**Changing lenses to read a changing world:**

**The new Istat approach to study firms’ competitiveness using integrated data**

**Abstract**

The presentation will show how the new Istat approach to the production of microdata helps enhance the scope of official statistics in measuring business structure and economic performance, allowing to capture the multi-faceted dimensions of firms’ competitiveness in such a heterogeneous business system like the Italian one. In particular, the use of integrated administrative and statistical firm-level databases recently developed by Istat makes it possible to create new taxonomies and indicators able to overtake the analytical limits of the traditional NSIs classification schemes, improving the ability to assess the Italian business system along (at least) four fields of interest: *a)* the role of different forms of internationalization in shaping Italian firms’ performance during the 2011-2014 recession, when external demand was virtually the only source of demand for many Italian enterprises (the resulting internationalization taxonomy is currently being proposed as an experimental statistics); *b)* the study of how the endowment of human capital and physical assets across the business system interact affecting the firms’ propensity to digitalization; *c)* the study of firms’ productivity dynamics; *d)* the analysis of firms’ financial soundness before and after the recession.