



National Statistics Office  
Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Istatistika

## **CDU-POL-002: Revisions of Official Statistics Policy**

**6 June 2024**

## 1. Overview

- 1.1. Statistical data produced by the National Statistics Office (NSO) may be subject to revisions in accordance with Principle 8 of the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#). Revisions of statistical data are normal and necessary to progressively increase the quality and precision of data, while ensuring the consistency of data over time and across domains.
- 1.2. This document outlines the general principles and procedures followed by the NSO for any revisions of data and are meant for both users and producers of statistics to gain a better understanding of the revision process and its analysis.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1. Revisions are defined broadly as any change in a value of a statistic released by the NSO to the public.
- 2.2. Revisions occur either when new observations become available and/or some past values are modified for any of the reasons outlined below.
- 2.3. Statistics can be subject to three main types of revisions:

### 2.3.1. Minor Revisions

Official statistics prioritise the timeliness and accuracy of results. Hence, initial figures are typically provisional, subject to planned minor revisions, which are routine across various domains. These revisions stem from ongoing data collection processes, multiple data sources, and administrative information, contributing to the improvement of published data aligned with standard production procedures.

Minor revisions involve:

- Routine updates to preliminary estimates, by incorporating source data which is considered more updated, complete and/or of better quality;
- Revisions arising from seasonal adjustments.

Minor revisions aim at incorporating improved source data and do not involve significant changes in the methodologies and definitions used.

### 2.3.2. Major Revisions

These involve amendments in published data driven by one or more of the following factors:

- Changes to definitions, classifications, concepts and/or methodology;
- Re-referencing by updating the index reference period, re-weighting and chain-linking;
- Incorporating results of changes in basic data sources (surveys and censuses) and/or new estimation methods;
- Discontinuation of current data sources;
- Availability of new data sources resulting in more significant changes than those outlined in 2.3.1;
- Benchmark revisions.

Major revisions may be the result of a combination of factors rather than an outcome of a single cause. This is because data producers take advantage of upcoming major revisions to implement methodological improvements.

Major revisions are subject to advance communication by the Office to its users.

### 2.3.3. Unplanned Revisions

Unplanned revisions generally occur when:

- Statistics that are initially considered final may need to be revised upon receipt of updated data which significantly affects the figures;
- Corrections are required;
- Improved estimated data becomes available from alternative sources.

The Office will provide appropriate explanations for any unplanned revisions that greatly influence the final result.

In statistical work, errors in source data and computations occasionally occur. While every effort is made to minimise errors, the Office has a long-standing policy to correct errors as soon as they are detected and to inform users by means of an errata corrige.

## 3. Implementation of Revisions

- 3.1. All news releases that will be affected by revisions are appropriately flagged in the news release calendar.
- 3.2. Revisions are referred to in the methodological notes accompanying the release and explained/pre-announced as appropriate.
- 3.3. For each statistical domain subject to revision, the specific characteristics of the revision are incorporated in an internal Revisions Inventory. Such characteristics include: type of revision, types of data affected by the revision, frequency of revisions, periods revised and causes of revision.
- 3.4. Major revisions only take place at intervals, limited to not more than twice a year. Reasonable effort is made to explain major revisions in advance, through appropriate information on the online news release calendar, an accompanying note on the news release and a Press Information Notice disseminated at least 2 weeks in advance. As much as possible, the NSO provides indications of the statistical measures which will be affected by the major revision, the magnitude of the revision and its potential impact on other important indicators.
- 3.5. Benchmark revisions take place at distant intervals and when absolutely necessary. They are pre-announced well beforehand and implemented retrospectively. Benchmark revisions are coordinated across statistical domains to ensure coherence. Efforts are made to coordinate benchmark revisions with related EU initiatives, to ensure comparability of results across the EU. As much as possible, when a benchmark revision is announced, the NSO shall provide indications of the statistical measures which will be affected by such revision, the magnitude of the revision and its potential impact on other important indicators.
- 3.6. Breaks in series brought about by a revision are flagged to users and explained.
- 3.7. The procedure for handling errors entails issuing an errata corrige notification indicating the correction made and the date when the correction was made. Corrections are flagged to ensure clarity and transparency.

## 4. References

- [1] European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6.6 “Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies.”
- [2] European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 8.5 “Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures.”
- [3] European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 12.3 “Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve source data, statistical processes and outputs.”

## 5. Document Control

- 5.1. This policy needs to be formally reviewed by the Policy Owner every two (2) years from coming into effect.
- 5.2. The current version of this policy, together with any previous versions, shall be recorded below.

Version History		
Version	Description	
1.0	Date Live:	June 2022
	Version Notes:	First version of the policy
2.0	Date Live:	June 2024
	Version Notes:	The types of revisions were changed by: renaming routine revisions to minor revisions; replacing routine ad-hoc revisions and benchmark revisions with major revisions; adding unplanned revisions to the list of revisions. Text throughout the policy was also amended accordingly.

Full Name & Role	
Policy Owner:	Duncan Brincat (Director Corporate Services)
Reviewed by:	Lara Friggieri Cordina (Head of Communication and Dissemination Unit)
Reviewed by:	Catherine Vella (Head of Office of the Director General)
Approved by:	Etienne Caruana (Director General, NSO)