

# QUALITY OF SERVICES

## 1. Basic concepts

The link between the availability of services and citizens' well-being is based on an interpretive approach in which high quality public investments improve the general context in which people live and work and their social and economic interconnections. The choice of services to be taken as a reference depends on two distinct considerations relating to what qualifies a service as essential in the specific context of a policy, and what conditions must be met to define feasible targets. The identification of services and quality of performances depends on the different level of development, which increases the level and types of services seen as essential. For example, in more developed contexts, the minimum set of health services refers to a wider range of treatments. Aspects of equity and distribution, that is the connection between individual income and availability of services, are also relevant: the inadequate availability of services particularly affects those who do not have sufficient income conditions to resort to alternatives, while the non-availability of basic services is in itself a factor of poverty and exclusion. In this framework poverty is understood as the deprivation of opportunities and basic assets to which every person is entitled (nutrition, basic education, access to health services, water services, the possibility of participation in social and political life, ability to work, ...). This implies that inadequate services directly worsen the conditions of marginalization and exclusion, and therefore, decisive action on improving quantity and quality of services contributes directly to the reduction of social exclusion and poverty.

## 2. Dimensions considered to represent the domain

Based on the recent work of the Department of Public Administration (DFP, 2010) to assess the actual quality of public services, the Independent Commission for the Evaluation and Transparency of Government (Civit) identified the relevant dimensions for measuring quality of public services. "*The analysis of the quality of a service indicates how and to what extent an organization delivers quality services, which comply promptly, consistently and fully to the requests of potential users, minimizing the trouble, the number of steps necessary, inconvenience caused by disruptions*". It does not include the quality of the delivery process, rather involving aspects of efficiency, affecting only indirectly the citizen, or the subjective perception of users. The Commission identifies four essential dimensions: accessibility, timeliness, transparency and effectiveness. Here, the dimensions of transparency and timeliness (for which, however, the statistical information is extremely scarce) are considered as elements of accessibility or effectiveness, which are therefore considered as central dimensions of quality.

Even if infrastructures supply are in most cases only a pre-requisite for the achievement of a high standard in the delivery of services, in some cases aspects of infrastructures supply were taken into account as proxy of accessibility.

Furthermore, also on the basis of information provided by the CNEL-ISTAT Steering Committee, of criteria of data availability parsimony of indicators, the thematic group proposes to structure the analysis through three main areas of services: social services (health and social care), public utilities (energy, water and waste) and mobility. Therefore, it is possible to analyze each of the three main areas of services through the dimensions of accessibility and effectiveness.

### 3. List of the best indicators

- 1. Beds in residential health care facilities: *Beds in residential health care facilities per 1,000 inhabitants***  
The availability of beds in these facilities meets the requirements associated with the progressive aging of the population. This indicator is a proxy for the accessibility of the elderly to these facilities, needed to meet health and social needs.
- 2. Waiting lists: *Individuals who renounced to see a specialist or to undertake a therapeutic treatment (not dental) because of the length of waiting lists***  
The length of waiting lists in many cases pushes the citizen to renounce to undergo examinations or treatments and when possible to turn to private facilities. This indicator represents directly the inconvenience caused by delays and indirectly is a proxy for the length of waiting lists that are supposed to produce more waivers by users the more they stretch .
- 3. Taking charge of users for early childhood services: *Percentage of children aged zero to three years who benefited of early childhood services (crèches, micro-crèches or supplementary and innovative services).***  
The proportion of children receiving the services for early childhood is a useful indicator to measure the implementation of policies to reconcile the family and work commitments and to promote women's employment. At this service is assigned also a key part of regional policy, drawn and described in 2007-2013 National Strategic Framework (NSF).
- 4. Taking charge of the elderly for home assistance: *Percentage of elderly people who benefited from integrated home assistance service (Adi) compared to the total elderly population (65 and over).***  
The integrated home assistance is an essential service for frail elderly people and offers relief care for family members. This indicator measures the effectiveness of the system in providing medical, nursing and rehabilitative assistance, aimed at improving, maintain or restore the health state and level of independence of the elderly in need.
- 5. Irregularities in electric power distribution: *Frequency of accidental long lasting electric power cuts (cuts without notice longer than 3 minutes) (average number per consumer).***  
The interruptions of power create important discomfort for both domestic and economic activities. Furthermore, the irregularity of the service may, in extreme situations, create a damage to human health (eg in cases where you use electrical equipment).
- 6. Percentage of household served by methane gas: *Percentage of household declaring that the apartment is supplied with methane gas on the total number of households.***  
The indicator measures the degree of territorial spread of the local gas network, expressed in terms of population served. Access to methane gas is a form of service to citizens and businesses that allows the diversification of the use of renewable energy for home use or in support of productive activities, easy to use in terms of capillary distribution infrastructure, which ensures saving in terms of scale economies for producers and environmental benefits in terms of polluting emissions released into the environment compared to those produced by the use of other fossil fuels. In view of these factors has been the subject of government incentive policies dedicated favoring its widespread use, particularly in the more backward regions.
- 7. Irregularities in water supply: *Percentage of households who report irregularities in water supply.***  
The irregularity of the water distribution involves significant inconvenience for citizens given the daily and diverse use of water resources. As a basic need service, its irregular supply has significant negative impact on the quality of life of households.
- 8. Landfill of waste: *Percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill on total municipal waste collected.***  
Minimizing the amount of waste sent to landfill is one of the main objectives of EU waste management. It is the combined result of the actions that the administrations put in place to ensure the highest eco-friendly management of the waste cycle in terms of waste reduction, to foster reuse and recycling and to carry out a virtuous disposal of waste. The indicator is therefore suitable to describe the effectiveness of service delivery.

9. Separate collection of municipal waste: *Percentage of municipal waste object of separate collection on total municipal waste*  
The percentage of municipal waste object of separate collection describes the ability of citizens to access the service but also the activation of good practices in municipal waste management. In this context, the indicator is also used as a proxy for the overall quality of the service of waste collection and for the ability to reach the largest number of citizens. The growth in the proportion of waste collected in differentiated form (set as an objective by the European legislation on waste and as such also adopted with the determination of target levels in national laws) is a prerequisite to reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. Therefore it has a significant positive impact on the overall quality of the environment and indirectly on the health and quality of life of citizens.
10. Prison density : *Percentage of prisoners in penal institutions on the total capacity of penal institutions.*  
The indicator allows to have an overview of the quality of life of prisoners.
11. Time devoted to mobility: *Minutes devoted to mobility on an average weekday.*  
Several studies show that the time spent travelling has negative effects on health and quality of life. The increase in the time spent on mobility necessarily reduce the time spent on other activities, primarily leisure time.
12. Density of urban public transport networks: *Km of urban public transport networks in provincial capitals per 100 sqKm of municipal surface.*  
Local public transport is of value to the citizens well-being in many ways: a network with extensive and efficient coverage reduces the congestion of the city and its rise time of movement for citizens; it limits the economic costs of travelling, and guarantees improved air quality through the use of a smaller number of vehicles (being equal the number of passengers transported) and the diffusion of modes of transport by rail which are alternative to the traditional road transport.
13. Composite index of service accessibility: *Percentage of households who find very difficult to reach some basic services (pharmacy, emergency room, post office, police, carabinieri, municipal offices, crèches, nursery, primary and secondary school, market and supermarket).*  
The index summarizes the degree of satisfaction of citizens with regard to a large group of different services but of great importance, it is a measure of the extensive coverage of services to citizens in the area. It is possible to decompose the figure for each of the services covered by the index and therefore see which service records the most critical aspects.

#### 4. Indicators under evaluation

1. Index of accessibility to hospitals with emergency room: *Percentage of population living more than X minutes<sup>1</sup> away from an hospital with emergency room.*  
The adequate location on the territory of emergency rooms, and thus their accessibility, is a necessary condition for the effectiveness of emergency care, in particular, it is important to evaluate the time needed to reach an emergency service in case of emergency . This indicator measures which share of the region's population lives at a distance implies travelling more than X minutes to reach the nearest emergency department using the road network.
2. Index of accessibility to transport networks: *Percentage of population living more than X minutes<sup>1</sup> away from a major railway station.*  
The accessibility of the main hubs of rail system gives citizens a greater ease of movement in the country, in support of both the occasional travel and the systematic commuting between different municipalities for work or study. Only the main railway stations are considered, namely those defined by the Italian Railway Network as a) Platinum - a class that includes 15 major structures which include stations characterized by an attendance of over 6,000 travelers on average each day and a high average number of trains each day with a high incidence of high quality trains. The host cities of these structures, are of

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<sup>1</sup> Tests to identify the most appropriate threshold are in progress.

great importance from the tourist, cultural, institutional and architectural point of view and also featuring a high commercial potential, b) Gold - a class that includes 103 medium and large structures that have a quite high attendance, with a significant offer both local and in terms of quality. The locations served by these systems are of some interest from the of tourist, cultural, institutional and architectural point of view. Commercially are areas with a good potential.