

Short-term statistics on business demography

Methodology and operational lines



October 2026

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Overview; Objectives and Starting Elements

The experimental statistics *Short-term statistics on business demography* has emerged out of the need for more frequent information on phenomena occurring within entrepreneurial dynamism, as well as how they may be characterised through classification variables, economic activity, size, or socio-demographic aspects of self-employed workers.

This operation complements the role of the DIRCE [Central Business Directory] system as a source of information on the business fabric in Spain. So far, the main statistical analyses in this field have been structural in nature, considering both a static (a fixed point in time) and dynamic perspective (annual flows). These new initiatives focus on the production of short-term indicators, on a quarterly basis.

The production cycle of the DIRCE will continue to be developed on an annual basis, generating the system of interconnected statistical unit frameworks. This working model thus ensures compliance with regulatory commitments at the European level and the needs of national users regarding sampling frameworks. The DIRCE will continue to be the basis for generating all operations falling within the domain of *Business Demography*, in adherence with the current SBS [Structural Business Statistics] Regulation and the future EBS [European Business Statistics].

The aim is now about leveraging the experience gained so as to meet the growing demands for entrepreneurial dynamism in the short term. Although full consistency with the indicators traditionally obtained on Harmonised Business Demography has not been attained, the aim is for them to help provide value to the currently available statistical database, especially in the current context.

The operation focuses on two populations of interest: one dedicated to employer companies and another dedicated to self-employed individuals, including various data series on stocks each quarter and the flows that occurred between successive quarters. The coverage of economic activities is identical to that used for the Statistical Exploitation of the DIRCE. This means that agricultural, livestock and fishing activities, administrative services of the Central, Autonomous and Local Administration, activities of households employing domestic staff, and Extraterritorial Organisations are excluded.

I Quarterly Employer Company Demographics

1 Characteristics

This initiative takes an approach to the international methodology on *Employer Demography*, but incorporates the short-term component. It focuses on the population of Legal Units with employment carrying out a range of activities consistent with the coverage published in the DIRCE Statistical Exploitation.

Since an 18-month period has been established internationally for the domestic production of the indicators related to the previous methodology, a simplified version of that methodology will obviously be applied for the production of these indicators.

2 Basic information sources

Two main sources are used:

- **Social Security Contribution Account Records.** Considers the set of Accounts with at least one employee registered on a given reference date. Includes information related to the following Social Security Regimes:
 - General Regime
 - Special Maritime Regime
 - Special Regime for Coal Mining
 - Health Care Agreements

The INE usually receives this source at different times over the course of a calendar year. For this project, four monthly databases have been used to contain information on legal units with employees as of 31 December, 31 March, 30 June, and 30 September. Each Social Security Contribution Account contains identifying data of the responsible Legal Unit.

3 Treatments and outputs

None of the above sources are used directly. In line with the experience gained from the DIRCE production cycle, a specific programme of treatments and improvements to the quality of the primary data has been designed.

3.1 RECORD OF CONTRIBUTION ACCOUNTS

The main treatments focus on a macro analysis, micro improvements of core variables, and transformation of the elementary unit.

- *Macro analysis.* Elimination of Accounts with zero employees, adjustment of coverage by activity, and generation of aggregates by number of employees. A comparative analysis is made with previous periods.
- *Micro improvements of core variables.* Especially aimed at the NIF [tax ID number] identifier (validity control, incorporation of valid identifiers based on DIRCE information, standardisation, changes in legal form, etc.). Contrast of CNAE

[National Classification of Activities] codes against the official listing and incorporation of valid codes based on DIRCE information. Contrast of geographic codes against the INE Nomenclator and incorporation of valid codes through support from complementary variables (postal code or even postal address text).

- *Transformation.* Once the previous processes have been carried out, a database is generated containing information about Employer Legal Units (n:1 relationships). The variables associated with this new unit are generated by procedures already tested in the DIRCE. For each time reference considered, *individualised information about Legal Units with employees at the end of the period* is produced.

3.2 OUTPUT: DYNAMIC DATABASE ON EMPLOYER LEGAL UNITS

A database is generated on employer units with longitudinal information related to the different observed quarters. It is maintained through the integration of the available retrospective information and new files received, once its improvement programme is completed. It is the reference for the extraction of indicators and aggregates that are identified in the dissemination plan.

4 Demographic events

The starting point taken is 1 January 2026. On that reference date, the population of Employer Legal Units is generated. Over the course of the successive quarters, the following categories are identified:

- **Entries of employer legal units in the quarter.**- Set of Legal Units that did not have employees at the beginning of the quarter (not listed in the population of Employer Legal Units), have hired workers and still have employees at the end of the quarter.
- **Remainings of employer legal units in the quarter.**- Legal Units with employees at the beginning and end of the quarter.
- **Re-entries of employer legal units in the quarter.**- Legal Units with employees at the beginning of the previous quarter, but without employees at the beginning of the current quarter. They have hired workers over the course of the quarter and continue to employ them at the end of the quarter. This occurrence begins to be identified starting in the second quarter of 2026.
- **Exits of employer legal units in the quarter.**- Employer Legal Units at the beginning of the quarter that have lost their employees during the same period.
- **Cohort of Employer Legal Units.**- Set of units with employees at a given date. It will be used as the baseline population for its monitoring over time and detection of survivals. For example, the cohort as of 1 July 2026 is the set of units with employees at the end of the second quarter, regardless of their demographic status (Entries, Remainings, or Re-entries).
- **Survivals of employer legal units.**- Each cohort is monitored over time. Legal units that continue to have employees at the end of each successive quarter are considered survivals in that quarter.

The occurrence of Entries and Exits does not necessarily mean that the legal entity has been established/dissolved or has been involved in any process involving a redistribution of production factors (merger, absorption, etc.). *Employment* is the determining factor in identifying the demographic flow.

5 Classification variables

The populations that make up the different demographic events will be broken down into the following variables:

- **Main activity.**- According to the National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE 2025). In the process of transformation to a *Legal Unit*, a hierarchy of CNAE codes is implemented according to the employment registered in their Social Security Contribution Accounts. The main activity of the Legal Unit is the one with the highest number of employees.
- **Wage Earner Stratum.** - In the same process of transformation, the employment registered is grouped in all the Contribution Accounts of each Legal Unit. The following groupings have been adopted: 1 to 5, 6 to 9, 10 to 99, 100 to 249, 250 and over.
- **Geographical codes.**- The location of the Contribution Account with the highest number of workers is taken for each Legal Unit. The dissemination plan features various levels of detail, including the municipal level.
- **Age range.**- Identical procedure, considering the age of the company from the legal unit's start of economic activity in the following categories: Less than 5 years, 5 years and over.

6 Dissemination plan

The results generated for each quarter are structured into four series

- **Series 1: Comparative tables of demographic events.** Allows for an analysis of how the demographic categories develop from a base quarter throughout the following quarter. For each calendar year, four tables are generated, broken down nationally and by Autonomous Community.
- **Series 2: Survivals of employer unit cohorts.** Each identified cohort is monitored over the next four quarters, with the survivals (aggregate and rate) identified in each period. Alternatively, an analysis can be made of the rate of personnel loss over time and the factors contributing to this phenomenon. Survivals are broken down territorially at the national level, by autonomous community and province. Aggregates are also classified for each geographical area into two criteria, combining the classification variables:
 - Main activity (CNAE Division) and Age range
 - Wage earner stratum and Age range
- **Series 3: Dynamism of economic activities.** The starting point is taken as the total set of units at the beginning of the year, distributed by activity. For each CNAE Division, the flows (Entries + Re-entries, Remainings, and Exits) occurring in the

successive quarters of the year are calculated. This information is broken down at the national level and by province.

- **Series 4: Municipal indicators.** This information is provided in map-based format. The following indicators have been generated:
 - **Net growth rate.** Ratio where the numerator is Entries + Re-entries – Exits and the denominator is the total stock of units, Entries + Re-entries + Remainings + Exits.
 - **Entry Rate.** Ratio where the numerator is Entries and the denominator is the Stock of Units.
 - **Exit Rate.** Ratio where the numerator is Exits and the denominator is the Stock of Units.

II Quarterly Demographics of Self-Employed Workers

1 Characteristics

This initiative addresses the quarterly dynamic analysis of individuals registered in the Register of Self-Employed Workers. The target population is the total set of Affiliates to the different self-employed regimes in the Social Security system: Special Regime for Self-Employed Workers (RETA) and Maritime Workers.

The population considered is understood in a broad sense and includes all individuals who are legally affiliated with the above regimes and engage in a range of activities consistent with the coverage published in the DIRCE Statistical Exploitation.

2 Basic information sources

One source used is the **Social Security Register of Self-Employed Workers (RETA)** in its Spanish initials), which the INE regularly receives at various points throughout a calendar year. For this project, four monthly databases have been created containing information on individuals registered as of 31 December, 31 March, 30 June, and 30 September. From a temporal point of view, this source is completely consistent with the one used in the first project.

Another source is the **Register of Inhabitants**, an administrative record that lists the residents of each municipality with identifying information. This database is available at the INE and is the source from which the socio-demographic information on self-employed workers is drawn.

3 Treatments and outputs

In line with the experience gained from the DIRCE production cycle, the main treatments designed for the RETA register focus on macro analysis and micro-improvements in core variables.

- *Macro analysis.*- Removal of records that were not registered at the end of the reference period, adjustment of coverage by activity, generation of aggregates by activity, and comparative analysis with previous periods.
- *Micro-improvements in core variables.*- Especially aimed at the NIF-DNI [Tax ID] identifier (standardisation and validity check). Contrast of CNAE [National Classification of Activities] codes against the official listing and incorporation of valid codes based on DIRCE information. Contrast of geographic codes against the INE Nomenclator and incorporation of valid codes through support from complementary variables (postal code or even postal address text).

For each monthly file processed at the four time of the year, *individualised information is produced about self-employed workers registered at the end of the period.*

The output generated after applying the previous treatments is a dynamic database on self-employed workers with longitudinal information relating to the different quarters observed. It is maintained through the integration of the available retrospective information and new files received, once its improvement programme is completed. It is

the reference for the extraction of indicators and aggregates that are identified in the dissemination plan.

4 Demographic events

The starting point of this project is set as 1 January 2026. As of that reference date, the population of self-employed workers registered is generated. Over the course of the successive quarters, the following categories are identified:

- **New Entries of self-employed individuals in the quarter.**- Natural persons not registered at the beginning of the quarter and registered in the RETA file at the end of the quarter.
- **Remainings of self-employed individuals in the quarter.**- Natural persons registered in the RETA file at the beginning and end of the quarter.
- **Re-entries of self-employed individuals in the quarter.**- Natural persons registered in the RETA file at the beginning of the previous quarter, not detected at the beginning of the current quarter but detected again at the end of the quarter. This occurrence begins to be identified starting in the second quarter of 2026.
- **Exits of self-employed individuals in the quarter.**- Natural persons registered in the RETA file at the beginning of the quarter, but who deregister during the same period.
- **Cohort of self-employed individuals.**- Group of individuals registered in the RETA file, used as the initial population for their monitoring over time and survival detection. For example, the cohort as of 1 July 2026 is the set of registered individuals at the end of the first quarter, regardless of their demographic status (Entries, Remainings, or Re-entries).
- **Survivals of self-employed individuals.**- Each cohort is monitored over time. Those who remain registered in the RETA file at the end of each successive quarter are considered survivals for that quarter.

5 Classification variables

The populations that make up the different demographic events will be broken down into the following variables:

- **Main activity.**- According to the National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE 2025).
- **Sex.** - Included based on information from the Register.
- **Age range.**- Identical procedure, considering the following categories: Under 30, 30 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59, 60 and over.
- **Geographical codes.**- Taken from the address listed in the RETA file. The dissemination plan features various levels of detail, including the municipal level.

6 Dissemination plan

The results generated for each quarter are structured into four series

- **Series 1:** Comparative tables of demographic events. Allows for an analysis of how the demographic categories develop from a base quarter throughout the following quarter. For each calendar year, four tables are generated, broken down nationally and by Autonomous Community.
- **Series 2:** Survivals of self-employed individual cohorts. Each identified cohort in a given base quarter is monitored over the next four quarters, with the survivals (aggregate and rate) identified in each period. Alternatively, an analysis can be made of the rate of personnel loss over time and the factors contributing to this phenomenon. Survivals are broken down territorially at the national level, by autonomous community and province. Aggregates are also classified for each geographical area into two criteria, combining the classification variables:
 - Main activity (CNAE Division) and sex
 - Age range and sex
- **Series 3:** Dynamism of economic activities. The starting point is taken as the total set of self-employed individuals at the beginning of the year, distributed by activity. For each CNAE Division, the flows (Entries + Re-entries, Remainings, and Exits) that occurred in the successive quarters of the year are calculated. This information is broken down at the national level and by province.
- **Series 4:** Municipal Indicators. This information is provided in map-based format. The following indicators have been generated:
 - **Net growth rate.** Quotient where the numerator is Entries + Re-entries – Exits and the denominator is the total stock of self-employed, Entries + Re-entries + Remainings + Exits.
 - **Entry Rate.** Ratio where the numerator is Entries and the denominator is the Stock of Units.
 - **Exit Rate.** Ratio where the numerator is Exits and the denominator is the Stock of Units.