submit supervisory reports to the Bank of Italy pursuant to Article 51 of the Consolidated Law on Banking (Legislative Decree 385/1993).

On the basis of the reporting standards and according to the notified schedule, intermediaries must submit information, normally consisting of data on flows and end-of-period stocks, regarding balance-sheet items, transactions (e.g. the technical form they take, the type of instruments being traded or managed, the original and residual maturity and the currency) and counterparts (e.g. their location and the type of activities they perform), as well as additional elements useful for analysing the different technical profiles (e.g. concentration of lending, structure of funding, exposures abroad and lending relations displaying anomalous trends).

2. Supervisory Registers and Lists

The data on the banks and financial intermediaries supervised by the Bank of Italy and on the activities they are authorized to carry out are taken from the registers and lists maintained by the Bank of Italy or Consob in accordance with the law. Namely:

- Pursuant to Article 13 of Legislative Decree 385/1993, the Bank of Italy enters in a special register the banks authorized in Italy and the branches that EU banks have established on Italian territory,
- Pursuant to Article 19 of Legislative Decree 58/1998, Consob, in consultation with the Bank of Italy, authorizes securities firms (SIMs) to provide investment services. Pursuant to Article 20 of the same legislative decree, Consob enters securities firms in a dedicated register and gives notice of it to the Bank of Italy,
- Up to 12 May 2016, pursuant to Article 107 of Legislative Decree 385/1993, the Ministry of Treasury, now the Ministry of Economy and Finance, in consultation with the Bank of Italy and Consob, set objective criteria to identify the financial intermediaries that had to enter the special register maintained by the Bank of Italy. The criteria centred around the

activities performed, size and the debt-to-equity ratio. On 13 May 2016, pursuant to the

reformed version of Title V of the Consolidated Law on Banking enacted through Legislative Decree 141/2010, a Single Register was established for the entities operating in the financial sector, and the old special register for companies operating under Article 107 of the old version of the Consolidated Law on Banking was discontinued,

- Pursuant to Article 35 of Legislative Decree 58/1998, the Bank of Italy, in consultation with Consob, authorizes asset management companies (SGRs) to provide services relating to the collective management of savings and to individual portfolio management. Pursuant to Article 36 of the same legislative decree, the Bank of Italy enters asset management companies in a dedicated register,
- Pursuant to Article 44 of Legislative Decree 58/1998, the Bank of Italy, in consultation with Consob, authorizes the establishment of open-end investment companies (OIECs, known in Italian as SICAVs); those authorized in Italy are entered in a dedicated register maintained by the Bank of Italy, pursuant to Article 45 of the same legislative decree.

Glossary

Reporting entity

The entity submitting the reports from which the published data are drawn. This includes: banks, securities firms (SIMs), asset management companies (SGRs), the financial companies operating under Article 107 of the Consolidated Law on Banking (Legislative Decree 385/1993) up to 12 May 2016 and included in the Single Register from 13 May 2016 onwards, payment institutions and electronic money institutions. The tables contain data referring to one or more types of reporting entities.

As regards banks, the following classifications apply.

A) SIZE OF BANKS. Banks are grouped into five classes according to their size: major, large, medium, small and minor. Originally the classification was based on a five-point centred average of the quarterly values of total assets, assigning a weight equal to 1 to the fourth quarters of 2005 and 2006, and equal to 2 to the first, second and third quarter of 2005.

In January 2015 the classification was updated using data on the average total assets for the three quarters comprising the fourth quarter of 2014 and the first and second quarter of 2015.

In January 2018 the classification was updated using data on the average total assets for the three quarters comprising the fourth quarter of 2017 and the first and second quarter of 2018.

In January 2022 the classification was updated using data on the average total assets for the three semesters comprising the second semester of 2020 and the second semester of 2021.

The criteria used to place banks in one of the five classes were the following:

- major banks: average total assets greater than €60 billion;
- large banks: average total assets ranging from €26 billion to €60 billion,
- medium-sized banks: average total assets ranging from €9 billion to €26 billion,
- small banks: average total assets ranging from €1.3 billion to €9 billion,
- minor banks: average total assets less than €1.3 billion.

The time series given in the tables showing the breakdown by size have as a rule been reconstructed backwards for the previous three years (see the 'Additional information' in *Statistical Bulletin*, No, 2,

2007).

In the case of mergers or takeovers, the resulting entity is assigned to the largest size class to which at least one of the constituent banks belonged. If banks cease their activity for other reasons, they are classified according to the last reports they submitted to the Bank of Italy. Finally, newly established banks are classified according to the average total assets listed in the first reports submitted to the Bank of Italy.

It is worth noting that the size class may only change in composition as a result of the establishment of new entities or of mergers and takeovers. Pending a revision of the classification, the fact that a bank moves above or below the threshold values does entail its relocation to another class.

B) INSTITUTIONAL CATEGORY OF BANKS. This classification mostly follows the one adopted in the Consolidated Law on Banking: public limited (SpA) banks, cooperative (*popolari*) banks, mutual banks (BCCs), central credit institutions and refinancing institutions. In January 2005 the 'Central credit and refinancing institutions' category was merged into the 'Public limited (SpA) banks' category.

Finally, please note that the number of intermediaries belonging to the "major banking groups" is calculated on the basis of the list of groups reported in the note to the relevant table published in the Statistical Database.

North-West	Piedmont, Valle d'Aosta, Liguria and Lombardy.
North-East	Trentino Alto Adige, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Emilia Romagna.
Centre	Tuscany, Marche, Umbria and Lazio.
South	Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria.
Islands	Sicily and Sardinia.
Branch location	Geographical area (region, province or municipality) in which reporting intermediaries establish branches, at which the records of transactions are kept.
Number of banks by location of headquarters	Number of banks with headquarters in the province.

**Number of banks with branches
In territory**

Number of banks with at least one active branch in territory. The Number of banks with local branches may be less than the Number of banks by location of headquarters since some banks operating, and listed in the Single Register,

may not have physical branches as they only conduct business online or use other banks' branch networks.

Number of SIMs	Number of securities investment firms (SIMs) authorized to conduct at least one of the activities listed in Table TDB20210.
Number of SGRs	Number of asset management companies (SGRs) that have set up an open-ended securities investment fund incorporated under Italian law.
Number of financial companies	Number of financial companies from the source 'Supervisory reports'; this can differ temporarily, owing to derogations and specific transitional situations, from that taken from the source 'Supervisory Registers and Lists'.
Number of payment institutions	Number of Italian or foreign payment institutions with a branch in Italy.
Number of IMELs	Number of Italian e-money institutions (IMELs).
Municipalities served by banks	Number of municipalities in which at least one bank branch is present.
Number of active branches	<p>Number of branches that conduct front-office activities either exclusively or partially. This includes all the branches operated in Italy by banks listed in the Register of Banks that are not being wound up, but excludes representative offices.</p> <p>The number of active branches reported in the Supervisory Registers and Lists follows a legal criterion to define whether a branch may be defined as such and be considered active. Owing to exceptions and special transitional arrangements, the number of active branches thus obtained may differ from the figure resulting from supervisory reports (statistical reports and Accounts Matrix reports), which take into account the operational needs of intermediaries, such as that of keeping certain branches active for short periods of time even when they are deemed obsolete from a legal point of view.</p>
Number of employees	Number of employees with whom the reporting bank has entered into a formal employment relationship. The data published do not include employees seconded to the reporting bank by head office (for Italian branches of foreign banks), by parent companies and direct or indirect subsidiaries or by other entities. Nor do they include employees of the reporting bank seconded to their own foreign branches, to parent banks and direct or indirect subsidiaries or to other entities.