



## **DISS-POL-003: Policy on Dissemination**

**March 2010**

<b>Document Title:</b> Policy on Dissemination	<b>Page:</b> 1
<b>Document ID:</b> DISS-POL-003	<b>Version Number:</b> 3.0

# 1. Overview

The National Statistics Office (NSO) as established by article 9 of the Malta Statistics Authority Act, Chapter 422 of the Law of Malta, has the function of: “Collection, Compilation, Extraction and Release of official statistics”.

NSO’s statistics and analyses must be accessible and understandable in order to enable users obtain information on the Maltese society. NSO shall use its know-how to make the statistics coherent, understandable and accessible. NSO’s statistics and analyses shall cover the needs of the general public, and be extensive and detailed enough to cater for the business community and the authorities’ needs, for analytical and policy making purposes.

## 2. Abbreviations

MSA: Malta Statistics Authority

NSO: National Statistics Office

## 3. Definitions

3.1. Nill

## 4. Policy Objectives

- 4.1. Through this policy, NSO binds itself to produce high quality official statistics and disseminate these in an impartial, independent and timely manner, making them available simultaneously to all users.
- 4.2. This Policy is based on the principles as outlined in the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#), namely: impartiality, objectivity, accessibility and clarity in publishing statistics and making them available to the public in various forms.

## 5. Scope

- 5.1. All user requests irrespective of their original shall fall under the provisions of this policy, with the exception of Parliamentary Questions.

## 6. Policy Statements

- 6.1. **Dissemination Channels** – this section details how NSO shall communicate with its users and how these may in turn communicate with it.
  - 6.1.1. General enquiries shall be directed to the unit responsible for dissemination and communications within NSO, and are subject to [Legal Notice 28 of 2014](#). The relevant contact details are included in all NSO news releases and publications.
  - 6.1.2. NSO’s primary channel of dissemination for official statistics is the NSO website (<http://www.nso.gov.mt>) on which official statistics are published and made available to the public free of charge.

Document Title: Policy on Dissemination	Page: 2
Document ID: DISS-POL-003	Version Number: 3.0

- 6.1.3. The NSO website allows users to access an online statistical database, StatDb (<https://nso.gov.mt/statdb/start>) that includes statistical information on various domains for the more expert users or researchers to engage in more detailed analyses. No registration is required to access the StatDb.
- 6.1.4. The Office also makes use of several social media venues as a platform to communicate with its users and to present its output.
- 6.1.5. All outputs produced by the NSO shall include statistical information only without any reference to the implications of the statistics being published on the current state of the economy, society or policies be they governmental or otherwise.
- 6.1.6. The public is free to use, copy and quote the information published provided that the NSO is quoted as the source. It should be understood, however, that any calculations and conclusions drawn by users on the basis of NSO data are the intellectual product of the users themselves.
- 6.1.7. Tailored requests for statistical information may be submitted through the NSO website (<https://nso.gov.mt/en/Services/Pages/Request-for-Information.aspx>).
- 6.1.8. The NSO logo may not be re-disseminated for commercial purposes.
- 6.1.9. The Director General is responsible for the content of all statistical products produced by the NSO.
- 6.2. **News Releases and Publications** – NSO’s main means of information dissemination is the news release, described as a concise summary of statistical information on a particular topic. Lengthier publications are also published by NSO with less frequency.
  - 6.2.1. An Advance Release Calendar projecting three months of news releases (including the current and two subsequent months) is maintained by the NSO and may be found on the website’s homepage (<https://nso.gov.mt/en/Pages/NSO-Home.aspx>).
  - 6.2.2. All news releases are published and disseminated at 1100 hrs.
  - 6.2.3. NSO makes every effort to ensure that the scheduled news releases are published on the date and at the time announced. However, in the occurrence of unforeseen circumstances, news releases may be deferred to a later time or to another date. The NSO shall indicate this postponement on the Advance Release Calendar as soon as is practicable.
  - 6.2.4. It is the practice of the NSO to publish one news release on a given working day. Additional releases are published only when exceptional circumstances warrant this.
  - 6.2.5. The NSO may, from time to time, include ad hoc news releases focusing on thematic statistical content that are not included in the Advance Release Calendar. In such cases, the ad hoc news releases shall be inserted in the Calendar with at least one week advance notice to inform all users.
  - 6.2.6. NSO publications are available in electronic format, but in some cases, a hard copy may also be produced.
- 6.3. **Online Statistical Database (StatDb)**

Document Title: Policy on Dissemination	Page: 3
Document ID: DISS-POL-003	Version Number: 3.0

- 6.3.1. The NSO is committed to publish datasets on major social and economic statistical areas. The main indicators will be presented in traditional products such as news releases while more detailed and time-series data will be published in the StatDb.
- 6.3.2. The NSO will update its online statistical database on the day of publication of the news release. Moreover, additional data related to a particular news release or publication shall be made available on the StatDb at the earliest possible time following the publishing of the news release.
- 6.4. **Access to Microdata** – under specific conditions, the NSO may provide access to anonymised microdata files to support the research community and to enable wider use of the data collected.
  - 6.4.1. Confidentiality is of utmost importance to the work carried out by NSO. All information available to the NSO is used for statistical purposes only and the MSA Act precludes the NSO from sharing any information that can relate to an identifiable person or undertaking.
  - 6.4.2. Anonymised files containing microdata are provided for statistical/ research/ non-commercial purposes. These are produced in such a form that the information related to an identifiable person/ undertaking is suppressed.
  - 6.4.3. Microdata access is only granted under strict conditions to a selected number of institutions or persons accredited as research entities or researchers respectively as defined on the NSO website:  
<https://nso.gov.mt/en/Services/Microdata/Pages/Access-to-Microdata.aspx>.
  - 6.4.4. Access to anonymised microdata is granted subject to the terms of reference included in the application form found on the NSO website and a contract agreement that is signed by both parties.
  - 6.4.5. Access is normally granted for a definite period which is specified in the agreement.

**6.5. Metadata**

- 6.5.1. All NSO products shall include methodological notes and definitions about the statistical domain under study. To complement this, the NSO website includes a dedicated page covering the main metadata aspects (<https://nso.gov.mt/metadata/>), as well as detailed methodological and technical information on the sources and methods in place. Links to these pages are included in every News Release and publication released by the NSO.

## 7. Responsibilities

**7.1. Handling of errors**

- 7.1.1. While all efforts are made to minimise errors in statistical products, these may occasionally occur. In such cases it falls under the responsibilities of the Dissemination and Communications unit to rectify this error and publish the relevant corrections as soon as possible.
- 7.1.2. This procedure is followed for both News release and Publications.

<b>Document Title:</b> Policy on Dissemination	<b>Page:</b> 4
<b>Document ID:</b> DISS-POL-003	<b>Version Number:</b> 3.0

- 7.2. **Pre-Release Access** – In line with the European Statistics Code of Practice, limited and controlled pre-release access, under embargo, may be granted to a number of persons in high-level positions whose area of responsibility encompasses such matters.
- 7.2.1. Pre-release access may be granted for news releases and publications up to one working day prior to publication.
- 7.2.2. All such data must be labelled "Provisional" until the final publication is released by the NSO.

## 8. References

[1] Nill

## 9. Attachments

Not Applicable.

<b>Document Title:</b> Policy on Dissemination	<b>Page:</b> 5
<b>Document ID:</b> DISS-POL-003	<b>Version Number:</b> 3.0

## 10. Document Control

10.1. This policy is scheduled for review in February 2020 unless the need arises to review the policy before this date.

10.2. The NSO reserves the right to revise this policy at any point in time without notice.

Version History		
Version	Description	
1.0	Date Live:	22 AUGUST 2018
	Version Notes:	First version of the policy

Version 2.0			
	Full Name & Role	Signature	Date
Policy Owner:	SueAnn SCOTT Drago (Head of Dissemination and Communications Unit)		22 August 2018
Reviewed by:	Lorraine SPITERI (Director Corporate Services)		
Reviewed by:	Sarah J. MELI (Legal Advisor)		
Reviewed by:	Catherine VELLA (Head of Institutional Affairs)		
Approved by:	Etienne CARUANA (Acting Director General)		

<b>Document Title:</b> Policy on Dissemination	<b>Page:</b> 6
<b>Document ID:</b> DISS-POL-003	<b>Version Number:</b> 3.0