1. Main features of the 2002 census

The following are the main features of the 2002 census:

- **It is the first census of the new millennium**
  
  The 2002 Census is the first to be covered in the new millennium. Commencing with 1841, censuses were held every ten years up to and including 1911. The ten year cycle was resumed with the 1926, 1936 and 1946 censuses. Commencing with 1951 censuses have been held every five years. This five-year periodicity was broken in 1976 with the cancellation of the census planned for that year due to budgetary cutbacks. A census containing 6 questions was held in 1979. The five-year periodicity was again broken when the 2001 Census was postponed until 2002 by the Government acting on the advice of the expert group on Foot and Mouth.

- **It also includes questions on housing**
  
  Irish censuses are generally held in years ending in “1” and “6”. Mid-decade censuses (i.e. those ending in “6”) cover questions relating to individuals only while censuses held in years ending in “1” (including the 2002 Census) cover housing characteristics in addition to personal questions.

- **2002 population likely to be the highest since 1871**
  
  The CSO estimated the population to be 3.84 million in April 2001. With births exceeding deaths by about 20,000 each year and with net inward migration over the past number of years the population for April 2002 could be as high as 3.9 million. The last census when the population exceeded 3.8 million was in 1881 when the recorded population was 3.87 million.

- **New questions being asked**
  
  A census pilot test was carried out in September 1999. Based on the findings of this test and following a Government decision a number of new questions were added to the 2002 Census. These include:
  
  - PC ownership and access to the Internet
  - Nationality
  - Membership of the Irish Traveller Community
  - Disability (2 questions)
  - Time of leaving home to go to work, school or college and time taken
  - Third level qualifications held
  - Providing regular unpaid help for a friend or a family member
  - Labour market participation according to International Labour Office recommendations.
In addition a limited number of questions are asked of persons who are usually resident in the household but who are absent on Census Night.

- **Layout of census form different from previous censuses**

  The census form has been altered radically compared with previous censuses. The questionnaire to be used in the 2002 census is a 24-page booklet catering for 6 persons in each household (3 pages per person). If there are more than 6 persons present on Census Night then a continuation form catering for a further 6 persons should be used. The form has been redesigned with scanning in mind. When the completed census forms are returned to CSO they will be guillotined and scanned and the information on them recognised using up to date recognition technology. Extensive use has been made of tick-boxes while responses, which require information to be written in (e.g. occupation, industry), make use of constrained boxes in which to provide the relevant texts.

## 2. Who conducts the census?

The census is being conducted as usual by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The CSO is an independent Office established in 1949. It operates under the aegis of the Department of the Taoiseach to guarantee its statistical independence and the confidentiality of the data it collects.

The independence of the Office and data confidentiality were reinforced by the Statistics Act, 1993 which constituted the CSO as a statutory body in the Civil Service. The public can therefore rest assured that the information they provide will be treated as strictly confidential by the CSO. It will only be used for statistical purposes, and the results will be prepared and disseminated in a fair and impartial manner.

A team of approximately 4,400 temporary field staff recruited and trained by the CSO will carry out the census field operation. The team comprises 5 Liaison Officers, 35 Regional Supervisors, 350 Field Supervisors and 4,000 Census Enumerators. The Census Enumerators will deliver and collect the census forms and will provide any assistance, which the public may need. All Census Enumerators will carry ID cards.

## 3. Who should complete the census form?

The information requested on the census form must be provided by:

- The householder or any adult member of the household present on the night of Sunday 28 April 2002.

- The person in charge of a communal establishment (i.e. a hotel, guesthouse, hospital, barracks, etc.).

- The person in charge of any vessel in Irish territorial waters at midnight on Sunday 28 April 2002.
4. Who should be covered?

Everyone who spends Census Night in the country is covered in the census. Furthermore, persons are covered where they spend Census Night.

The census form should cover every person who passes the night of Sunday 28 April 2002 in the household, communal establishment or vessel or who arrives on the morning of Monday 29 April 2002 not having been enumerated elsewhere.

The detailed information (Q1 to Q36) appropriate to every person in the household has to be provided by the householder or any adult member of the household present on Census Night.

The person in charge of a communal establishment is responsible for ensuring that everyone who passes Census Night in the establishment completes an individual form.

REMEMBER

INCLUDE

All persons alive at midnight on Sunday 28 April 2002;

Persons staying temporarily in the household, communal establishment or vessel;

EXCLUDE

Persons who are normally resident if they are absent from the household on the night of 28 April 2002 (e.g. spouse on a business trip to another part of the country or abroad);

Babies born after midnight on 28 April 2002.

5. Asylum seekers

Because the census covers everyone who is present in the State on census night then by definition asylum seekers who are present must be enumerated. The census makes no distinction based on whether a person is an asylum seeker or not. Indeed, it is very important to emphasise that from a census perspective everyone counts equally on census day.

However, it has to be borne in mind that some asylum seekers may have sensitivities about providing some of the information requested on the census form, particularly country of birth, nationality, country of last previous residence and year of taking up residence in the State. These fears can be allayed by emphasising that no individual information collected for census purposes is passed on to any other Government Department or outside agency. Furthermore, the detailed results, which will be published, will not disclose any information which might potentially identify any individuals, whether they are asylum seekers or not. On the contrary, the published
information will be beneficial to immigrant groups to enable them to assess their socio-economic conditions and to facilitate targeted employment policies and programs.

Bearing in mind that some asylum seekers may have genuine difficulties in understanding the English language version of the forms it has been decided, in addition to providing an Irish language version of every form, to translate the main household form into the most common languages used i.e. Albanian, French, Russian, Polish and Romanian. A multilingual card is also provided in the same languages to enable the enumerator to introduce herself where language difficulties may arise. The translated forms (apart from Irish) are not for completion. They are merely an aid to completing the English language version of the form.

6. People who are away from home on Census Night

While persons are enumerated where they spend Census Night, an additional section comprising 8 questions has been included on pages 22 and 23 of the household form to gather basic information in relation to persons who are temporarily away from home on Census Night whether elsewhere in Ireland or abroad. The purpose of these questions is to provide details of the usually resident population and to enable an analysis of the permanent composition of households to be undertaken.

In particular, students who are living away from home during term time and who are absent from the household on Census Night should only be included in the absent persons section of the household form. They should, of course, be enumerated where they spend Census Night. This procedure will enable an assessment of the extent to which students are temporarily away at school or college to be carried out.

7. Participation is compulsory

There is a legal requirement on the public to participate in the census. The relevant legislation is the Statistics (Census of Population) Order, 2001 made under the Statistics Act, 1993. Any person who fails or refuses to provide the information requested on the census form or who knowingly provides false information may be subject to a fine of up to €25,000.

8. Excellent public co-operation

The co-operation of the public in Irish censuses has always been excellent. The success of the census is completely dependent on this traditional high level of public co-operation. The CSO is fully confident that the public will participate equally co-operatively on this occasion.
9. Information provided is confidential

All information collected in the census will be treated as strictly confidential by the CSO and will be used only for statistical purposes. The names of individuals will not be entered onto any computer database. No other Government Department or Agency will have access to identifiable information relating to individuals or households.

The confidentiality of all information collected by the CSO from individuals, households or businesses is guaranteed by law. It operates as a “one way street” in the sense that identifiable data comes in but does not leave the Office.

The need for confidentiality is stressed in the training of CSO headquarters and field staff. The penalty for any breaches by staff can be as high as €25,000. All are made fully aware of their legal obligations in this respect. The CSO is justifiably proud of its unblemished record in protecting the confidentiality of data. It is one of our top priorities to maintain this record.

10. Importance of the census

The Census usually takes place every five years and counts all the people and households in the country. The census planned for April 2001 in accordance with the normal five yearly pattern, was postponed to April 2002 because of the foot and mouth disease situation at that time. Census 2002 will give a comprehensive picture of the social and living conditions of our people at the start of the 21st century. Only a census can provide such complete detail. The census is not, however, an end in itself! Rather the results are essential tools for effective policy, planning and decision making purposes.

Ireland has been conducting Censuses of Population since 1841. This enables us to track developments over a long period with considerable accuracy. The census is therefore a fundamental part of our national heritage and collective knowledge.

At national level current population statistics are essential for planning the provision of health care, education, employment, etc. Regional figures are critical for determining regional policy and for the operation of regional authorities (e.g. Health Boards). The greatest strength of the census is the provision of detailed population figures at local level. These help to identify likely demand for schools and hospitals, areas of relatively high unemployment, the best location for new shops, etc.

Article 16.2 of the Constitution (Bunreacht no hÉireann) lays down that the total membership of Dáil Éireann depends on the population as measured by the census (i.e. 1 TD per 20,000 to 30,000 persons). Constituency reviews normally follow when the definitive results of the census have been published.

The census is also the only means of accurately measuring the exact extent of migration. By comparing the results of successive censuses, and taking account of the number of births and deaths that have occurred over the same period, we get an accurate measure of net migration (the difference between inward and outward migration).
In the five-year period ending April 2001 the CSO estimated that net immigration was approximately 103,000. This represents the difference between 121,000 people who left the country and 224,000 who came into the country. As the composition of these two flows differs significantly (i.e. young people mainly leaving and older persons, often with families, generally returning) the extent of migration significantly affects both the level and structure of the population. Because of this, trends in Irish population tend to be volatile. This is one of the reasons why censuses are carried out every 5 years.

11. Key points about the census


2. The census is of critical national importance to the Government, the business community, and the public generally.

3. The full co-operation of the public is essential for the success of the census.

4. There is a legal requirement on the public to co-operate.

5. The information provided on the census form will be treated as strictly confidential by the CSO.

6. The census forms are delivered during the month prior to Census Day and collected during the following month by Census Enumerators who carry identification.

12. How the census is conducted

To conduct a census it is necessary to:

- Recruit and train approximately 4,400 field staff;

- Arrange for Census Enumerators to deliver approximately 1.4 million census forms to every household and communal establishment prior to Census Day and to collect them afterwards;

- Cover all areas of the country;

- Ensure that all persons in the State are covered on Census Night.
13. Some guidelines for the public

1. If your form is not delivered by Census Day: Phone the Census LoCall Helpline 1890 28 04 02.

2. If your form is mislaid: Phone the Census LoCall Helpline 1890 28 04 02 for a replacement form or wait until the Census Enumerator calls after Census Day to collect your completed form.

3. If you have any difficulty with the form: The Census Enumerator will be glad to assist when s/he calls to collect the completed form.

4. If a completed census form is not collected by Monday 27 May: Return it to our FREEPOST address which is Central Statistics Office, PO Box 2002, FREEPOST, Swords, County Dublin.

5. If staying in a hotel or other communal establishment on Census Night: Ensure that you complete an individual form and leave it with the person in charge for collection by the enumerator.

6. If you are working a night shift on Census Night 28 April 2002: Make sure that you are enumerated at the address you return to on the following morning.

14. A major undertaking for the CSO

The census is the largest statistical operation undertaken by the CSO. It is also the most exacting since the fieldwork must be completed over a relatively short period and a complete count of the population present in the country on Census Night must be obtained. Some of the time consuming tasks, which must be completed, include:

- The division of the whole country into approximately 4,000 non-overlapping Enumeration Areas (EAs) containing approximately 350 households each;

- The identification of the boundaries of all administrative and geographic areas (i.e. counties, towns, suburbs, Electoral Divisions and townlands);

- Provision of a detailed map for each EA with all boundaries marked to ensure that all households and residential establishments located within the EA are covered;

- Interview approximately 15,000 applicants in some 200 different locations for the temporary field force positions;

- Scan, recognise, edit and process the information returned for over 3.8 million persons.
Census 2002 will cost approximately €38 million. This is split half and half between field and headquarter costs.

15. The census form

All census forms have been redesigned with scanning in mind.

The main household form caters for up to six persons present in the household on Census Night. Where more than six persons are present a continuation form catering for a further six persons is used. The household form also seeks limited information about persons who are temporarily away from the household on Census Night.

A listing form is provided for communal establishments. Every person present in the communal establishment on Census Night is listed on this form and receives an individual form for completion.

An Irish language version of the household form, continuation form, listing form and individual form is available for completion by any person who requires one.

In addition the main text of the household form has been translated into Albanian, French, Polish, Romanian and Russian to assist persons who may not be familiar with either English or Irish.

The household census form in English and Irish and in the five foreign languages can be viewed on our web-site www.cso.ie.

16. Guidelines on completing your Census Form

For the first time ever the Census Forms will be scanned into the computer rather than keyed in, as has been done in previous censuses. In order to ensure that the forms can be processed rapidly, it is important that the following instructions are adhered to.

**Do**
- DO complete your Census Form using a BLACK or BLUE BIRO.
- DO leave non applicable sections blank.
- DO ask your enumerator when s/he calls to collect the form if you have questions about the completion of your Census Form.

**DO NOT**
- DO NOT use RED biro or pencil.
- DO NOT put lines through any section of the form that is not applicable to you.
- DO NOT write N/A on any section of the form that is not applicable to you.
- DO NOT attach extra pages or notes to the Census Form.

See Appendix 2 for information about individual census questions.
17. Catering for visually impaired persons

Special arrangements have been put in place to assist visually impaired persons to fill out their census forms. In the first instance the enumerator is trained to offer any assistance which may be requested. In addition to this, a large print version of the personal form as well as versions in Braille and on audio tape have been provided in consultation with the National Council for the Blind in Ireland. The large print form of the questionnaire allows visually impaired persons respond directly in relation to their own census questionnaire. Should the response to the Braille or audio tape versions of the questionnaire be provided on computer printout or diskette, this will also be acceptable to CSO.

The audio version of the Census Form in MP3 format is available to download from our web-site. A text version of the web-site is also available to facilitate those who use screen-readers.

18. What questions are included?

The household form contains questions relating to household characteristics and individuals. A Government decision on the topics to be covered was taken after a wide-scale public consultation process and after pilot testing in September 1999.

The responses to the questions on household characteristics provide important information on the quality of our housing stock.

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**New questions included for Census 2002**

- PC ownership and access to the Internet
- Nationality
- Membership of the Irish Traveller Community
- Disability (2 questions)
- Time of leaving home to go to work, school or college and time taken
- Third level qualifications held
- Providing regular unpaid help for a friend or a family member
- Labour market participation according to International Labour Office recommendations

Every census includes questions on basic demographic and social topics such as age, sex, marital status, education, employment status and occupation. A number of new questions have been introduced for the 2002 Census.
19. Census 2002 – the advertising approach

The Central Statistics Office will be running a comprehensive advertising campaign in the run up to – and the day of – the Census. Its purpose will be to encourage and remind people to fill out their census form. The advertising will also be used to communicate the importance of the Census for the country as a whole.

The campaign will be spear-headed by a television commercial entitled ‘Portrait of a Day’. In the commercial, specially filmed sequences of natural history, infrastructure and people going about their daily lives are knitted together to paint a picture of a day in the life of contemporary Ireland.

As the viewers watch these scenes, they hear a message designed to convey the importance of one day in particular: ‘Some days can help to decide the way we live the rest of our lives. Census Day 2002 is one of those days. Because what you put on your census form will help to ensure that your needs and the needs of your family will be recognised’.

As the Census 2002 logo comes up at the end of the commercial, this final message is delivered: ‘Census Day, April 28th, 2002. It’s your future, don’t leave it blank’.

Radio commercials, outdoor and newspaper advertisements and posters and will be used to support the television commercial. They will develop the theme of the census as an important day for the nation as a whole. A variety of messages will point up the part which the census plays in developing plans for such things as transport, health care and education.

The actual day of the census, however, marks only the first step in the process of gathering and making sense of the raw information that is gathered on April 28th. In recognition of this fact, a radio commercial will also be broadcast to thank people for their participation. It will remind the listener that their ‘local enumerator will be calling soon to collect their form’.

20. Publication of results

The preliminary results of the 2002 Census will be published within 3 months of Census Day. The CSO is giving top priority to the early publication of the detailed results. Inevitably there is some delay in publishing the census results because the details of over 1.4 million households and 3.8 million people must be checked for accuracy and consistency, corrected where necessary, and a number of personal characteristics (e.g. occupation and business) must be coded in detail. This is a sizeable job which is completed by over 150 staff temporarily assigned to CSO for a period of two years or so. The process is being speeded up on this occasion by the use of scanning and recognition technology, the greater use of pre-coded replies and using computer assisted coding techniques.

Within two years of the census the full range of census results will be released in the traditional manner in a series of subject-matter volumes. In addition increased emphasis will be placed on disseminating the data electronically i.e. on CD-ROM and via the
Internet. It is also proposed to release under strict conditions a sample of anonymised records for research.

21. Historical perspective

The first major census, using a household form, was the so-called Great Census of 1841. Censuses were subsequently taken at 10 year intervals up to 1911. The first census following the formation of the State was undertaken in 1926. This was followed by censuses in 1936 and 1946. Commencing with 1951, censuses have been undertaken at five yearly intervals. The census planned for 1976 was cancelled at a late stage as a Government economy measure. However, the need for up-to-date population figures resulted in a census being specially undertaken in 1979 with a restricted number of questions. This was followed by a full census in 1981; two censuses within a period of 3 years should merit a mention for Ireland in the Guinness Book of Records! The most recent census was carried out in 1996.

22. Access to old census records

Old census returns are valuable historical and genealogical records. Unfortunately, the returns for 1813, 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851 censuses were destroyed when the Custom House was burned in 1922. The 1861 and 1871 census returns were deliberately destroyed. The 1881 and 1891 census returns were pulped because of the paper shortages during the 1914-18 War. Of the pre-Independence censuses only the 1901 and 1911 census returns remain intact today.

The 1901 and 1911 censuses were undertaken under legislation which made no provision for the confidentiality of the information recorded on them. These were made available as public records in 1961 via a warrant made by the Minister of Justice under the Public Records (Ireland) Act, 1867. They are the most frequently used records in the National Archives mainly for genealogical research.

The censuses since the foundation of the State from 1926 to 1991 were undertaken under the provisions of the Statistics Act, 1926 which protected the confidentiality of the information provided. However, the returns were retained by the CSO because of their genealogical research purposes in the hope that access would be possible some time in the future under law.

The extensive use of the 1901 and 1911 census records and the public acceptability of their availability after 50-60 years prompted the inclusion of a provision in the Statistics Act, 1993 which allows census returns to be made available as public records 100 years after the relevant census. This means that the 1926 census records will be open to the public by the National Archives in the year 2026. By that time almost all of the persons covered in the 1926 census will be deceased. Although there was demand for a shorter period it was considered that 100 years was necessary to comply with the spirit of confidentiality promised to respondents.
23. Irish population trends

The censuses conducted from 1841 give a very valuable chronicle of the evolution of the Irish population during the past two centuries. The main features are:

- The 26 counties of the State had a population of 6.5 million in 1841;
- This fell to 3.221 million in 1901 because of the famine and emigration;
- The population of the State was 2.971 million in 1926;
- It reached its lowest point of 2.818 million in the last century in 1961 following a sustained period of heavy emigration;
- It recovered to reach a 20th Century maximum of 3.626 million in 1996.
Appendix 1

Some interesting facts from the 1996 Census

- The Greater Dublin Area accounted for over a quarter of the 1996 population.

- Over 58% of the 1996 population lived in towns with 1,500 or more inhabitants. This compares with 28.3% in 1901 and 39.3 per cent in 1946.

- The percentage of the population aged under 25 years, which reached a peak of 48 per cent in 1979, declined to 41 per cent in 1996. Ireland continues to have the youngest population of the European Union.

- There were more than twice as many separated persons in 1996 (87,800) than in 1986 (37,200).


- The percentage share of Catholics in the population fell from 93.1 per cent in 1981 to 91.6 per cent in 1991.

- About half of the female work force was married in 1996 compared with only 14 per cent in 1971.

- The answers to a new question on the Irish language introduced in 1996 revealed that 1.43 million people aged 3 years and over reported that they could speak Irish.

- 50 per cent of the Traveller Community distinguished by enumerators in 1996 were aged less than 15 years compared with slightly less than a quarter for the population in general.