

Annual Report 2010

Published by the
National Statistics Office
Lascaris, Valletta VLT 2000
Malta
Tel.: (+356) 2599 7000
Fax: (+356) 2599 7205 / 2599 7103
e-mail: nso@gov.mt
website: <http://www.nso.gov.mt>

CIP Data

Annual Report 2010 / National Statistics Office, Malta. - Valletta: NSO 2011
viii, 64p.

ISBN: 978-99957-29-08-0 (print)
ISBN: 978-99957-29-09-7 (online)

NSO publications are available from:

Unit D2: External Cooperation and
Communication
Directorate D: Resources and Support Services
National Statistics Office
Lascaris
Valletta VLT 2000
Malta
Tel: (+356) 2599 7219
Fax: (+356) 2599 7205

Department of Information
3 Castille Place
Valletta
Malta

Tel: (+356) 2122 4901
Fax: (+356) 2123 7170

Printed in Malta at the Government Printing Press

CONTENTS

	Page
Letter to the Chairman	v
Mission Statement	vii
Director General's Overview	1
Director General	5
Unit 01: Methodology and Research.....	7
Directorate A – Economic Statistics	9
Unit A1: National Accounts	11
Unit A2: Public Finance	13
Unit A3: Balance of Payments	15
Unit A4: Short-term Statistics	16
Unit A5: Price Statistics	17
Directorate B – Business Statistics	19
Unit B1: Structural Business Statistics	21
Unit B2: International Trade and Transport Statistics	23
Unit B3: Agricultural and Fisheries Statistics	26
Unit B4: Environment and Resources	27
Directorate C – Social Statistics and Information Society	31
Unit C1: Demographic, Social and Culture Statistics	33
Unit C2: Labour Market and Education Statistics	36
Unit C3: Information Society and Tourism Statistics	39
Directorate D – Resources and Support Services	41
Unit D1: Personnel and Budgetary Matters	43
Unit D2: External Cooperation and Communication	54
Unit D3: IT Systems	62



28 February 2011

The Chairman
Malta Statistics Authority

In accordance with the provisions of subsection 5(g) of the Malta Statistics Authority Act XXIV of 2000, I hereby submit to you this report on the operations of the National Statistics Office for the year ended 31 December 2010.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Pace Ross', written in a cursive style.

Michael Pace Ross
Director General

Mission Statement

"To produce efficiently and with minimum burden on respondents high-quality statistics that are relevant, reliable and comparable, and to disseminate them in an impartial, independent and timely manner, making them available simultaneously to all users."

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S OVERVIEW

2010 was a challenging year for the National Statistics Office. In terms of statistical output, the NSO disseminated 249 news releases, up by 13 over 2009, and ten publications. In particular, *Children 2010* was published, with updated and more detailed data on the 2002 edition. A new publication focused on *Sustainable Development Indicators for Malta*. Statistical obligations and data requirements were, to a broad extent, met.

In terms of human resource development, new statisticians were contracted, and training for all staff was promoted and sustained. New managers were appointed for vacant posts, while human resources continued to be deployed more efficiently. Discussions on a new collective agreement commenced towards the end of 2010.

For the third consecutive year, the deficit of the NSO was reduced by focusing more on revenue-generating initiatives while containing recurrent expenditure through cost-cutting measures. Despite a drop in the government subvention, receipts went up by more than 10 per cent, on account of a rise in income from surveys and from EU grants. Expenditure rose by almost 4 per cent, driven by a statutory increase in salaries, despite a drop in overtime. Significant savings were made on travelling and conference expenses, while declines were also recorded for water, electricity and telecommunications expenses, when compared to 2009.

I will now highlight the NSO's achievements for 2010.

Statistical Operations and Methodology

Household Budgetary Survey

The period under review saw the finalisation of the Household Budgetary Survey exercise, wherein detailed tables and results were made public and disseminated in a press conference in August. The HBS weights were used as a platform for updating the RPI weights. The new weighting frame was introduced in January, after approval from the RPI Advisory Committee. The HBS was also used to extract socio-economic data on households.

Census of Agriculture

A Census of Agriculture, co-financed by the European Commission and regulated by the Malta Statistics Authority Act (XXIV of 2000), was held on 31 August. The aim of the Census was to identify and measure changes in the agricultural sector that occur from time to time, thereby enabling the planning and carrying out of agricultural policies of benefit to the sector. A letter was sent to all registered farmers and breeders outlining the importance of accurate and timely responses. Farmers and breeders were asked to provide a record of crops sown and harvested during the twelve months ending on 31 August 2010.

EDP Dialogue Visit

On 5-6 June Eurostat undertook an Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) dialogue visit in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 (article 13). The aim of this visit was to ensure that ESA 1995 methodology and recent Eurostat decisions are duly implemented in Malta's EDP tables and national accounts. In particular, the recording of EU grants and the accounting consequences of the recently signed contract regarding Malta Shipyards were discussed. A number of action points were agreed upon.

Technical assistance on LFS

During the period under review, technical assistance was provided on the Labour Force Survey by Dr Antonio Discenza, an expert on LFS calibration. Over the project time-frame, Dr Discenza visited the NSO four times and his objective was to produce a new weighting system to be applied for the LFS. This new methodology, which will soon be implemented, will ensure that population estimates produced from LFS tally with those from other social surveys such as SILC. Dr Discenza also conducted training on calibration methods.

In addition to improvements in the LFS, a number of initiatives in the Social Statistics Directorate were carried out, aimed at enhancing quality in the various social surveys carried out by the three units, and which will be reported on in detail in the Annual Report.

Technical assistance on National Accounts

The NSO also requested Statistics Netherlands (CBS) to give technical assistance on the compilation of producers prices (PPIs) and their use, together with other indices, in national accounts, in particular in the deflation of the GDP using the Production Approach. The three-day training programme focused on the application of price indices in the supply and use tables, and the deflation of non-market (public sector) output.

World Statistics Day (20.10.2010)

The NSO, in line with a United Nations General Assembly resolution, marked the first-ever World Statistics Day on 20 October with a half-day seminar at The Westin Dragonara Resort. The seminar was organised into two sessions entitled (i) the role of statistics in social and economic development; and (ii) accuracy versus timeliness: the perennial dichotomy. A number of high-profile speakers delivered topical presentations. Representatives of the European Commission (Eurostat) and the European Central Bank also participated. The seminar's closing address was delivered by the Hon. Robert Arrigo, MP, parliamentary assistant within the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

To mark this day, Eurostat and the National Statistical Institutes of the 27 EU Member States, including the NSO, published a common news release illustrating the role of European official statistics. The NSO also launched the annual publication *Malta in Figures 2010* and presented its plans for a statistical publication for those non-conversant with statistics, to be released in 2011.

Structural and Institutional Improvements

Following extensive refurbishment and maintenance works on the outer walls of the premises in 2009, a MEPA application was filed for the demolition of the top room on the NSO's main building. The room was brought down in the summer months, to reduce the inconvenience for staff. Furthermore, broken office chairs were removed and replaced, with seven units getting new chairs. The remaining units' chairs will be replaced in 2011. New air conditioning units were installed in six units.

The Office continued with its policy of shredding and recycling used paper. More use was made of electronic mail instead of the usual mail, thus also saving paper. New waste recycling bins were introduced on each floor, and an energy audit was carried out by a private company contracted by the Government. Office stationery was reorganised and the 2005 Census documents were transferred from the Cypher Building, which was vacated (as it is earmarked for demolition in 2011), and stored in the main building at the NSO.

In addition, a new state-of-the-art server was installed at the NSO, thus increasing IT storage capacity and enhancing the speed of automatic IT processes. The purchase of this server was long overdue, and not only helped to support technical units, but also ensured that a proper back-up of data was in place.

Organisational Issues

On 21 June, Directorate D was reorganised into three units by merging the Legal, Institutional and International Affairs unit and the Information Services unit into the External Cooperation and Communication unit. A number of functions, including training, were transferred to the remit of the Personnel and Budgetary Matters unit, with Unit O1 renamed Methodology and Research unit.

During the course of the year, two unit managers stepped down due to personal reasons, and a third resigned. New unit managers were appointed in Units B3 and C3, and a third was moved to Unit C1.

In November, the Office participated in Job Exposure week, hosting 12 students from St. Benedict's College and assigning them in various units.

Equality Mark

In October the NSO was one of the first eight organisations to be awarded the Equality Mark by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE). This mark is a certification to organisations which do not discriminate on the basis of sex and which are equal opportunities employers. A new sexual harassment policy and a new equality policy were also introduced.

Production of Weekly TV Programme

In the first quarter of 2010, NSO managers and senior staff participated in a weekly programme *Statistika għal Kulhadd*, produced by the Malta Statistics Authority, and conducted by PBS journalist Mr Reno Bugeja. The 30-minute programmes covered 16 weeks and were aired on Channel 22 and TVM, with repeats during the summer

months. The NSO also accepted invitations to participate in other programmes on TVM, One TV and on Channel 22, and on two radio programmes (*Radju Malta*).

Statistician Seconded to Eurostat

The NSO seconded a statistician to the European Commission. Mr Eusebio Bezzina, who joined the NSO in 2002, took up his new post on 18 October and was assigned with Eurostat's Labour Market unit. This was the first time Malta seconded a national expert to Eurostat, and he is based in Luxembourg.

Archbishop Visits the NSO

His Grace Mgr Paul Cremona O.P., Archbishop of Malta, paid a courtesy visit to the NSO on 8 January. He met the management and staff, and also celebrated Mass in the Conference Hall.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Malta Statistics Authority Board, in particular the Chairman Mr Reno Camilleri, for the support provided to the NSO in terms of human and financial resources. My appreciation is also due to all staff members, without whom I would not have succeeded in building on past achievements and in carrying out the work outlined in this report.



Michael Pace Ross
Director General

February 2011

DIRECTOR GENERAL

UNIT 01: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH

The primary role of the Methodology and Research unit is to provide technical assistance to functional units within the NSO. This support is also offered to public and private organisations, where the Unit may be also commissioned to carry out tailor-made sample surveys on behalf of third parties by means of face-to-face, postal or telephone enquiries.

In 2010, the Unit was also responsible for the setting-up of comprehensive individual and dwelling registers to be used for internal purposes, as well as the organisation of specific training courses according to the demands of the Office.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH

Cross-Unit Initiatives

Internal assistance offered by the Unit is normally required at various stages of the statistical process, particularly in those of sampling, survey design and other methodological areas such as questionnaire design, data collection methods and statistical inference.

Throughout the year, 25 different samples were provided; 13 were used internally by the NSO, while the remainder were requested by clients. In addition, innovative sampling designs were introduced by the Unit in 2010 to enhance the efficiency of the sampling mechanism in surveys as well as to lessen the burden on respondents. Enhancements were also made to other designs developed in previous years.

In the course of the year, the Unit worked in collaboration with the Environment and Resources unit on an EU grant project entitled 'Development of detailed statistics on energy consumption in households'. The main responsibilities of the Unit included the design of the survey questionnaire, the extraction of the sample and sample weights, as well as the processing of the relevant tabulations and methodological report included in the grant documentation.

Household Budgetary Survey (HBS) 2008/9

One of the main tasks of the Unit throughout the year was to finalise and publish the results of the 2008/9 Household Budgetary Survey (HBS). Although the main scope of the HBS is to serve as an updating tool for the weighting basis of the Consumer Price Index, it illustrates patterns in household expenditure and how these are distributed among different goods and services. The main survey results were published in August 2010.

Surveys carried out on behalf of third parties

In the year under review, the Unit undertook a number of customised socio-economic surveys and business research on behalf of public and private organisations, including:

- a survey on behalf of the Department of Agriculture (*Pitkali Markets*);
- three surveys on behalf of the Hamrun Local Council;
- two surveys on behalf of the University of Malta;
- a survey on behalf of Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment (MFEI);
- a survey on behalf of Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family (MEEF);
- a survey on behalf of WasteServ Malta Ltd;
- a survey on behalf of the Commerce Division.

Although the majority of external projects carried out by the Unit are normally commissioned on a one-off basis, the Unit has also been responsible for the carrying out of the Broadcasting Authority's audience survey for the seventh year running. This survey focuses on radio listenership and TV viewing, for which interviews are conducted daily and quarterly figures are provided to the client.

TRAINING

In the first semester of 2010, the Unit was responsible for training at the NSO, where it was engaged in the organisation of various customised training courses for both the NSO and other organisations. This function was assigned to the Personnel and Budgetary Matters unit in the second semester, and training is therefore dealt with under Unit D1.

DIRECTORATE A: ECONOMIC STATISTICS

UNIT A1: NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

In the period under review, the National Accounts unit continued its process of revising annual and quarterly estimates to ensure that data is updated and in line with the European System of National and Regional Accounts (ESA95). Revisions made during the year were mainly due to the availability of new statistical data and to methodological improvements resulting from this continuous process of improving the operating methods.

The Unit published its quarterly news releases in accordance with the NSO Advance Release Calendar. Support was also provided to the External Cooperation and Communication unit by making available national accounts data to various users.

Other Activities

Apart from its regular compilations, during 2010 the Unit was also engaged in the following tasks:

- i. the compilation of weights for the annual purchasing power parities' (PPP) exercise, including reports on VAT, rents and tips in the service industries;
- ii. the annual Gross National Income (GNI) questionnaire and its supporting quality report for EU own resources purposes;
- iii. the calculation of the weighted average rate for the VAT own resources exercise;
- iv. seasonally-adjusted data;
- v. updates of various NACE categories following the availability of new SBS data.

The National Accounts unit met all its reporting obligations with regard to the transmission of quarterly GDP estimates to Eurostat within the 70-day timeframe.

Ongoing Projects

Institutional sector accounts

During the course of the year, the Unit was engaged in preparatory work to produce, for the first time, a full set of non-financial accounts by institutional sector from 2005 to 2009. A full set of accounts for 2005 and 2006 were sent in March 2010. The accounts in respect of 2007 and 2008 were transmitted in June and September respectively, while in December the accounts for 2009 were sent. Pending further data updates, the sector accounts are still considered provisional.

Deflation of the output approach

During 2010, the Unit continued to develop a system for deflating the output measure of GDP. Technical assistance was provided by two consultants from CBS Netherlands. Assistance focused on various areas relating to the system of deflation, specifically on the compilation of producers' prices (PPI), and the harmonised consumer price indices (HICP), and their application in national accounts. The technical assistance consisted of a three-day programme with the following contents:

1. Compilation of price indices for deflating GDP using the production approach;
2. Application of price indices in the supply and use system;
3. Discussion on the deflation of the public sector (non-market) services.

A number of improvements were applied to the system of deflation following recommendations presented by the experts in their technical report. This work is ongoing, and the first transmission of the deflated GDP based on the Output Approach is scheduled for 2011.

Economic Statistics Development Programme (ESDP)

The Unit continued to participate in the Economic Statistics Development Programme with the ultimate aim of identifying potential areas for improvement in National Accounts. The Committee, under the chairmanship of the Director of Economic Statistics and including all the managers of the Economic Statistics Directorate, was also assisted by a British consultant and included representatives from the Central Bank of Malta and the Economic Policy Division within the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

Grants

During the period under review the Unit was engaged in work relating to the following Eurostat grants:

1. 'Improvements of Quality of National Accounts' – Impact of new ESA on GDP (Grant Agreement number 20101.2009.008-2010.082): The Unit conducted a preliminary assessment of the impact on Malta's National Accounts for each of the 44 recommendations specified by Eurostat.
2. 'Improvement of Quality of National Accounts' (Grant agreement number 20101.2008.002-2008.189): The Unit carried out an extensive exercise in relation to both 'research and development' and 'insurance output' with regard to the changes in regulations in the insurance business and its effect on economic accounts.

Courses and Meetings

Training courses are an effective means of strengthening the career development of National Accounts staff. During 2010, staff attended three courses organised by Eurostat. These were directly related to the compilation of National Accounts. In addition, three staff members attended a local training session specifically for senior and principal statisticians. The Unit was represented at the ESA review Group and other working groups organised by Eurostat. Staff members also participated in local seminars and conferences.

UNIT A2: PUBLIC FINANCE

During 2010 the Unit continued its work on the compilation of quarterly and annual non-financial and financial accounts for the General Government Sector.

Financial Data Reporting System (FDRS)

In January 2010, the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, after consultation with the NSO, launched the FDRS, an online system geared towards attaining financial data, pertaining to public entities, with minimum delay. The entities surveyed through this system include all the Extra Budgetary Units (50 entities) and 15 public corporations. On a monthly basis, entities are required to submit the income statement (profit and loss account) within 22 calendar days following the end of each month. In addition to this, every quarter entities are expected to submit their balance sheet position. The Public Finance unit is one of the administrators of the system and has online access. This administrative source replaced the quarterly questionnaires the NSO used to send to entities, thus reducing the burden on respondents.

EDP Notification

The Unit is responsible for estimating the General Government's deficit and debt levels as established by the Maastricht Criteria. These statistics are reported to the Commission bi-annually through the compilation of the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) notification and the additional questionnaires related to the notification tables. Due to the introduction of the FDRS and other methodological revisions, the Unit updated and published the EDP Consolidated Inventory.

EDP Dialogue Visit

A regular EDP dialogue visit to Malta took place on 5-6 July 2010 in order to review the implementation of ESA95 methodology and to ensure that provisions of the ESA95 Eurostat Manual on Government Deficit and Debt and Eurostat decisions are duly implemented in the Maltese EDP and Government Finance Statistics (GFS) data. The recording of specific government transactions in the Maltese national accounts and EDP notifications were also discussed during the visit. The meeting was very constructive and Eurostat thanked the Maltese authorities for the openness and transparency shown in the meeting and for the quality of documents provided prior and during the visit.

Financial Accounts for the Total Economy

For the first time, the annual financial accounts for all the sectors of the economy were sent to Eurostat. This was a joint exercise with the Central Bank of Malta, whereby the Public Finance unit was responsible for the compilation of the financial accounts for the general government sector and the Central Bank of Malta was responsible for the other sectors. The Unit collated all the data in order to fulfil its reporting obligations.

In this regard, a working group has been set up between the NSO and the CBM in order to discuss and find ways how to improve the quality of these accounts.

Research and Development in the General Government Sector

During the first quarter of 2010, the Unit carried out its annual survey within General Government in order to measure the sector's output in Research and Development (R&D). All the relevant reporting obligations to the Commission were respected and the findings were also published locally.

Throughout the year the Unit participated in a grant on Research and Development Statistics. The study was undertaken to identify the most appropriate approach and sources for the collection of the R&D indicators - Government Budget Outlays or Appropriations of R&D (GBAORD), and the breakdown of the domestic expenditure on R&D funded from abroad into geographical area of origin of funds at EU/non-EU level. The analyses of results, together with the methodological report, were sent to Eurostat.

European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS)

The Unit maintained the compilation of a full set of data on the Government's expenditures and receipts in respect of social protection. Work was initiated on the annual publication on social protection expenditure, covering data for the period 2005-2009 and comparing data for Malta and the EU. The publication presents data on expenditure under the various social protection schemes and was drawn up according to the ESSPROS Manual.

Other Activities

The Unit continued to support the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment in their work relating to forecasts on government finance aspects, advising on ex-ante issues impacting government finance, and providing support during foreign visits from DG ECFIN, IMF and the various credit-rating agencies.

The national tax database available on the DG TAXUD website continued to be maintained.

In 2010 the Unit finalised the first part of the project on deflation of the general government sector's output and expenditure aggregates.

UNIT A3: BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

The Unit is mainly responsible for the compilation of the balance of payments, the international investment position, foreign direct investment and foreign affiliates' statistics. The compilations are carried out by the NSO with the collaboration of the Central Bank of Malta, which is responsible for the financial sector.

Balance of Payments (BOP)

During the year under review, the Balance of Payments statement was compiled on a monthly basis, as a requirement of the European Central Bank (ECB), following Malta's adoption of the euro as its currency. This statement, broken down by country and displaying all requested instruments, was submitted to the ECB within the stipulated six weeks from the end of the period being reported (as per Regulation). An updated quarterly BOP statement was later on (within 90 days from the end of the quarter) submitted to Eurostat and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and also posted on the NSO website in its entirety. A summarised version of the quarterly BOP was released within 90 days from the end of the period being reported upon. In September, a further set of annual reports was also submitted to Eurostat. These covered BOP, international trade in services (ITS), and direct investment flows and positions. These reports are broken down by country and by economic sector.

International Investment Position (IIP)

Another important statement, the International Investment Position, was also compiled from the same sources used for the BOP, which are mainly the monthly/quarterly/annual direct reporting (DR) questionnaires. The full IIP statement was submitted to the IMF within the guidelines of the SDDS requirements. The IIP statement was also published in a News Release showing positions as at June and December. As from 2011, it is envisaged that this statement will show the position as at the end of every calendar quarter.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Details on the development of another important economic indicator, foreign direct investment, were compiled from the same sources as for the BOP and IIP, so as not to burden respondents with any additional surveys, as is the case in many other countries. Figures showing the composition of FDI, the economic sector invested in, as well as from which country the investment originates, or where the direct investment is made, are all shown in a summarised news release compiled by Unit. These cover both flows as well as stocks, both in Malta and abroad.

Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey (CPIS)

Malta once again participated in the annual CPIS together with a number of countries under the patronage of the IMF. Information regarding the stock position of portfolio investment abroad at the end of the year was collated from the same sources from which the BOP and IIP are compiled. These are essentially shown by country where the investments are made. The CPIS 2009 was submitted to the IMF

to be published on its website together with the contributions of the other countries. The information was also published in a news release.

Coordinated Direct Investment Survey (CDIS)

For the first time, Malta participated in the Coordinated Direct Investment Survey, a survey similar to the CPIS but concerning direct investment. Direct investment positions in Malta, by country of direct investor, and direct investment abroad by local enterprises and by country of destination, were compiled and submitted to the IMF. The data provided will be assimilated with that forthcoming from the other participating countries.

Foreign Affiliates Statistics (FATS)

In 2010, FATS statistics were compiled for both Inward and Outward for base year 2008. Entities having more than 50 per cent shareholding or dominance by foreigners (in the case for Inward) and by Maltese enterprises (in the case for Outward) were surveyed for these statistics. The collated information related mainly to employment and turnover. The information was submitted to Eurostat to be published together with the information of the other Member States. Since the number of enterprises involved, which are in turn broken down by country and by economic sector, could lead to their identification, these may not be published.

An additional survey was launched for the compilation of statistics pertaining to special purpose entities (SPEs), which are registered in Malta but operate mainly abroad.

Apart from the regular news releases and database updates on the Office's website, additional written requests for information were seen to. In cases where requests infringed on confidentiality issues, users were notified that the NSO was not in a position to provide data.

UNIT A4: SHORT-TERM STATISTICS

Industry

During the year, approximately 450 monthly questionnaires were sent to enterprises operating in the quarrying, manufacturing and energy sectors. This work provided data on turnover, employment, hours worked, wages and salaries and new orders for all markets. The unit transmitted, on a monthly basis, a full set of industrial indices (NACE divisions 08 to 36) in NACE Rev. 2 backcasted to 2000.

Furthermore, four news releases on industrial indicators were disseminated during the period referring to the quarter that had just elapsed.

Index of Industrial Production

The Index of Industrial Production was compiled and disseminated in NACE Rev. 2, extending back to 2005. The information is released on a monthly basis and in compliance with the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). Approximately

100 monthly questionnaires are sent to manufacturing enterprises, while additional information is obtained from another 100 enterprises that submit hours worked and turnover data within the framework of short-term statistics. Data are disseminated in main industrial grouping (MIG) format and also at the division level of NACE (NACE 2-digit).

Producer Price Index for Industry

The producer price index is a useful indicator measuring ex-factory prices of the most important manufacturing products. Data on selected products are compiled monthly from 80 of the largest manufacturing enterprises across Malta and Gozo. Monthly indices for Main Industrial Groupings (MIGs) by market began in 2008 and towards the end of 2009 the unit was fully compliant to IMF and Eurostat's standards. The time series has been back-casted to 2005, this being the base year. In contrast to 2008, the monthly release is now being published with a time lag of 30 days, in line with the SDDS. In 2010, 12 monthly news releases were issued.

Construction

Quarterly data were compiled from a number of construction companies during 2010. These were included in the short-term statistics database converted into NACE Rev. 2. Further to the quarterly transmission of the data, in 2010, four news releases with data on employment, wages and salaries, hours worked and new permits for residential buildings were disseminated.

Services

The services sector comprises wholesale and retail trade and other services. Approximately 1,000 questionnaires were sent every quarter to enterprises falling in these sectors, providing data on turnover, employment, wages and salaries and hours worked. The data in 2009 was being converted into NACE Rev. 2. The data started being transmitted to Eurostat in the latter stages of 2009 in the new classification. After a gap of four years, four news releases on the services sectors were released in 2010.

Stocks

The Short-Term Statistics unit, on a quarterly basis, sends 360 questionnaires to various enterprises within different sectors of the economy. These data are used internally for the compilation of 'changes in inventories' within the framework of national accounts.

UNIT A5: PRICE STATISTICS

Consumer Price Indices

In 2010, the Retail Price Index (RPI) and the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) were compiled using new weighting schemes, based primarily on results from the Household Budgetary Survey (HBS). The Price Statistics unit developed a

new system for the computations and monitored over 9,500 prices of goods and services on a monthly basis. This considerable increase in price quotations was brought about by the larger sample size considered for restaurants and communications.

One of the Commission Regulations stipulates that the weights of the HICP should be updated every year using the National Accounts data (Expenditure Approach) as a base. To this end, in December 2010 preparations were underway to change the HICP weighting scheme using National Accounts data. This process is still being fine-tuned, under the supervision of the Economic Statistics Director.

Improvements

In 2010, the use of the hedonic method was extended on mobile phones survey, internet services and used cars. Rack rates are no longer used in the compilation of the accommodation services index. Instead the unit is relying on specific internet-based travel reservation websites to collate price information. Furthermore, a new data source is being considered for the compilation of the used cars index.

Purchasing Power Parities (PPP)

The Unit is still responsible for most of the tasks related to the Purchasing Power Parities exercise. Two consumer surveys (the salaries survey and the estate agencies' rent survey) were conducted. In addition, the unit completed the CPI-PPP questionnaire.

The equipment goods pre-survey and the construction survey were also carried out as agreed in the PPP grant. Even though the two surveys are quite technical, only the latter was outsourced. However, all data are validated by unit staff.

The PPP inventory was updated again in order to account for the changes registered in this area. Moreover, time was dedicated to the planning of the forthcoming Health survey, which shall be an annual commitment as from 2011.

HICP-CT

The Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices – Constant Taxes (HICP-CT) is still being compiled on a monthly basis. Even in this area, there is more collaboration between the National Accounts unit and the Price Statistics unit since part of the GDP (Output Approach) will be deflated using the HICP-CT.

Immovable Property Price Index

Apart from issuing the Property Price index news release every year, the Price Statistics unit is committed to produce the index on a quarterly basis (with a time lag) and transmit it to Eurostat as stipulated in the OOH grant agreement. New sources are being studied to produce a superior index, which would eventually form part of the HICP framework.

DIRECTORATE B: BUSINESS STATISTICS

A new manager, Mr Ronald Tanti, was appointed to head Unit B3 with effect from 1 April 2010. He replaced Ms Mary Rose Debono, who was detailed by the Director General to head Unit C1.

UNIT B1: STRUCTURAL BUSINESS STATISTICS

Structural Business Statistics (SBS)

In 2010 the unit was required to conclude SBS 2007, including unit weights and subsequent grossing up. The exercise was eventually concluded early in 2011. Most weights have been checked, although further corrections may be made later. An important development in the recent months concerns an enhancement to the SBS system, which allows us to draw the Eurostat reports in-house instead of requesting same from MITA. This saves the Unit considerable time.

After an exercise aimed at estimating non-response, the Unit will start grossing up SBS 2008 in 2011 with the aim to conclude by end of year. As minimal changes to the questionnaire are required (2006-2008 included new software, new shorter questionnaire, new address format including new postcode and CDR address format link, revised computed fields and corrections as a result of the new SBS regulation, new additions to section 6 to cater for requests from the Environment and Resources unit, new additions to company subsidiarity details to distinguish SPEs as agreed with BOP and CBM, new Eurostat report extraction tool, new CPA and NACE Rev. 2) during 2011, the Unit will be mailing both 2009 and 2010 questionnaires. The revised samples will attempt to rotate the respondents and minimise the response burden.

The series relating to Central Banking for 2009 was once again compiled and transmitted as was the series relating to Commercial Banks, which was compiled and transmitted for 2008 and 2009.

The SBS Survey is now coded using NACE Rev. 2 as the principal NACE but still retaining NACE Rev. 1.1. This will be retained at least for another year. All addresses for units replying to SBS 2008 were again recorded in the standard CDR address format and recording the new postcode.

The Survey will still incorporate variables required by the Balance of Payments Unit for Foreign Affiliate Trade Statistics (FATS). Variables relating to business services in NACE Rev. 2 divisions 62, 69, 71, 73 and 78 and groups 58.2, 63.1, and 70.2, will still be collected since these variables are incorporated as part of Annex 8 of the new SBS Regulation and are scheduled to become an integral part of the SBS Survey.

It is now established that the SBS surveys will include a census of the more dominant units within each NACE Class as well as a sample of the remaining micro units.

Business Register (BR)

Early in 2010 it was absolutely vital to launch the New BR since a trade-related grant under the MEETS project required BR links in order to be completed.

The New BR is now the only BR being utilised since all vital issues categorised under Phase 1 have been delivered. Data from the old BR have been successfully migrated to the new system and updates from SBS 2006, 2007 and 2008 have been imported. During the course of this work, the Unit took on board updates as necessary. These included employment updates from ETC, SPE updates from CBM, updates from the SME and the STBS surveys, and closure updates from VAT. All these changes, which have a direct impact on the BR, have been completed. Some other updates where the BR ID link is still being confirmed, will be effected in due course.

All units presently in the BR going back to 2005 have been double-coded in NACE Rev. 2.

Apart from continuing with its normal practice of updating the Business Register with new demographic data, approximately 300 per month, the Unit has also embarked on a process whereby units are converted to NACE Rev. 2 prior to uploading. Double-coding will continue until 2011.

The grant relating to the Euro Groups Register, whereby countries were required to compile and submit information regarding ownership and control for a European pre-specified list of Enterprise Groups, and to make the necessary corrections where such data did not agree with that originating from other countries, was concluded.

Research and Development Survey (R&D) and Innovation Survey (CIS 2008)

During 2010, the Unit has concluded the Innovation 2008 survey, managing a 70 per cent response. The survey targets the minimum requisite, i.e. some 1,500 small to large enterprises only.

The Unit has also concluded and transmitted the R&D Survey for 2008, and is now in the final stages of collecting the R&D 2009 survey. This survey targets all enterprises reporting R&D expenditure and/or R&D personnel in the Innovation Survey, plus a selection of possibly R&D active units as selected by Malta Enterprise, as well as units identified by the IRD as benefitting from advantageous tax rates related to R&D expenditure.

Access to Finance

The Unit has concluded the mandatory annual Access to Finance survey. A sample of some 600 units with 10 or more employed persons was surveyed. Of 495 respondents, only 190 were relevant for the survey since the survey is not applicable in cases of subsidiarity. As most large enterprises in Malta are subsidiaries, 226 units replied that they did not fall within the scope of this survey.

An interim report has been submitted for this survey although the NSO was not bound by a grant agreement, and final reports will be compiled and submitted by March 2011, as required.

Ad-hoc Requests

In 2010 the Unit replied to 196 official requests for data, of which 76 were internal requests and 5 were parliamentary questions.

UNIT B2: INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TRANSPORT STATISTICS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS

Intrastat/Extrastat System

In the course of 2010, the International Trade and Transport Statistics Unit has sustained its ongoing IT programme to further expand the scope of the Intrastat/Extrastat system which serves as the backbone for the storage and dissemination of International Trade data. The system enhancements carried out included:

- Updates of the Combined Nomenclature (CN) for 2011 on the Intrastat website;
- Ongoing maintenance, creation and further development of the existing report-generating capability of the System;
- Further promotion of the Intrastat online service with its added XML upload facility among traders whose number increased to over 2,560 users by the end of 2010. The bulk (90.5 per cent) of all Intrastat declarations is being lodged electronically.

Main Output

Throughout 2010, the Unit was actively engaged with the fulfilling of its primary task: to compile, check and disseminate external trade data. The data is collected from two main sources: the Supplementary Declaration System (Intrastat) covering trade between EU Member States, and the Customs Electronic System covering Extra-EU trade (Extrastat). In the course of its work, the Unit also provides a help desk function to both providers and users of statistical information in the foreign trade domain.

During the period under review, the Unit maintained its monthly news releases in line with the Advance Release Calendar published on the NSO website. All news releases in relation to International Trade were issued on time. Furthermore, monthly transmissions to Eurostat of Extra-EU and Intra-EU data covering both aggregated and detailed data were made within the deadlines specified in the relevant regulations.

Other Activities

Supplementary to the core work carried out in 2010, the Unit also undertook a new project initiated under the MEETS¹ financing programme which was established by the European Commission (Eurostat) on projects in the field of external trade statistics. This project, covering 12 months starting from January 2010, was successfully applied for in 2009. The main action of this project was related to the reduction of asymmetries in Intrastat, and the preparatory work was carried out in the first quarter of 2010.

In order to carry out this project, international trade data for 2008 available on the COMEXT² database was extensively made use of. From this database the Unit retrieved data which was provided by the NSO and by the other Member States for analysis of the underlying causes for the main asymmetries of selected CN codes. With the help of this project, the Unit was able to achieve its main objective to reduce the existing asymmetries by 25 per cent and 8 per cent for arrivals and dispatches respectively. Furthermore, the Unit has also reconciled the data where this was possible and transmitted revised data to Eurostat. Revisions of data for 2008 and 2009 covering late responses, corrections and resolved asymmetry issues, were published through news releases and sent to Eurostat for updating of the COMEXT database.

During the period under review, the NSO was also represented by a senior statistician at the June and November committee meetings in Luxembourg on statistics relating to the trading of goods covering both Intra-EU and Extra-EU trade. A half-day seminar on the Future Developments of Foreign Trade Statistics was also held before the June Committee meeting. Another two seminars were held before the November Committee meeting, which specifically included a one-day seminar on Intra-EU Asymmetries Reconciliation and a half-day seminar on ships and aircraft registers. Participation at these committee meetings and seminars invariably serves as an essential source of information, enabling the Unit to keep abreast of developments within this statistical domain.

Between 30 September and 1 October, the Unit hosted a Eurostat mission, carried out by two colleagues from Eurostat's Units G-4 (methodology and classifications) and G-5 (production). The mission focused on, among other topics, methodological, data collection and processing issues. Officials from the VAT and Customs Departments were also present for some time during the mission.

Throughout 2010, the Unit actively supported the External Cooperation and Communication unit with the provision of merchandise trade data in response to various requests from diverse regular and occasional users of information. Within the same period, the Unit also supported a number of other units in the provision of merchandise trade data required in the compilation of other statistics. In fact requests for trade data make up a large share of information requests received by the External Cooperation and Communication unit.

¹ Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics

² Eurostat's International Trade Database

The Unit continued to provide the most updated monthly merchandise trade data, following Malta's entry in the IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) in December 2009.

TRANSPORT STATISTICS

Sources and Outputs

The compilation of Transport Statistics is primarily based on administrative data supplied by the Gozo Channel Company Limited, Transport Malta, the Police Department and the Guard and Warden Services Limited.

In 2010, the Unit sustained its ongoing initiative in the upgrading of its systems to efficiently store and process data in the transport database. This process has enabled better validation, usage and a more timely use of the data. The transport statistics programme is invaluable in the production of News Releases on road traffic accidents, the stock of motor vehicles, as well as on sea transport between Malta and Gozo.

The Unit is determined to provide more support to users with a view to enabling the extraction of a higher analytical value from its news releases. The latest changes in the news release layout have contributed positively to this aspect. In this respect, the Unit is continually exploring viable new areas concerning transport statistics that can be initiated in conformity with Eurostat's recommendations. Furthermore, the Unit is also working towards further enhancing the annual Transport Statistics publication which currently covers all forms of transport that are relevant to Malta. The latest Transport Statistics publication, which includes data up to 2009, was published in November 2010. The publication included a substantial increase in valuable data, and more information will be incorporated in the 2011 publication.

Main Activities

A Unit staff member participated at the annual Meeting of the Co-ordinating Group for Statistics on Transport (CGST formerly CCST) held in December in Luxembourg. As a follow-up, meetings are planned to be held with the associated local authorities to discuss the issues resulting from the meeting, and also Malta's obligations towards the EU and its agencies in the light of existing and new regulations.

During the course of 2010, the news releases were issued on a quarterly basis and covered three different transport themes: Sea Transport between Malta and Gozo, Motor Vehicles, and Traffic Accidents. Several requests and parliamentary questions were answered in a timely manner. All the databases concerning transport statistics were continuously updated to enhance the efficiency and availability of data. New transport data from other sectors are still being requested on an ongoing basis in order to substantiate and widen further the data disseminated by the Unit.

UNIT B3: AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES STATISTICS

Survey on Estimating the Volume of Water Used for Irrigation

In the first quarter of 2010, a mathematical model that would be able to estimate the volume of water used in the agriculture year 2008/2009 was built. The model accounts for the type of crop, crop area, irrigation method, temperature, precipitation, humidity and wind speed. The data used in the model was collected from a survey that was held on an ongoing basis and selected holdings were evenly distributed over 52 weeks. The model would be also used for future analysis, including the Survey on Agricultural Production Methods (SAPM).

A report on the estimation of water usage for irrigation purposes was transmitted in March and was subsequently approved by the Commission.

Census of Agriculture 2010

In 2010, the Unit was actively preparing for the Census of Agriculture to be carried out in third and fourth quarter of 2010. This is a comprehensive exercise undertaken every ten years to collect exhaustive data on the structure and use of agricultural holdings.

In the first half of the year, the Unit collected complete lists of agricultural holdings. These were linked with the existing register to arrive at a complete list of holdings. The final questionnaire, including the information leaflet that was sent to all the farmers, was drafted. Meetings were regularly held with the IT Systems unit on the development of an in-house system to store all the data collected in the Census. In June, a number of persons were selected to act as an interviewer or supervisor. Each supervisor had a number of interviewers allocated to him.

In August, a series of detailed briefing sessions were held in order to explain the questionnaire and the importance of the project. During the briefing sessions, all interviewers were provided with a detailed instruction manual on each characteristic of the Census and a list of the farmers to be interviewed.

An information campaign targeted different segments of Maltese society and a communications mix, which included television, radio and newspapers, was used.

Fieldwork started on 1 September and ended in December. During this period the interviewers made an appointment with the farmer or animal breeder to fill in the questionnaire. Data inputting started in November and will be finalised by the first quarter of 2011.

Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)

During the first quarter of 2010, the Commission accepted the 2008 results of the FADN survey. During this period, the Unit launched the FADN survey with 2009 as reference year. The Unit was responsible only for the questionnaire and sample selection. The Food and Veterinary Resource Division (FVRD) was responsible for the remaining phases of this work.

Fisheries

Every year the Unit is given access to the fisheries database held at the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRRA), from which information is used to compile tables for the purposes of the annual Agriculture and Fisheries publication. In collaboration with MRRRA, the Unit also compiles catch and landings statistics which are transmitted to Eurostat and the FAO on an annual basis. Every year, the Unit is also responsible for the data collection pertaining to aquaculture. The raw data are analysed and checked, after which tables are compiled and sent to Eurostat.

Regional and Urban Statistics

During 2010, the Unit was involved in a new data collection project, financed in part by a Eurostat grant. The project included the collection of quantitative data for 2007, 2008 and 2009 over a two-year span. Data were collected from the different sections within the NSO, as well as from the Department of Health Information and Research and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority. The complete dataset for 2008 was submitted in February, while the annual data for 2009 were collected in the second quarter of 2010 and transmitted to Eurostat in August. The final report was sent in October and was subsequently approved by the Commission.

Other Activities

In the first quarter, the Unit compiled data from the annual surveys on pigs, cattle, sheep and goats that were carried out in December 2009. Information on the pig industry was collected from a postal census sent to all licensed pig breeders in Malta and Gozo, while data on cattle, sheep and goats are obtained directly from the Department of Veterinary Services. A number of news releases on animal husbandry were duly issued by the Unit. Other releases included Economic Accounts for Agriculture 2009, Aquaculture 2009, World Food Day 2010, and four quarterly releases on each of the following domains: fruit and vegetable production, producer/input agricultural price indices, meat production and fish landings.

During the year, the Unit was represented at the working groups on Agriculture and Fisheries held in Luxembourg. Where appropriate, staff members also participated in locally-organised courses.

UNIT B4: ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

Environment and Resources statistics comprise water, land, energy, air emissions, waste, environmental accounting and sustainable development indicators. These datasets are regularly maintained and updated annually to comply with the regular reporting obligations to Eurostat, as well as to satisfy national requirements. In the past year, the Environment and Resources unit has expanded the existing data collection programmes in respect of specific requirements for energy statistics, environmental accounting, water statistics and sustainable indicators. These improvements were possible with the technical and financial assistance of Eurostat.

Waste

The Unit is continuously researching improvements in the collection of specific datasets regarding particular waste streams. During 2010 preparatory work was done for a waste characterisation survey addressed on sampled domestic households. This work is being done in close collaboration with MEPA and WasteServ, and will serve to upgrade the existing data for this particular solid waste stream. During the period under review the Unit attended and participated at Eurostat meetings and contributed in the discussions on the introduction of a new legislation in the European Community regarding the Import and Export of Waste.

Water

In the past year, the Unit continued to build up on its previous work regarding the re-classification of the Water Services Corporation database of consumers so that this can be aligned with the NACE classification of the business sector. Several meetings were held with the Automated Revenue Management Systems (ARMS) Ltd. in order to establish the datasets which are to be produced by this company in the near future. By the end of 2010 the Unit had received several datasets from ARMS Ltd., covering water consumption and its costs for the various economic sectors. Validation and verification of data received from ARMS Ltd. is still ongoing.

Work also progressed on the compilation of waste water statistics through a closer collaboration with the Water Services Corporation. This resulted in the creation of new datasets which were added to the existing statistics. The result of this work was communicated to Eurostat in fulfilment of a grant which was awarded during 2008. The work was well received and now Malta has 100 per cent coverage for water statistical data.

Energy

The Energy Statistics legislation (Regulation (EC) 1099/2008) which has been in force since 2008, obliges reporting to Eurostat on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. The datasets involved include prices of fossil fuels and electricity, fuel imports, power generation and energy consumption by sector. Owing to the liberalisation of fuels in Malta, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Malta Resources Authority and the NSO in order to facilitate the transfer of data between the two Authorities. Bilateral cooperation and efforts have yielded a good result in the data collection of energy balance statistics. A similar improvement was also registered with the Energy directorate at Eurostat, where Malta has made good progress in the submission of data to this agency.

During the year under review the Unit has also commenced a survey on energy consumption in households. This involves an investigation made up of a CATI survey among 1,500 households, coupled with a physical electrical energy measurement of 60 households for a whole month. This exercise is ongoing and is expected to be finalised by mid-2011.

Sustainable Development Indicators

During the period under review, the Environment and Resources unit concluded a project for the compilation of a set of indicators as annexed in the Sustainable Development Strategy for Malta. A publication of the results was also launched and is available on the NSO website. During 2010, the NSO also collaborated with MEPA regarding the sustainable development indicators which are integrated in the annual *State of the Environment Report*.

During 2010, the Unit secured another grant from Eurostat to compile more data in respect of other sustainable development indicators. The work is ongoing and is expected to be concluded by the end of 2011.

Environmental Accounting

The Unit has compiled an initial set of environment accounts. During 2010 the initial dataset has been compiled and disseminated to Eurostat. The results were approved and other data sets are being compiled. Meetings abroad were also attended by staff where technical assistance was provided. During the year, the Unit had also compiled initial data relating to the NAMEA Air Emission Accounts.

For the first time, the Unit was involved in the compilation of datasets relating to other aspects of environmental accounts. Data in respect of environmental taxes continued to be compiled and transmitted.

Consultations

During 2010 the Unit staff members were involved in consultations with stakeholders regarding various environmental datasets. Staff also attended training sessions related to the different aspects of their daily work. On different occasions, staff members participated and delivered presentations in local and international conferences and working groups.

DIRECTORATE C: SOCIAL STATISTICS AND INFORMATION SOCIETY

Two unit managers stepped down early in 2010. These were replaced by Ms Mary Rose Debono (Unit C1) and Ms SueAnn Scott (Unit C3), with effect from 15 March and 5 April respectively.

UNIT C1: DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURE STATISTICS

POPULATION

The Demographic, Social and Culture Statistics unit is responsible for the compilation of Maltese and total population counts based on updates derived from the latest Population and Housing Census conducted in 2005. Extensive work has been carried out in order to estimate these important statistics, as in previous years.

During the year under review, the Unit liaised with various government departments to collect all demographic components used for updating the total population distribution. These include statistics on births, deaths, adoptions and regular and irregular migration. In addition, the Unit also collected data on marriages, separations, divorces and crime statistics, and were subsequently published in the annual Demographic Review. These statistics were used to compile life tables and population projections.

These data were also used to answer a considerable number of requests made by various national and international users, including policy makers. Every effort was made to ensure that the methods used for data collection were in line with the harmonised methodologies as recommended by Eurostat, thus ensuring comparability with other EU Member States.

During 2010, the Unit continued assisting the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (REFCOM) in the production of asylum statistics. Work conducted included maintaining a register of asylum applicants, which was used for the extraction of statistics as per Article 4 of the European Commission Regulation on Asylum and Migration Statistics (EC 862/2007). During the year, the NSO signed an agreement with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs to develop an IT system aimed at improving the system by which information on asylum seekers is collected at REFCOM. Once implemented, this system will serve as a centralised system where information regarding new applicants and decisions taken in their regard will be saved and accessed from a unique depository. This system will also facilitate the production of more timely and higher quality statistics. This project will be finalised in Spring 2011.

Technical assistance has also been provided to the Department for Expatriates and Citizenship Affairs, and the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs.

LIVING CONDITIONS

2010 Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2010)

Data collection of EU-SILC is today one of the major tasks undertaken by the Unit. The methodology applied for this survey is based on Eurostat recommendations,

which ensures consistency, and hence comparability, across EU Member States. In Malta this survey was first undertaken in 2005, and has been carried out annually ever since. It is regulated by a European Framework Regulation (EC 1177/2003).

During the first quarter of 2010, some questions were enhanced based on methodological updates proposed by Eurostat and users' comments regarding previous surveys. EU-SILC interviewers were also consulted during the design of the questionnaire so as to make it as simple as possible, thus reducing bias.

The fieldwork for the EU-SILC 2010 was carried out during the second half of 2010, with a gross sample size of 4,739 households. This sample included 1,707 new households, as well as others which had also participated in previous EU-SILC surveys. In fact, almost 18 per cent of the gross sample comprised households that were first contacted in 2006 and were participating in this survey for the fourth time; another 20 per cent were participating for the third time, while another 26 per cent were contacted for the second time. By repeatedly contacting households over the years, it is possible to produce more reliable and better indicators that may measure changes in poverty, and other social indicators, over time.

Fieldwork was completely done through Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and the response rate achieved for this survey was 77 per cent. Interviewers participating in the data collection were requested to attend two separate briefings covering the SILC questionnaire and the use of the laptop with regard to the data entry program.

SILC microdata are expected to be submitted to Eurostat by September 2011 while locally, a news release highlighting the main results of this survey is expected to be issued in the last quarter of 2011. A publication comprising all analysis will then follow in 2012.

2009 Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2009)

In the year under review, the Unit was actively involved in the analysis of the SILC data collection carried out in 2009. Following submission of all datasets to Eurostat in September, a news release was compiled and issued in December. In this release salient indicators on income and social exclusion for Malta were published. More detailed results will be published in a separate publication by April 2011. The main indicators and the corresponding sampling errors, together with methodological aspects of the cross-sectional components, were provided in the intermediate quality report that was submitted to Eurostat.

2008 Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2008)

During 2010, the Unit finalised the EU-SILC 2008 project by completing the longitudinal dataset and the final quality report. In view of the fact that 2008 was the fourth EU-SILC round of data collection, the longitudinal dataset covered households that have been participating in the survey since 2005. The final quality report was due for submission by the end of December 2010. Indicators measuring poverty and social exclusion were issued in the SILC 2008 publication.

CULTURE

In 2010, the Unit launched a project for the economic impact assessment of Valletta as a cultural city, in collaboration with the Creative Economy Working Group. For this project, two surveys were undertaken, for which separate questionnaires were designed. The first survey was conducted during the Malta Arts Festival, the Malta Jazz Festival and the concerts organised by NNG Promotions, while the second survey was aimed at covering attendances in museums in Valletta. In-house data entry programs were prepared by the IT Systems unit. Both surveys were conducted through face-to-face interviewing. The results of the analysis will be launched during the first quarter of 2011.

During the period under review, extensive work was carried out in preparation for a plan to undertake surveys in different cultural fields over a period of four years, starting from 2011. Different areas will be explored in the coming years, including cultural participation, education, economic impact and cultural industries. This plan is expected to enhance the availability of cultural statistics for interested users and policy makers.

Other Activities

In 2010, the NSO continued its collaboration with the Malta Insurance Association (MIA) and supplied death probabilities based on mortality and population counts. Three additional projects were undertaken by the Unit in 2010, in which assistance to external users was provided.

- An exercise was undertaken with the Department of Health Information and Research to calculate the life expectancy by educational level disaggregated by sex, single years of age and highest education level attained;
- The Unit was responsible for analysing data regarding health and safety attributes within local sports organisations. Results of this study served to establish new policies aimed at putting Maltese sport statistics at par with international standards;
- The Unit was also an active member in the European Migration Network (EMN). Work conducted on behalf of this network included the Annual Report on Migration and International Protection Statistics, focusing primarily on migration statistics, with 2008 and 2009 as reference years.

Ten news releases were published in the year under review, of which six commemorated international days.

Publications

In 2010, three publications were duly issued. The first publication, *Children 2010*, focusing on the current situation of children in Malta, was published in March. This was followed by the second publication in the Survey on Income and Living Conditions series, and the annual Demographic Review with 2009 as reference year.

UNIT C2: LABOUR MARKET AND EDUCATION STATISTICS

LABOUR MARKET

Labour Force Survey (LFS)

During 2010, the data collection of the Labour Force Survey continued to be carried out on a monthly basis. The rotation pattern of 2-(2)-2, which was first used in 2008, was retained for the year. To enable the collection of information for the different panels, the Unit continued making use of two pools of interviewers; an external pool to cover the first panel of respondents, and an internal pool of interviewers to cover the second to fourth panels.

As part of its commitments in this domain the Unit carried out an *ad hoc* module on the reconciliation between work and family life. Information for this module was collected during the first six months of 2010 and the results are expected to be transmitted to Eurostat by the end of the first quarter of 2011. In addition, results of the 2009 *ad hoc* module on transition from school to the world of work were sent to Eurostat by the second half of 2010.

Throughout the year under review the Unit focused on the improvement of the Labour Force Survey through different initiatives. The Unit carried out work in connection with the issue of differential non-response resulting from panel attrition. In this regard work with an expert on calibration techniques was carried out as part of a Eurostat-funded grant in order to obtain better quality employment estimates. The work in connection with this grant was concluded in June 2010; however the Unit is still in the process of integrating the recommendations which have been put forward by the expert in order to improve the response and reduce panel attrition. Moreover, in order to reduce panel attrition, unreachable households for a specific panel were re-contacted during the subsequent rounds.

Another initiative undertaken during 2010 included the use of predefined validations on quarterly Labour Force Survey data. This ensured that before the actual analysis of LFS results, main variables pertaining to a specific quarter were validated via the use of standard checks.

Registered Employment and Unemployment Data

The publication of registered unemployment data, as provided by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), continued during 2010. In this regard a release on registered unemployed was published on a monthly basis.

The Unit is also responsible for the publication of administrative records relating to the employed population and in this regard this information is also disseminated on a monthly basis. As part of the revision policy adopted by the ETC, administrative records relating to the employed population are being revised on an annual basis. The years which were included in the 2010 revision were 2005-2007. For these years the revision was carried out on the data for March, June, September and

December. On the other hand, revisions to the monthly data were carried out for 2008 and 2009.

Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases

Quarterly statistics on accidents at work were disseminated in 2010. During this year the Social Security Department started including additional information describing the accident in its data entry application, and the NSO is planning to use this information to comply with European statistical obligations.

Labour Cost Survey (LCS) 2008

During 2010, the Unit concluded the data collection associated with labour costs. The target population of this survey consists of companies with at least 10 employees operating in quarrying, manufacturing, construction and services (NACE Rev. 1.1: C to K and M to O). The response rate for this survey was 84 per cent. Results for this enquiry were analysed during the third quarter of 2010 and the quality report, together with the figures generated from this study, was disseminated to Eurostat by the fourth quarter.

Labour Cost Index (LCI)

The production of quarterly indices on wages and salaries, social contributions and labour costs continued throughout 2010. As in previous years, data used for the production of these indices were coded from NACE Rev. 1.1 to NACE Rev. 2 through a conversion matrix. In 2011 this matrix will be revised and hence all information relating to labour costs will need to be reworked in line with the revised data.

The quality report for the Labour Cost Index was submitted to Eurostat in August, in line with the regulation deadline.

Job Vacancy Statistics

The collection of data on job vacancy statistics has been conducted throughout 2010. As in previous waves of this survey, information relating to public sector entities was retrieved from administrative records housed at the Management and Personnel Office (MPO), whereas data for private entities were collected through a survey which was either emailed or completed via telephone. As from 2010, 900 private enterprises were randomly sampled and interviewed on a quarterly basis, with a significant improvement in quality over the use of an independent sample on a quarterly basis.

In the first quarter of 2010, the Unit concluded two feasibility studies related to the extension of job vacancy statistics to small enterprises (1 to 9 employees) and to new economic activities (NACE Rev. 1.1: L to O). The conclusions of these studies indicated that at a national level, the collection of job vacancy statistics for small enterprises is not feasible, mainly due to the response burden, coverage errors and other bias induced by non-response. The compilation of job vacancy statistics on enterprises engaged in public administration, education, health and community

service and personal activities resulted as feasible. The main reason was that a huge proportion of the units active in these activities are public and hence records were directly retrieved from MPO.

Labour Market Policy (LMP)

The data collection of labour market interventions was carried out during 2010 with the submission of data relating to 2009. Information provided relates to descriptive information on each measure, eligibility criteria and a profile of participants.

EDUCATION

During 2010 the Unit undertook the collection of data on students and personnel from pre-primary to secondary schools. Unlike previous years, data were only collected from independent and Church schools, since information from state schools was directly retrieved from administrative records held by the Education Division. Data pertaining to post-compulsory education were provided by another administrative source, namely the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE). For statistics which were not available at the NCHE, the NSO contacted the respondent directly.

Work on education finance statistics was also undertaken. In this regard, data for schools and education-related entities operating in the public sector were obtained from the Public Finance unit, in addition to information from Church and independent educational institutions.

During 2010 considerable work was undertaken in connection with the implementation of ISCED 2011. This new education classification is intended to be implemented in all household-based surveys in 2014 and shall be used in the collection of education statistics relating to academic year 2011/2012. In addition, the Unit started to actively collaborate with the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) with the objective of improving the quality of ISCED codification for different qualifications available at a national level. Work on a mapping framework between ISCED and MQF levels has been undertaken during 2010 and will continue throughout 2011.

Another task carried out during the year under review included the publication of statistics on foreign students learning English in Malta. The information for this task was collected through questionnaires. The Education Division was responsible for the compilation of these data; however the statistics emanating from this exercise were published by the NSO.

Adult Education Survey (AES)

The Adult Education Survey was conducted in 2009 and the analysis of data was finalised in the fourth quarter. Following the transmission of the first output tables of this survey, work was undertaken on the provision of microdata. The exercise was concluded in the third quarter and is expected to be finalised by the first quarter of 2011.

UNIT C3: INFORMATION SOCIETY AND TOURISM STATISTICS

INFORMATION SOCIETY

The items in this domain are post and telecommunications and ICT usage, by both households and enterprises. Data concerning Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are collected as per European regulation (EC) No. 808/2004 and is directly comparable with those produced by other EU Member States. On the other hand, statistics concerning post and telecommunications are based on information supplied by the Malta Communications Authority (MCA).

Census on ICT usage and e-Commerce in Enterprises

This census, carried out during the first quarter of 2010, aims to measure the extent of computer and internet usage in enterprises employing a minimum of ten employees. The employment calculation is based on the concept of full-time equivalence, in which two part-time employees are equivalent to one full-timer. The survey also enquires about the use of e-Commerce and e-Government services at company level, as well as issues concerning connectivity and security. A response rate of 71 per cent was achieved in this study and the data accompanied by a detailed quality report were sent to Eurostat by November.

Survey on ICT usage in Households and by Individuals

This survey was conducted during the second quarter of 2010 and was undertaken with the scope of measuring computer and internet usage in households and by individuals. At an individual level, the survey also studied the phenomena of e-Commerce and e-Government usage, uses concerning internet security and e-Skills. The response rate achieved for this survey was 76 per cent and data, together with the required quality report, were sent to Eurostat in December.

At a local level, information concerning ICT usage by enterprises and households will be published in a dedicated publication scheduled for the first quarter of 2011.

Post and Telecommunications

Throughout 2010, the Unit also took care of the dissemination of quarterly post and telecommunications information, which is collected by the MCA. Furthermore, the NSO also benefitted from MCA assistance in compiling Eurostat's annual enquiry on telecommunications.

TOURISM STATISTICS

During the year under review, the NSO continued collecting statistics on tourism under European Council Directive 95/57/EC. Under this framework, the NSO is obliged to collect information concerning both inbound and outbound tourism, as well as on domestic tourists. Additionally, the NSO also collects information on cruise passengers, who are classified as same-day visitors.

Tourstat Survey on Inbound and Outbound Tourism

In the course of 2010, the NSO maintained its commitment to deliver accurate and timely tourism statistics to its users. For this purpose, the Unit has been carrying out an ongoing frontier survey at the Malta International Airport and at the Valletta Seaport since 2001. At the beginning, the survey mainly targeted inbound tourists, however as from 2010, the survey was modified to include outbound tourists. The variables requested under this survey include country of residence, length of stay, purpose of visit, type of accommodation and expenditure incurred.

Work was also carried out on the imputation and calibration methods adopted in this survey, with the intention of minimising the survey's margin of error. The average response rate for this survey is 74 per cent. Ultimately, the survey results are published in two monthly news releases issued by the NSO, while part of the information is also sent to Eurostat.

Census on Collective Accommodation

Throughout the year, the Unit maintained its commitment of collecting information from the suppliers of tourism services. The main scope of this exercise was to measure the occupancy levels in hotels, guesthouses, apart-hotels and hostels. A census of accommodation establishments is carried out monthly, and the findings are published in a news release issued by the NSO. In an effort to optimise results, every effort is made to ensure a high response rate to this census, which is consistent at about 90 per cent.

Cruise Passenger Information

As part of its work, the Unit publishes a monthly news release on cruise passenger traffic, which is based on administrative data collected by Transport Malta, the competent regulatory Authority. Statistics in this release are a measure of same-day visitors to Malta, and this niche of the tourism sector has its own diverse characteristics. These data are not mandatory under the European Directive on Tourism; however, this sub-domain is an essential component of Tourism Satellite Accounts.

Survey on Domestic Tourism

For the first time in 2010 the Unit undertook the task of implementing a fully-fledged survey on domestic tourism, which was conducted in conjunction with another NSO household survey. The results were analysed, and will be validated by the first quarter of 2011.

DIRECTORATE D: RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The manager of the Information Services unit resigned in June, and the unit was merged with Legal, Institutional and International Affairs to form the External Cooperation and Communication unit. The managerial post of unit D1 became vacant in August and, until a new manager was appointed with effect from 1 January 2011, Mr Paul Mifsud assumed the additional role of manager.

UNIT D1: PERSONNEL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

PERSONNEL

The overall workforce at the NSO adds up to 149 persons. Table 1 shows that the female/male ratio is 1.7:1, accounting for 62 per cent of the complement. Statisticians account for 44 per cent of total employees, and include 7 principal statisticians, 20 senior statisticians, and 39 statisticians. The management team comprises the Director General, 3 directors, a legal advisor, 15 unit managers and a financial controller. The female participation in the management team has decreased slightly from a male/female ratio of 2.3:1 in 2009 to a male/female ratio of 2.5:1 in 2010. Other personnel groups include 37 executive staff, 18 clerical staff and 7 support staff. Female concentration in the latter three functions is significant, with 2.3 females for every male employee.

Table 1. NSO staff members by function: December 2010

Function	Male	Female	Total
Management team	15	6	21
Statisticians	22	44	66
Executive staff	9	28	37
Clerical staff	5	13	18
Support staff	5	2	7
Total	56	93	149

Charts 1 and 2 illustrate characteristics relating to the composition of the human resource base. Apart from the increasing female participation, especially in the younger age brackets, one can note a relatively young workforce, with 77 per cent under 41 years of age.

Chart 1. Staff distributed by sex and age

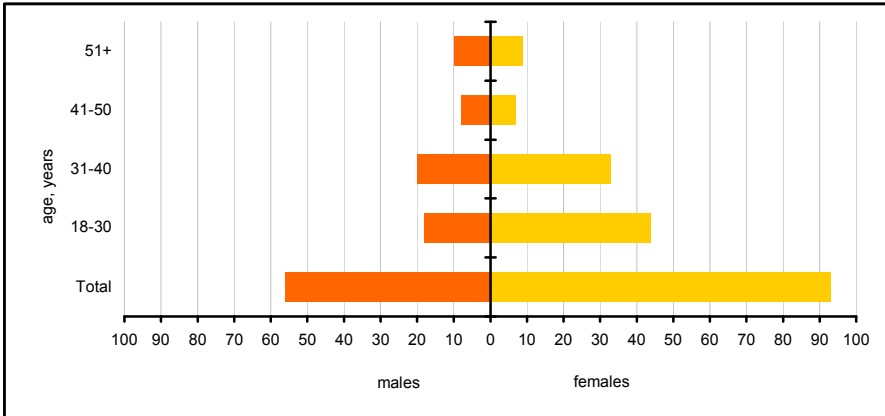
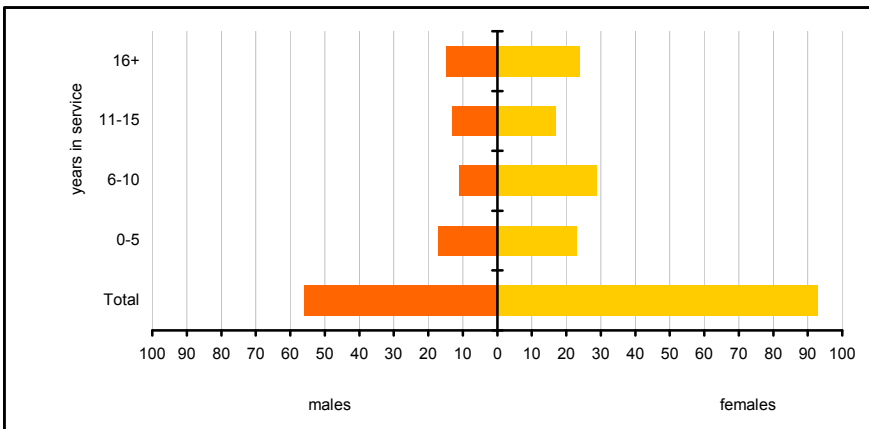


Chart 2. Staff distributed by sex and years in service



As depicted, over the past decade the NSO underwent consecutive staff intakes in possession of higher educational attainment. The circumstances of the Office have directed it towards striking a balance between experience and academic qualifications. Chart 2 gives a graphical representation of the staff distributed by number of years in service, indicating the experience spread which illustrates inter-temporal continuity. As illustrated, the strongest group is the 6-10 bracket, reflecting the significant recruitment exercises that took place during the pre-EU accession stage, and that were intended to strengthen human capital to meet obligatory statistical commitments. Almost two-thirds of the staff were recruited from 2000 onwards.

Chart 3. Staff distributed by highest level of education and years in service

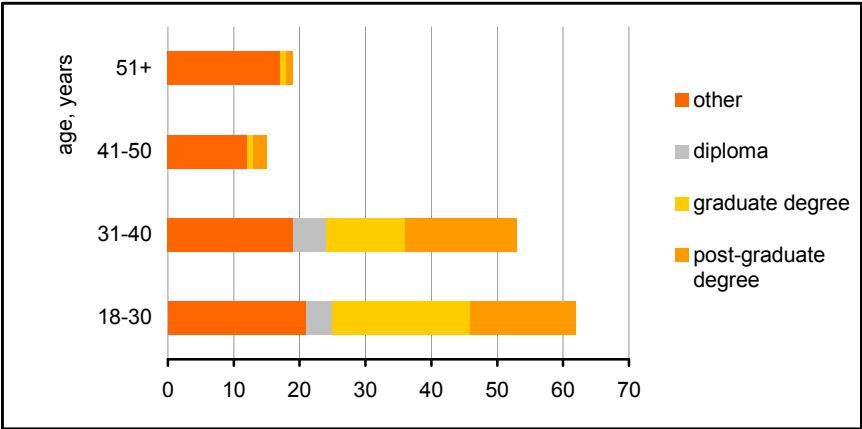


Chart 3 shows the relationship between level of education and work experience. Most graduates are young in terms of experience and this reflects developments already explained. New recruits for the post of statistician were required to have a minimum first degree. Over 54 per cent of the personnel possess a post-secondary level of education as a minimum; 9 staff members have a diploma, 35 have a graduate degree, and 36 possess a post-graduate attainment.

TRAINING

In the second semester of 2010, the Unit was assigned the responsibility for training at the NSO.

Local Training

During 2010, 77 employees attended courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation (SDO), today known as the Centre for Development Research and Training (CDRT), in ICT, Management Development, and Continuous Development Training.

Table 2 presents participation by NSO staff in CDRT courses.

Table 2. Courses organised by the Centre for Development Research and Training: 2010

Training type	No. of participants
ICT-related training	
Spreadsheets	4
Database	28
Statistical	27
Other ICT-related	4
Other training	14
Total	77

In addition, a statistical course *Analysis, Interpretation and Dissemination of Official Statistics* was set-up in collaboration with the Staff Development Organisation (SDO) within the Office of the Prime Minister. This training course, for which there was a very positive response with over 30 participants, features in the SDO prospectus and will be offered again in 2011.

The Office has also delivered a number of tailored courses for external organisations, including a course on statistical software to employees from the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment (MFEI).

The initiative taken in 2009 by the NSO to organise specific training for managers and directors by Dr Paul Gauci was also offered to senior and principal statisticians in 2010. Furthermore, two more sessions were organised for managers and directors on leadership. An internal course for nine assistant statisticians has been organised by the NSO in 2010.

The NSO subcontracted Statistics Netherlands (CBS) to organise a specialised course on Price and Volume Measures mainly for the National Accounts unit, the Short-Term Statistics unit and the Price Statistics unit. Participants from the Central Bank of Malta also attended this course.

Participation in training courses was also extended to training abroad with 12 staff members attending courses in foreign European countries, under the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) framework.

Table 3 presents foreign courses attended by NSO staff in the year under review.

Table 3. Foreign courses: 2010

Course Title	No. of participants
Methodology	
Survey Methodology and Sampling Techniques	1
Advanced Methods for Sample Surveys	1
Introduction to Statistical Metadata	1
Statistical Disclosure Control	1
Seasonal Adjustment Introductory Course	1
European Statistical System	
European Statistical Week Study Visit to Eurostat	1
National Accounts and Public Finance	
ESA95 - Advanced National Accounts	1
National Accounts (Introductory Course)	1
Government Finance Statistics (GFS) Parts 1 and 2	1
Other thematic Training	
Data Quality Reporting	1
Hands on Training for Education Statistics (UOE) Data Providers	1
Data Dissemination and Publication of Statistics	1
Total	12

Table 4 presents local courses attended by NSO staff during 2010.

Table 4. Local courses: 2010

Training type	Number of participants	% of Total
ICT-related Training	58	43.3
Data Analysis using SPSS	20	14.9
Advanced Spreadsheets	2	1.5
Pivot Tables	2	1.5
MS Access	28	20.9
Advanced Access	2	1.5
Excel Formulas	1	0.7
Advanced Excel	1	0.7
Data Warehouse Design	1	0.7
Dreamweaver Web Design	1	0.7
Management Development Training	47	35.1
Time Management Workshop for Middle Management	1	0.7
Building Better Work Relationships for Senior and Middle Management	1	0.7
Leadership for success (Principal & Senior Statisticians)	26	19.4
Leadership for success (Manager & Directors)	19	14.2
Continuous Development Training	19	14.2
Dynamic Communication	1	0.7
Writing Skills	15	11.2
Delivering Successful Presentations	1	0.7
Public Relations Module 1	1	0.7
Competency Certificate in HR	1	0.7
Other Training	10	7.5
Price and Volume Measures	10	7.5
Total - 2010	134	100.0
<i>Total - 2009</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Training Abroad

During 2010, 12 employees attended training courses and study visits abroad, compared to 31 participants in 2009. Most of the courses attended were organised by Eurostat within the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) framework.

The ESTP courses were attended by two managers and eight statisticians. An executive officer attended a study visit at Eurostat, while a statistician attended a study visit abroad which was financed through the PPP grant.

Table 5. Training abroad: 2010

Training Type	Number of participants
Courses	10
Advanced Methods for Sample Surveys	1
Data Dissemination and Publication of Statistics	1
Data Quality Reporting	1
ESA 95 - National Accounts	1
Hands on Training for Education Statistics (UOE) Data Providers	1
Seasonal Adjustment - Advanced Course	1
Seasonal Adjustment - Introductory Course	1
Statistical Disclosure Control	1
Introduction to Statistical Metadata	1
Survey Methodology and Sampling Techniques	1
Study Visits	2
European Statistical Week - Study Visit to Eurostat	1
Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) Grant - Study Visit	1
Total - 2010	12
<i>Total - 2009</i>	<i>31</i>

Official Business Abroad

Table 6 provides an outline of NSO's business abroad. The profile comprises three sections: the participants by function, the type of business attended and the monthly distribution, depicting the ongoing travelling commitments drawing on the Office's human and financial resources.

Table 6. Travel-related profile: 2009 and 2010

Participation by function	Business trips		Business days	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Management Team	100	84	182	151
Statisticians	88	57	207	124
Executive Staff	4	2	9	5
Total	192	143	395	280
Description by type				
Committees and Task Forces	25	16	39	24
Conferences and Seminars	14	6	29	13
Council Meetings, GNI and Other Meetings	43	28	72	52
Study Visits and Training	31	12	110	45
Working Groups/Parties and Workshops	79	81	145	146
Distribution by month				
January	9	4	15	6
February	13	7	25	12
March	24	15	44	29
April	16	14	31	28
May	22	12	40	22
June	26	27	60	58
July	5	5	16	12
August	-	-	-	-
September	20	13	41	23
October	21	17	40	35
November	24	19	63	37
December	12	10	20	18

In total, NSO staff members made 143 official trips abroad, spread over 280 business days, implying a monthly average of 12 trips or 23 business days. The majority of the travel was conducted by the management team, reflecting the main type of business abroad; working groups and meetings.

Table 7 summarises the direct financial burden on NSO related to official business abroad. Although the NSO received financial support from the European Commission and other institutions related to travelling expenses in connection with working groups and other meetings, it nonetheless financed 17 per cent of air and rail transport and 97 per cent of subsistence allowances. There was an improvement in financial support of 5 per cent in case of air and rail transport compared to 2009, and a decrease in financial support of 6 per cent in case of subsistence allowances. The NSO financed 100 per cent of insurance costs. Altogether in 2010, the NSO forked out €88,738 from its own resources on visits abroad, achieving a cost savings of 23 per cent when compared to 2009.

Table 7. NSO's travel-related expenses: 2010

Month	Per Diem		Travel		Insurance		Total
	No.	€	No.	€	No.	€	€
January	4	1,986	-	-	4	56	2,042
February	7	3,458	2	670	7	98	4,226
March	14	6,860	1	339	15	210	7,409
April	14	7,805	2	609	14	199	8,613
May	11	6,613	2	1,002	12	168	7,783
June	25	14,759	5	2,580	27	377	17,716
July	5	3,384	2	309	5	70	3,763
August	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
September	12	5,530	2	353	13	182	6,065
October	17	10,790	4	1,601	17	238	12,629
November	19	10,755	5	2,189	19	266	13,210
December	10	5,144	-	-	10	140	5,284
Total - 2010	138	77,083	25	9,652	143	2,003	88,738
<i>Total - 2009</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>96,756</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>16,342</i>	<i>192</i>	<i>2,693</i>	<i>115,791</i>

Grant Agreements

Table 8 lists 22 grant agreements that were concluded in 2010, denoting projects that were carried out by the NSO and approved by the European Commission. The total value of the projects covered by the grant agreements concluded in 2010 amounted to €792,491 of which €125,916 from the "Transition Facility 2005" was actually received during 2007 and €85,277 from the EU-SILC 2007 Operation was actually received in 2006 through pre-financing.

Table 8. Grant Agreements concluded in 2010 ...

Grant Description	Total outlay	NSO contribution	EU contribution
	€	€	€
EuroGroups Register	5,247	2,113	3,134
Data collection on ICT Usage in Households and by Individuals 2008	23,956	2,396	21,560
Transition Facility 2005	146,155	14,615	131,540
Data Collection on ICT usage in households and by Individuals 2007	23,568	2,357	21,211
Data collection on ICT Usage and E-commerce in Enterprises 2008	26,270	2,728	23,542
EU-SILC 2007 Operation	269,286	90,265	179,021
Pilot studies on estimating the volume of water used for irrigation	30,289	9,087	21,202
EU KLEMS and related activities	4,665	1,399	3,266
Data processing and transmission: adjustments to national systems to implement new regulations' in both Intrastat and Extrastat	22,978	6,897	16,081
Data Collection on ICT Usage in Households and by Individuals 2009	28,392	2,839	25,553
Data Collection on ICT Usage and E-commerce in Enterprises 2009	36,009	3,607	32,402
PPP Production of data by Member States 2009	22,307	10,364	11,943

... Table 8. Grant Agreements concluded in 2010

Grant Description	Total outlay	NSO contribution	EU contribution
	€	€	€
Job Vacancy Statistics - Feasibility Studies	10,020	3,006	7,014
2009 LFS ad hoc module on entry of young people into the labour market	28,701	9,305	19,396
Improvement of quality of national accounts: Evaluation of the impact, in particular on major national accounts aggregates, of the introduction of the revised ESA in the Member States	13,375	4,012	9,363
Improving the use of the HBS for food consumption indicators	19,860	3,972	15,888
Labour Force Survey - Assessing non-response and mode effects	15,724	4,717	11,007
Outward Foreign Affiliates Statistics (FATS)	12,173	3,652	8,521
Improvement of quality of National Accounts	11,977	5,673	6,304
Environmental accounts and environmental expenditure statistics	16,297	4,889	11,408
Water Statistics - Data flows for wastewater statistics	10,342	3,566	6,776
Urban Audit 2009-2010	14,900	4,470	10,430
Total - 2010	792,491	195,929	596,562
<i>Total - 2009</i>	<i>411,135</i>	<i>124,706</i>	<i>286,429</i>

UNIT D2: EXTERNAL COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION

Generally speaking, the newly formed External Cooperation and Communication unit retained the functions of the previous separate units. The new unit operates on two main levels that cover:

1. External cooperation;
2. Communication ;
3. Dissemination.

EXTERNAL COOPERATION

Parliamentary Questions

The Unit has a coordinating role in the management of Parliamentary Questions (PQs) among the four NSO directorates. During 2010, the Office provided data and information in response to 147 PQs. The classification by the various remits at the NSO is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. PQs addressed to the NSO: 2010

Directorate	No.
Director General	5
Economic Statistics	48
Business Statistics	21
Social Statistics and Information Society	16
Resources and Support Services	57
Total	147

Coordination of Grant-based Projects

The Unit has the responsibility to monitor grants, which emanate mainly from European Commission sources. To this end, the Unit works closely with the technical units, as well as with Personnel and Budgetary Matters. Specific tasks include:

- filling of grant applications in conjunction with the relevant units;
- submission of applications within the stipulated deadlines;
- dealing with clarifications and follow-up actions required by the European Commission;
- ensuring that deliverables are submitted on time.

Table 10 gives details of grant projects which were awarded to the NSO in 2010.

Table 10. Grants awarded to the NSO in 2010

Reference no.	Grant name	Technical unit
10201.2010.001-2010.615	Eurostat grants for 2010. Theme 1.02 - "Labour market": Action: Implementation of quality improvement actions for the labour force survey	Labour Market and Education Statistics
20602.2010.001-2010.339	Eurostat grants for 2011-2012. Theme 2.06 - Prices. Title: Provision of basic information on purchasing power parities (PPP)	Price Statistics
10501.2010.004-2010.476	Eurostat grants for 2010. Theme 1.05 - Health and safety. Title: "Labour force survey - 2011 ad hoc module on employment of disabled people"	Labour Market and Education Statistics
10302.2010.001-2010.501	Eurostat grants for 2010. Theme 1.03.02 - Education and lifelong learning. Title: "Implementation of the adult education survey for 2011-2012. Revision of education variables in the EU labour force survey"	Labour Market and Education Statistics
50701.2010.003-2010.644	Eurostat grants for 2010. Theme 5.07 - Information Society. Title: "Data collection on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises 2011" and "Data collection on ICT usage in households and by individuals 2011"	Information Society and Tourism Statistics
10301.2010.003-2010.676	Eurostat grants for 2010 - Theme: 1.03.01: Education statistics. Title: Statistical capacity building in relation to the implementation of the Commission Regulation as regards statistics on education and training systems	Labour Market and Education Statistics

International Affairs

The international dimension of the Unit chiefly involves (1) monitoring the status of EU legislation in progress; and (2) driving and sustaining the developing relations between the NSO, supranational and international organisations including:

1. Eurostat;
2. European Commission and EU-related bodies;
3. National Statistical Institutes;
4. International Monetary Fund (IMF);
5. International Labour Organisation (ILO);
6. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Table 11. EU legislation in the making: Instruction notes compiled by the NSO in 2010

Regulation	Working Party on Statistics session
Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No. 479/2009 as regards the quality of statistical data in the context of the excessive deficit procedure	8 April 2010 19 May 2010
Proposal on strengthening Eurostat auditing powers	29 April 2010
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament amending directive 2009/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods and passengers by sea	29 April 2010 20 September 2010 25 October 2010
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European Statistics on Tourism	19 May 2010 1 June 2010 22 June 2010 7 October 2010 25 October 2010 22 November 2010 13 December 2010
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Environmental Economic Accounts	22 June 2010 20 September 2010 25 October 2010 22 November 2010 13 December 2010
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European statistics on permanent crops	20 September 2010 22 November 2010

In the course of 2010, the Unit took action with regard to the various developments in EU legislation as presented in Table 11. The principal pieces of legislation treated during the high-level Working Party on Statistics during the year under review were the proposed regulations in respect of European tourism statistics, European environmental economic accounts, and statistical returns in respect of the carriage of goods and passengers by sea.

COMMUNICATION

Media Monitoring Service

The Unit provides a system of monitoring the news media in order to measure the extent, quality and accuracy of the coverage of NSO statistical releases and publications in the print, audio-visual and internet-based media. This also includes coverage of Eurostat news releases and publications in Maltese newspapers and on Maltese radio and television. In the course of 2010, the Unit monitored around 2,000 coverages, an average of 40 per week. Table 12 provides an overview of the recorded NSO presence in the media.

Table 12. Media coverage by statistical domain

Theme	% coverage
Economy and Finance (incl. Price Statistics)	30.4
Population and Social Conditions	20.6
Industry and Services (incl. Business, Tourism and ICT Statistics)	18.0
Agriculture and Fisheries	4.9
International Trade and Transport	7.9
Environment and Energy	1.2
Other	3.1
Eurostat Mentions	13.9
Total	100.0

An important tool in the media monitoring system is the Knowledge Management – KM@NSO – developed in 2009 in collaboration with the IT Systems unit. This system includes a knowledge repository. Media coverages are attributed to the different units and directorates within the NSO and recorded accordingly in the system.

Media professionals frequently request the Unit to assist them with sourcing information to help them in the preparation of their articles and programmes. Information requests from members of the media are treated with high priority.

Role in *Economic Survey 2010*

Throughout September-October 2010, the Unit coordinated the submission of data to be included in *Economic Survey 2010*, a publication issued alongside the annual Government Budget. Data were submitted on the following statistical domains:

- Factor incomes in gross national income;
- Gross national income and expenditure;
- Balance of Payments;
- Government revenue and expenditure;
- Inflation rates and price indices;
- Foreign trade;
- Agriculture and fisheries indicators;
- Population;
- Social indicators;
- Labour;
- Tourism.

DISSEMINATION

Information Requests

The overall direction of the Unit is to establish a single entry point for all statistical information requests. Requests may be 'simple', with the unit staff dealing with them by resorting to published data, or 'complex', in which case the technical units are consulted for their expertise and for the compilation of a specific statistical report. Among other things, the concept of the single entry point will ensure fairness and consistency in the application of cost-recovery charges to users who lodge complex requests.

In all, in the year under review, the Unit received 2,100 requests through the online request management system and through the unit generic mailbox. An average of 15 telephonic requests per day was also dealt with, while persons visiting the library to carry out their own research were estimated at five per week on average.

Table 13 presents the 2010 request workload classified by statistical domain.

Table 13. Information requests - % share by statistical domain

Theme	% domain
General Statistics	3.1
Economy and Finance (incl. Price Statistics)	6.6
Population and Social Conditions	22.0
Industry and Services (incl. Business, Tourism and ICT Statistics)	18.8
Agriculture and Fisheries	1.1
International Trade and Transport	31.8
Environment and Energy	1.8
European Statistics	14.8
Total	100.0

Library

In the year under review, the Unit continued with its efforts to develop the library collection on the parallel binaries of physical and online resources. The last months of the year were characterised by preparations for the training of library staff in V-smart, the library management system which the NSO is adopting in a joint venture with the library within the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

News Releases and Publications

The desktop publishing branch of the Unit is responsible for the coordination and maintenance of the advance release calendar, as well as for the layout and formatting of news releases and publications, including liaising with the providers of printing services. Table 14 shows a time series of the NSO's news release output, while Table 15 records the full publications issued by the Office in the year under review.

Table 14. News releases: 2000-2011

Year	Number
2000	100
2001	124
2002	147
2003	207
2004	249
2005	281
2006	292
2007	207
2008	232
2009	236
2010	249
2011	250*

* Projected

Table 15. Publications: 2010

Title	Format
Social Protection: Malta and the EU 2009	Print and online
Children 2010	Print and online
Estimating Volume of Water Usage for irrigation in Malta 2009	Online
NSO Annual Report 2009	Print and online
Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2008	Online
Education Statistics 2006	Online
Household Budgetary Survey 2008	Print and online
Demographic Review 2009	Print and online
Malta in Figures 2010	Print and online
Transport Statistics 2010	CD and online
Sustainable Development Indicators for Malta 2010	Print and online

NSO Website

The website has evolved into the Office's principal dissemination medium. As is shown by Tables 14 and 15, all the NSO's published output is available on the web for browsing and download on an unlimited access basis and free of charge. The website administrator within the unit is responsible for publication uploads, as well as for the StatDB, Sources and Methods and Selected Indicators updates submitted periodically by the technical units. Advances in these activities were registered in the year under review.

The website has been operative for over five years and is showing definite signs that it needs to be changed in the near future. An application for the composition of a new website will be lodged early in 2011. Meanwhile, efforts are being made to solve the difficulties emanating from the technical platform as well as from the delays in effecting routine updates. These efforts are, however, reactive to cases as they arise – it is imperative that a more robust solution be found in the short run.

Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS)

Following the coordination exercise undertaken by the Unit to enable adoption of the SDDS standard on 1 December 2009, the first annual set of metadata updates was compiled, with the input of the NSO technical units and the Central Bank of Malta, and uploaded onto the respective pages hosted on the International Monetary Fund website. In addition to access to the National Summary Data Page (NSDP), the NSO website now also offers access to the SDDS Metadata Page. In December 2010, a new category was inserted into the Financial Sector component of the NSDP – 'Financial Soundness Indicators'.

Malta's current contributions to the SDDS - coordinated by the NSO - may be viewed on: <http://www.nso.gov.mt/site/page.aspx?pageid=507>

Legal notices

In 2010, the legal advisor supported the Unit in the issuing of two legal notices related to the Office's operations. These are:

1. L.N. 184 of 2010 Index of Inflation for the Year 2009
2. L.N. 451 of 2010 Immovable Property Price Index as on 1 April 2010

Participation in Fairs

During 2010, the NSO engaged in a series of outreach activities related to dissemination. The Office's participation in the S&T Festival 2010, organised in the last week of October on the University of Malta campus, was an exercise in selective dissemination. In contrast, the Malta Book Fair held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre between 10 and 14 November 2010, was a most appropriate occasion for general dissemination.

Regarding the latter, the NSO participated for the first time with its statistical publications and products, as well as with those of Eurostat. Both events were successes, with a very positive response from the target audiences. The NSO stand was visited by the Prime Minister as well as the Leader of the Opposition.

World Statistics Day

The NSO had been planning its programme for the first-ever World Statistics Day since early in the year under review. This was a global initiative thought up by the United Nations, and Eurostat actively encouraged the EU Member States to mark the day by the organisation of an event. On 20 October 2010, the NSO brought its data users and providers together in a well-attended seminar to which several valid contributions were made. In addition, Malta joined Eurostat and the other EU member countries in the publication of a joint news release.

One may view the papers and presentations delivered during the NSO seminar at: <http://www.nso.gov.mt/site/page.aspx?pageid=573>

Study Visit by Bulgarian NSI

On 11-12 November 2010, two members of the unit conducted a Study Visit for a delegation of four persons from the national statistical institute of Bulgaria, headed by Ms Mariana Kotzeva, the Director General. The objective of the visit was to provide technical assistance for the design of a web-based school in statistics. For this event, the Unit was able to draw on the knowledge it had gathered in the construction of two statistical literacy products - the online e-course in statistics aimed at secondary-level students and the CD for primary-school children. The Unit was supported by an external expert in the organisation and carrying out of the visit.

UNIT D3: IT SYSTEMS

The role of the IT Systems unit within the NSO was to support the various units in IT-related matters. Throughout the period under review the main focus of the Unit remained software development and IT support.

Software Development

A total of 25 software applications were developed by the IT Systems during 2010. Seven of the applications produced were CATI projects. The remaining projects consist of windows based applications for data capturing and/or data analysis. There were also five applications developed in previous years that required enhancements.

IT Support

The Unit responded to over 350 calls for IT support. These were mostly software related and therefore were instantly settled internally. Hardware related issues were tackled by the respective suppliers.

The Unit was also engaged with the maintenance and administration of five servers.

IT Services by External Service Providers

A team from MITA contributed software development services to the NSO. The effort of this team during 2010 was exerted on enhancements and adaptations of existing software. The software projects that were worked upon during this period are the following:

- Structural Business Statistics;
- Business Register;
- Survey on Income and Living Conditions;
- Education Statistics;
- Labour Force Survey;
- Labour Cost Survey;
- Intrastat.

Eurostat-related Matters

The IT Systems unit was also responsible for maintaining the eDAMIS data transmission portal. This portal is hosted on one of the servers administered by the Unit and is used by the various units to transmit data to Eurostat. Other IT tools supplied by Eurostat are also supported by the Unit.

Throughout the period covered by this report, the Unit was represented in four international meetings and workshops.

