CELEBRATING





Published by
National Statistics Office
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CIP Data

Celebrating 25 years of NSO 2001 - 2006
Valletta: National Statistics Office, Malta, 2026
68p.

Print: ISBN: **978-9918-605-60-6**
PDF: ISBN: **978-9918-605-61-3**

NSO publications and more information about the content of this publication are available from:

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Malta
NSO
National Statistics Office
Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Istatistika
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In Malta, official statistics have been compiled and published for generations, with early statistical records appearing in publications such as the Malta Blue Books and with population censuses conducted regularly since 1842. The establishment of the National Statistics Office (NSO), on 1 March 2001 under the Malta Statistics Authority Act, was therefore not the beginning of Malta's statistical journey, but an important new chapter in a long-standing tradition of measuring and documenting the social and economic life of the Maltese Islands. Replacing what was then known as the Central Office of Statistics (COS), the new Office was given a clear legal mandate and greater regulatory and executive independence within the framework of the Malta Statistics Authority. Its responsibilities encompass the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of official statistics covering Malta's demographic, social, economic and environmental spheres.

Over the past quarter of a century, the NSO has evolved alongside Malta itself. From traditional statistical collections and paper-based processes, it has progressively embraced new technologies, new sources of data and new methods of statistical production. Major milestones have included the expansion of social and economic surveys, the adoption of European statistical standards, the development of digital data collection and dissemination, the introduction of geographic and spatial analysis, and the increasing use of administrative and other innovative data sources.

The role of a national statistical office goes beyond producing numbers. Official statistics must be independent, objective, relevant, transparent and of high quality. They must also be produced in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the individuals, households and organisations that provide information. These principles are fundamental to the NSO's mission and to the confidence placed in its statistics.



The NSO has also become an integral part of the wider European Statistical System (ESS), working within common European standards and methodologies and contributing to the production of comparable statistics for Malta and the European Union. As coordinator of Malta's statistical system, the Office works with other national authorities to strengthen the quality, coherence and relevance of official statistics.

The past 25 years have therefore been a story of continuity and change: continuity in Malta's longstanding commitment to documenting its society and economy, and change in the methods, technologies and expertise used to do so.

While the story of the NSO is undoubtedly a story about data, it is also about people: the professionals who produce and safeguard the statistics, the respondents who provide the information on which they are based, the institutions and partners who contribute to the national statistical system, and the many users who turn statistics into knowledge and knowledge into action.

Twenty-five years on, the NSO remains committed to its fundamental purpose: producing independent, high-quality and relevant official statistics that help Malta understand where it has been, where it stands today, and where it may be heading tomorrow.

Central Office of Statistics
M A L T A

NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE · MALTA

NCPE
EQUALITY CERTIFIED



2001

The Origin

Established on March 1, 2001, under the Malta Statistics Authority Act, the National Statistics Office (NSO) transformed the former Central Office of Statistics into an independent authority. Over the past 25 years, the NSO has evolved from a traditional statistical institution into an agile, modern organization at the heart of Malta's evidence-based decision-making.

2006 – 2010

Quality & International Standards

The mid-to-late 2000s focused on enhancing quality and international engagement. By formally adopting the European Statistics Code of Practice and the IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standard, the NSO aligned Malta with global statistical standards. The office also began releasing anonymized datasets for academic research, hosted the international DGINS conference, and earned the Equality Mark for gender equality in employment.

2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013

2000 – 2005





Formative Foundations

The NSO's initial years established key social and economic benchmarks for Malta. The office launched cornerstone social initiatives—including the Household Budgetary Survey, the EU-SILC, and made the Labour Force Survey a continuous project — while publishing Malta's first ESA-aligned GDP estimates. Digital modernization also began during this era with the introduction of telephone-assisted interviewing and the launch of the StatDb database.

2011 – 2014

Modernization & User Engagement



Operational expansion and public engagement highlighted the following decade. The NSO strengthened its Business Register, launched its social media presence, and opened a dedicated regional office in Gozo. To better serve data users, the office introduced a revamped website alongside a dedicated metadata portal and conducted its first formal User Satisfaction Survey.





2015 – 2020

Digital Transformation & Resilience

The NSO accelerated its digital transformation by introducing tablet-based field collection, adopting spatial GIS capabilities, and achieving ISO 27001 information security certification. Institutional trust was reinforced through the signing of the national Commitment on Confidence in Statistics. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020, the NSO demonstrated high adaptability by shifting overnight to remote operations, ensuring uninterrupted statistical production while taking on national SDG indicator monitoring.

MALTA EU2017

2024 – 2025

Quality & International Standards

Recent years have expanded the national statistical system through the designation of Other National Authorities and the integration of smart data sources, including card payment transaction analytics. Alongside launching interactive SDG portals and earning the Public Service Good Governance Award, the NSO strengthened its European presence through leadership roles within the European Statistical System.



2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026

2021 – 2023

Strategic Innovation & Rebranding

The 2021 Census marked a major technological milestone with the introduction of web-based data collection. During this period, the NSO standardized its production workflows, published multi-annual work programs, and published Malta's first SDG monitoring report. This phase of modernization culminated in 2023 with the launch of a new corporate identity and website.

Malta NSO
National Statistics Office
Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Istatistika



2026

Malta 25 Years of NSO

	2001	2026
Team Size	136	228
Average Age	33	37
News Releases	124	240
Directorates & Units	4 19	6 30
Social media Platforms	0	5
Premises	1	2

Legacy & Beyond

Anchored in core values of independence, quality, transparency, and collaboration, the NSO enters its next quarter-century prepared to shape the future of Malta's national statistical system and empower decision-makers with reliable data.

Hon. Clyde Caruana

Foreword

Over the past twenty-five years, the National Statistics Office has established itself as one of the country's most integral public institutions. It provides something that every successful democracy and modern economy depends upon: information that is objective, methodologically sound, and trusted. That trust has not been built through assertion, but through the consistent adherence to professional standards, statistical rigour, and institutional independence.

Economic policy ultimately comes down to making choices about finite resources. Those choices are only as good as the evidence on which they are based. Reliable official statistics, therefore, do far more than describe the state of the country; they shape the quality of public policy itself. They allow governments to assess economic performance, identify emerging challenges, allocate resources responsibly, and evaluate whether policies are delivering the intended outcomes. Without confidence in the underlying data, trust in the decisions that follow inevitably weakens.

Malta benefits from an institution whose statutory mandate, professional culture, and adherence to internationally recognised methodologies ensure that its statistics command the confidence not only of government but also of citizens, businesses, investors, and our European partners.

The National Statistics Office operates under the European Statistics Code of Practice, which prioritises professional independence. Compliance is assessed through independent peer review, while statistics for European purposes undergo Eurostat's quality assurance processes. This framework adds accountability, strengthening the integrity, comparability, and international standing of Malta's official statistics.

For a small open economy like Malta, comparability is crucial. Our economic performance is continually assessed alongside that of our European counterparts. Common methodologies ensure that Malta's figures on economic growth, public finance, inflation, employment, and other indicators are measured according to the same standards across the European Union. This allows for fair, transparent, and confident evaluation of Malta's data-driven comparisons.

The achievements of the past quarter-century deserve recognition. They reflect the dedication of the Malta Statistics Authority, successive administrations, and generations of statistical officers whose professionalism has enabled the Office to meet an ever-expanding array of national and European obligations. Throughout this period, the statistical system has evolved significantly, adopting more sophisticated methodologies, greater use of administrative data, higher reporting frequencies, and increasingly complex analytical demands, while maintaining the quality and reliability for which the Office is respected.

The demands placed on official statistics will continue to grow as economies become more complex, technology transforms data availability, and policymakers require increasingly timely and detailed evidence. The principles that underpin official statistics, however, remain constant: professional independence, methodological excellence, transparency, and public trust. These are the qualities that have defined the National Statistics Office over the past twenty-five years, and they will continue to underpin its contribution in the years ahead.

I extend my appreciation to everyone who has contributed to the National Statistics Office's success over the past twenty-five years. Their work has strengthened the quality of public administration, strengthened confidence in Malta's institutions, and reinforced our standing within Europe. I am confident that the NSO will continue to uphold these high standards and remain a pillar of evidence-based policymaking for many years to come.

Hon. Clyde Caruana
Minister for Finance





Mr Michael Pace Ross
2008 – 2014



Dr Gordon Cordina
2006 – 2007

2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013



2001 – 2006
Mr Alfred Camilleri



2007 – 2008
Mr Reno Camilleri
Acting DG

Director Generals' Timeline



Mr Reuben Fenech
2015 – 2017

2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026



2014 – 2015
Mr Joseph Bonello
Acting DG

2018 – 2019 Acting DG
2019 – Present



Mr Etienne Caruana



Mr Alfred Camilleri

"A rollercoaster experience that hooked me onto statistics forever."

A career in Public Service

I graduated in Public Administration in 1983 and, in 1992, obtained a master's degree in Economics from the University of Wales. In 1993, Government requested that I join the then Central Office of Statistics with a view to revamping the national statistics system. I was appointed Director of the Central Office of Statistics in 1996 and, following the enactment of the Malta Statistics Authority Act in 2000, I became the first Director General of the National Statistics Office on 1 March 2001. In that sense, I was both the last Director of the Central Office of Statistics and the first Director General of the NSO. I remained in the role until March 2006, when I was appointed Permanent Secretary at the Ministry for Finance. Now a retired career ex-civil servant, I am still active in the private sector.

My years in national statistics had a profound influence on both my professional and personal development. The knowledge, insights and experiences I gained provided a solid technical and professional grounding that later proved extremely valuable in policy-related work at both national and European level. The management skills I developed while leading the organisation through such a period of transformation were lessons that could not have been learned elsewhere. It was a challenging and demanding time, but it was also an important part of my formative years.

Building a modern statistical system

My years in national statistics coincided with a critical period in Malta's development. I moved into the sector after Malta had applied to join the European Union. The negotiations leading to EU membership required substantial support from a national statistics system capable of producing timely and high-quality statistics. At the time, Malta's system neither produced all the required statistics nor did so in a timely manner. Methodologically, the system was rather archaic and in need of substantial upgrading. Without the required reforms, the country would have encountered difficulties in negotiating EU membership.

At the same time, irrespective of Malta's aspirations on the EU front, a fast-developing country required and deserved a statistical system capable of delivering consistently and sustainably to support governance, policymaking and business needs. This became the driving force behind the transformation of the national statistics system.

Transforming the NSO

The NSO we have today was my colleagues' and my creation. The challenges facing the Central Office of Statistics were considerable. Its legislation required a complete overhaul, it was housed in inadequate premises spread across two separate locations, it relied on outdated statistical methodologies and IT systems, and it faced shortages in human capital, low staff morale, significant knowledge gaps and a credibility problem.

Yet the organisation possessed one invaluable asset: a committed workforce that recognised the need for serious change. What staff members sometimes lacked in formal qualifications, they had gained through experience, an asset that proved indispensable during a period of major transformation.

Together, we embarked on a comprehensive renewal programme. We enacted the Malta Statistics Authority Act, created a new organisational structure for the NSO and introduced a competitive salary structure. We consolidated the Office into a single refurbished building equipped with modern facilities and IT infrastructure. We recruited young and qualified staff who worked alongside experienced colleagues, supported by an intensive strategic training programme. We adopted the EU Statistics Acquis Communautaire, successfully negotiated the statistics chapter in Malta's EU accession process, widened the statistical programme and introduced new methodologies across all statistical domains. We also implemented updated statistical governance policies, strengthened dialogue with users, established a statistics release calendar and fostered a positive can-do attitude throughout the organisation.

Managing change and investing in people

A renewal project of this scale inevitably brought significant challenges. Managing change and the uncertainty it created was perhaps the greatest of these. At the same time, we had to continue producing the statistics that users depended on while updating methodologies and introducing new outputs.

The most important resource of any statistical organisation is its people, their knowledge and their experience. It was therefore essential to introduce new talent while also recognising and valuing the contribution of experienced staff. Managing people is never easy, particularly during periods of radical change. However, through an inclusive and transparent management style that emphasised empowerment, dialogue, recognition and teamwork, we were able to move forward together.

As the organisation evolved, it continued producing its historical statistical series while modernising methodologies and introducing new ones. Looking back, I believe the organisation's greatest strengths became its value system, the

statistics collection, production and dissemination infrastructure we created, and its development into a professional and learning organisation.

Embracing Europe and building credibility

One of the most important developments during my tenure was the strengthening of the NSO's relationship with the European Statistical System (ESS) and Eurostat. We began participating regularly in Eurostat meetings and contributing actively to discussions. Additionally, our full integration in the ESS gave our staff members new opportunities to learn and grow professionally. This gave us opportunities to learn from international best practices and benefit from significant technical and methodological support. We also established cooperation agreements with several National Statistical Institutes across Europe. This created new opportunities for staff members to develop professionally and broaden their expertise. The transition from a closed and outdated national system to an open, modern system fully integrated within the European statistical community had an enduring impact on the organisation and its people, strengthening both confidence and motivation. At the same time, we worked hard to strengthen the organisation's credibility. We transformed a system that was struggling to deliver into one that produced quality statistics for all users. We maintained open channels of communication and nurtured the organisation's professional independence, which became widely recognised and respected. As a result, we gained credibility across government, academia, the media and the wider public.

Public debate around official statistics is a natural part of the environment in which statistical organisations operate. Different interpretations of statistical releases are inevitable. In my view, however, such debate demonstrates the relevance of official statistics. When statistics become part of national discussion, it is a sign that the work of the national statistics system matters and is not being ignored.

Reflections on leadership and the future of the NSO

As the NSO marks its 25th anniversary, I firmly believe that the production and dissemination of independent, high-quality official statistics remains both a democratic right and a public good. The NSO must continue striving to safeguard its independence and transparency, while remaining relevant to the country's evolving socio-economic realities and the needs of its stakeholders. It is only by doing so that the organisation can maintain its relevance, credibility and public value in the years ahead.

My advice to current and future leaders is straightforward: safeguard the NSO's professional independence, invest in and empower your staff, and never become blind to change in the wider environment. Relevance and credibility reinforce professional independence, and together they form the foundation of a successful national statistical office.

Looking back, my entire involvement with national statistics remains memorable. I never planned to work in the field but was unexpectedly called upon to lead its renewal. What began as an unforeseen opportunity became one of the most rewarding chapters of my career.



Visit by Archbishop Mercieca





Dr Gordon Cordina

"A brief time, yet intense and productive."

An economist's journey to the NSO

I am an economist by training and profession, having worked in central banking, public policy, social dialogue, official statistics and the private sector in Malta, as well as at the European Commission. I am a co-founder of a specialist economic consultancy firm and currently serve as Chairman of Bank of Valletta.

My objective as Director General was to apply my professional skills to further develop the institution as it continued evolving into a culture of independence, operating under the oversight of a dedicated authority while continuously strengthening its methods and systems to meet international quality standards.

My experience as Director General was intensely formative. It was the first time I found myself ultimately responsible for a large institution of national importance operating within a wider European network. The experience shaped me professionally and personally, and to a large extent it strengthened my ability to make difficult but necessary decisions.

Supporting a crucial national milestone

Although my tenure at the NSO was brief, it came at an important stage in the organisation's development. The NSO had already taken its first crucial steps towards integration within the European Statistical System during its initial years of existence. The Office gave the final push towards producing the quality and reliable statistics that enabled Malta to join the euro area. We continued a process of methodological improvements that was also reflected in a refreshed style for statistical publications.

At the same time, we implemented necessary revisions to key official GDP data, despite the repercussions this entailed within a particularly nervous and sensitive political climate. These decisions were not always easy, but they reflected the professional responsibility of the institution to present accurate and reliable statistics. I also recognise and salute the contributions of the Director Generals who served before and after me, whose efforts enabled and consolidated these achievements.

Indeed, one of the achievements I value most is the reinforcement of the culture that the NSO is, and should be seen as, a professional institution that operates independently of political processes. Looking back, I believe the NSO has continued to strengthen and consolidate this reputation over the years.

Strength through independence and European integration

Throughout its 25-year journey, one of the NSO's greatest strengths has been its participation in the European Statistical System. This brought much-needed resources, expertise and methodologies that helped develop the institution and strengthen its capabilities. Equally important were the talented individuals across the organisation who consistently pushed for progress and improvement at different levels. As a result, the NSO today enjoys a reputation that is unparalleled in its history.

My time at the NSO also highlighted an important consideration for a small country such as Malta: the balance between producing statistics for European requirements and ensuring that official statistics continue to respond effectively to the country's specific needs and characteristics. This was a recurring consideration during my tenure and remains relevant today.

The continuing importance of official statistics

Today, more than ever, decisions need to be evidence-based and data-driven. We live in a world where competing demands on scarce resources continue to multiply, while the challenge of building sustainable societies and protecting our environment has never been greater. In this context, the role of official statistics is fundamental. I believe the NSO is well placed to continue making a significant contribution to Maltese society by providing the reliable information required for sound decision-making.

Personal reflections and looking ahead

My advice to current and future leaders of the organisation is to remain true to the institution's mission. No individual personality, interest or concern should ever override the need for integrity and professionalism in statistical work. These principles are essential to maintaining public trust and ensuring the continued relevance of official statistics.

Looking back today, I remember my time at the NSO as a brief period, yet one that was exceptionally intense and productive. I reflect with satisfaction on the decisions that had to be taken, often in difficult circumstances, and on the professional relationships that were built and have endured over the years.

Mr Michael Pace Ross

"Challenging, rewarding and stimulating."

From statistician to Director General

I have always had a fascination with numbers as a way of understanding the world. That interest led me to join the NSO in 1998 as a statistician within the National Accounts Unit, shortly after graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Business Management and Economics. After completing an MBA at the University of Malta, I was promoted to head of unit. In 2007, I was appointed Director for Economic Statistics, and a year later I became Director General.

My years as Director General came with their share of challenges, but I was always conscious that I was building on the work of those who came before me. As the NSO marks its 25th year, it is worth remembering that it did not begin in isolation. It followed from the Central Office of Statistics, which had served Malta since 1947. That sense of continuity gave me confidence when difficult issues had to be addressed and helped me keep the Office moving forward. This turned my six years at the helm into a learning curve, sometimes a steep one, but always a fruitful one. The role shaped the way I work. It taught me the importance of optimising human and financial resources, maintaining regular internal communication and taking responsibility for decisions made. These are lessons I continue to carry with me in my professional life.



Leading the NSO through growth and change

You could say I had a baptism of fire as my appointment as Director General came soon after the 2008 financial crisis which led to a prolonged recession that also affected Malta. Despite this difficult start, together with my team at the NSO, we looked ahead and succeeded in delivering important milestones, while building on the strong foundations laid by my predecessors.

A major milestone at the start of my tenure was the completion of the Household Budgetary Survey, in 2009. Later that year, the NSO subscribed to the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard, laying the foundation for advances in the visibility and availability of timely and comprehensive statistics, primarily in the financial and monetary fields.

We progressed to deliver the Census of Agriculture in 2010 and made an important foray into health statistics through the compilation and submission of the first set of System of Health Accounts data. From 2010 onwards, I led the Office's preparations for the decennial Census of Population and Housing, held in 2011. As Census Officer, I was ultimately responsible for all aspects of this major national exercise.

In 2014, the Office branched out in several directions to support Malta's economic and social development. A significant milestone that year was the opening of an office in Gozo. This was followed by another office at Malta International Airport, established to support the collection of tourism statistics through survey interviewers.

A major challenge was the introduction of the European System of Accounts, ESA 2010, which brought substantial changes to the compilation of Malta's National Accounts. It placed significant professional demands on NSO statisticians, but it also provided an opportunity to develop new expertise. During this period, several statistical domains feeding into the National Accounts were further developed.

Strong relations between NSO and European National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat paved the way for Malta to host the DGINS Conference in 2009 under the theme Migration: Statistical Mainstreaming. Looking back, it is hard to overstate the value that NSO statisticians and other employees gained through working with their European counterparts. The opportunity to network and share insights on common challenges provided everyone with a broader perspective.

At a corporate level, another achievement was receiving the Equality Mark from the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality in 2010, reflecting the NSO's early commitment to fair and inclusive workplace practices.

EU Presidency



Building a strong and visible statistical office

The strength of any national statistical institute can be summarised in one sentence: to produce high-quality statistics efficiently, with as little burden as possible on respondents, and to make them available to everyone at the same time, without bias or delay. In essence, this was the NSO's mission statement during my tenure. It brought together the core principles of our work: sound methods and sources, relevance, reliability, comparability, timeliness, independence and impartiality. I feel a great sense of pride at having played a part in what I consider to be the NSO's greatest achievement over the past 25 years following the enactment of the Malta Statistics Authority Act in 2001.

The NSO also conducted surveys for government ministries and agencies. This helped the Office maintain regular contact with organisations that were both providers and users of statistics. It also helped strengthen trust and working relationships. Under my watch, the NSO made a conscious effort to increase its interaction and visibility with stakeholders. We held regular meetings with data users and providers and strengthened our presence in the media. In 2010, NSO managers and senior staff took part in Statistika għal Kulħadd, a series of 30-minute programmes aired over 16 weeks on TVM and Channel 22.

We invested heavily in staff development. Statisticians were recruited and trained locally, given placements, and sent to courses, meetings and seminars abroad, particularly in Luxembourg. At the same time, we worked to improve working conditions and the physical working environment, signing two collective agreements that provided improved salaries and conditions of service.

All IT systems were strengthened to meet the growing demands of statistical production and dissemination. We also introduced several innovative publications, including a publication on sustainable development indicators for Malta, a compact publication dedicated to statistics on Gozo, and a bilingual glossary of statistical terms.

During my term, the NSO published an average of 250 news releases annually, giving further impetus to the Office's visibility. Participation in job exposure initiatives and other public events also strengthened engagement with different audiences.

One project that remains particularly significant in my mind was the Blue Books digitisation initiative. During my time, we digitised 116 volumes dating back to the British Administration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The project provided users and the public with unprecedented access to archived statistical material.

The importance of official statistics in a changing world

We are living in a world increasingly dominated by misinformation and disinformation. This makes the role of official statistics infinitely more challenging and more important. One way of addressing this challenge is through clear metadata, so that users can better understand how statistics are produced, what they measure and how they should be interpreted. This was introduced at the NSO during my years there and remains an important part of building trust in official statistics.

Above all, the NSO must remain objective and independent. Its credibility with policymakers, institutions, academia and citizens has been built carefully over the years and must continue to be protected.

Lessons from leadership

Serving as Director General of the NSO carried great responsibility and accountability. It brought me into contact with all strata of society, from policymakers to researchers, respondents and the public. It also connected me with counterparts in other national statistical institutes through regular meetings in Luxembourg and Brussels. Through that wider network, I came to appreciate

that the challenges we faced in Malta were often shared by other institutes abroad. They too were dealing with limited resources, growing demands and the need to keep improving.

Visit by Archbishop Cremona



A particularly proud moment came in early 2013, when I was nominated to serve on the European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC) within the European Statistical System. The ESAC is a high-level committee that assists the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in ensuring that users' needs, and the costs borne by information providers and producers, are taken into account when setting priorities for EU statistical policy. For me, the nomination was personally rewarding, but its significance went beyond that. I saw it as a sign of the respect and confidence that Malta's National Statistics Office had earned within the European Statistical System, and particularly with Eurostat.

What I would emphasise most to current and future leaders is the need to keep the European Statistics Code of Practice at the centre of the NSO's work. It should continue to guide management, statisticians and all statistical staff, particularly in safeguarding the organisation's independence, integrity and accountability.



DGINS 2009



Mr Joseph Bonello

"Supporting continuity and modernisation in official statistics."

A professional journey in official statistics

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to reflect on my time at the National Statistics Office and on the significant progress made in the quality of official statistics over the past 25 years. I joined the Office as a statistician in 1995, when it was still operating as part of the civil service, before later transitioning into the independent National Statistics Office under the Malta Statistics Authority Act.

Shortly after joining the organisation, I was entrusted with establishing a section dedicated to public finance statistics. Initially forming part of the National Accounts Unit, Public Finance Statistics gradually developed into a separate unit, which I subsequently headed. The role required close collaboration with the Central Bank of Malta and the Ministry for Finance, experiences that reinforced the importance of partnerships in the production of high-quality official statistics.

Over the years, I continued to serve the organisation in a number of capacities. Following my promotion to Director of Economics in 2009, and subsequently Acting Director of Business Statistics, I contributed to the continued strengthening of economic and business statistics. In November 2014, I was entrusted with the role of Acting Director General, assuming leadership responsibility for the organisation during a transitional period until the appointment

of the next Director General. Even after my retirement from the NSO, I continued supporting the organisation as a consultant and later as Board Secretary of the Malta Statistics Authority until the end of 2022.

Leading through a period of transition

My tenure as Acting Director General lasted only six months, yet it remains a particularly memorable period of my professional career. From the outset, I understood that my responsibility extended beyond maintaining the day-to-day operations of the Office. It was essential to safeguard continuity, preserve institutional stability and ensure a smooth transition between the outgoing Director General, Mr Michael Pace Ross, and the appointment of his successor.



Management Team of 2015

A key priority during this period was to maintain the strong governance framework that characterised the organisation and to ensure that important relationships with national and international partners remained robust. Equally important was preserving internal cohesion across the organisation and ensuring that ongoing priorities continued to progress without disruption. This required prudent decision-making, clear communication and responsible stewardship of the commitments and responsibilities entrusted to the Office.

While my role was always intended to be temporary, I nevertheless sought to focus attention on initiatives that I believed were strategically important for the future development of the organisation.

Advancing the use of administrative data

One area in particular stood out as essential to the future of official statistics: the increased use of administrative data. Through my interaction with other European statistical offices, I became convinced that greater access to administrative sources would significantly improve both the timeliness and robustness of Malta's statistical outputs.

In this regard, I became a strong advocate for the use of tax data as a strategic source of information, particularly within business and economic statistics. Administrative data has the potential to improve coverage, enhance quality and reduce dependence on costly and burdensome surveys. It also creates the foundations for the development of a wide range of economic indicators, including turnover, structural business and income statistics. These developments were fully aligned with broader European trends, where administrative data was increasingly being recognised as a means of improving both efficiency and quality while reducing reporting burdens.

However, the use of administrative data was never simply a technical matter. It required trust between institutions, careful negotiations and, in many cases, legal changes to facilitate access to information for statistical purposes. I therefore devoted considerable effort to promoting the legal and institutional frameworks necessary for the effective use of administrative sources. Looking back, I believe this helped prepare the Office for a more modern model of statistical production, one in which administrative data complements traditional surveys and contributes to more timely and relevant statistics.

Strengthening strategic partnerships

Another important focus of my stewardship was strengthening cooperation with key national stakeholders. I was particularly committed to reinforcing ties with the Central Bank of Malta, recognising that closer collaboration would be mutually beneficial. During this period, I advanced discussions on subsidiary legislation to facilitate the exchange of business register data and support various national and international reporting obligations.

At the same time, I encouraged stronger cooperation with ministries and government entities to improve access to administrative information needed for the compilation of statistics. These relationships were fundamental to ensuring that the NSO could continue expanding its statistical programme while maintaining the high standards expected of a modern national statistical institute.

Reflections on the NSO's future

As I look back on my years of service, I remain deeply grateful for the opportunity to have contributed to the organisation's development. Any achievements were only possible through the professionalism, commitment and support of colleagues across the NSO. Throughout my career, I came to appreciate that the organisation is much more than a producer of statistics. It is a community of dedicated public servants working with integrity in the national interest.

I left the organisation with a profound appreciation for the trust, collaboration and shared purpose that characterised my years of service. These qualities remain among the NSO's greatest strengths and provide a solid foundation for its future development.

Looking ahead, I believe the NSO is well positioned to continue developing an evolving statistical programme that remains aligned with Malta's national priorities and with the legal and institutional frameworks governing official statistics. Continued attention must be given to areas such as data-sharing arrangements, access to administrative sources, confidentiality safeguards and governance obligations.

By continuing to invest in quality, coordination, legal preparedness and modern data systems, the NSO will be well placed to remain a trusted and forward-looking institution at the centre of evidence-based decision-making.

Staff of 2015



Mr Reuben Fenech

"Transformation, collaboration and shared achievement."

From finance to Public Service

I graduated in Economics and European Studies from the University of Malta and became a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) in 2003. My professional career began at the Malta Stock Exchange, followed by eight years with HSBC Malta and a further two years with HSBC UK in London, where I specialised in portfolio management and retirement solutions.

Upon returning to Malta, I was given the opportunity to join the National Statistics Office as Director General. The role represented a new and rewarding challenge, allowing me to contribute to an institution that plays a fundamental role in supporting evidence-based decision-making and informing public debate.

My time as Director General was both professionally rewarding and personally enriching. Coming from a private-sector background, it provided me with a new perspective on leadership, public service and organisational change. The experience reinforced the importance of balancing ambition with patience, and strategic vision which deepened my appreciation for the





Malta Presidency 2017

complexities of leading change within a public institution. These lessons have remained valuable throughout my subsequent professional journey.

Leading through Malta's EU Presidency

One of the defining aspects of my tenure was that it coincided with Malta's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This provided the NSO with a unique opportunity to contribute at a European level and allowed me to chair several meetings of the Council Working Party on Statistics. The period was characterised by close collaboration among European statistical authorities, and I was pleased to see several important legislative files successfully concluded.

The NSO continued to strengthen its role within the European Statistical System while maintaining its commitment to producing high-quality official statistics for Malta. During Malta's EU Presidency, relationships with Eurostat and fellow National Statistical Institutes became particularly intensive, providing valuable opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing. Despite Malta's relatively small size, the NSO was able to make meaningful contributions to discussions and initiatives at the European level.

Modernising the organisation

Looking back, I regard the modernisation of the organisation as one of the most



significant achievements during my tenure. This was not the result of a single initiative but rather a collective effort encompassing improvements in human resource management, organisational structures, internal processes, communications and financial management.

Together, we sought to strengthen the NSO's visibility and reinforce the importance of official statistics to society. We reviewed the organisation's mission and strategic direction, modernised both internal and external communications, and placed greater emphasis on making statistics more accessible and relevant to a wider audience.

Visit by Mr Speaker

During my tenure there was growing recognition of the importance of official statistics, particularly as information became increasingly accessible and widely distributed through multiple channels. To address this, the NSO invested significantly in communication and outreach. We increased engagement with the media, introduced more user-friendly statistical releases, enhanced the design and presentation of publications, developed infographics and expanded our presence on social media platforms. These initiatives boosted engagement with a broader and more diverse audience. I often described statistics as the light that helps guide decision-making. Just as a vehicle relies on visibility to navigate its journey, countries and societies rely on reliable statistics to make informed choices about their future.

Perhaps most importantly, these initiatives helped strengthen staff engagement and foster a greater sense of pride. The continued evolution of the NSO's communication practices and public outreach gives me confidence that many of the foundations established during that period have continued to support the organisation's development.

Challenges, leadership and people

One of the greatest challenges I faced was managing change. Any process of transformation naturally brings uncertainty, and it is important that change is accompanied by dialogue, consultation and a clear sense of purpose. While different stakeholders sometimes had varying perspectives on priorities and approaches, we remained focused on our strategic objectives and worked collaboratively to build understanding and support. These experiences reinforced the importance of communication, trust and perseverance in leadership and helped shape the organisation's long-term direction.

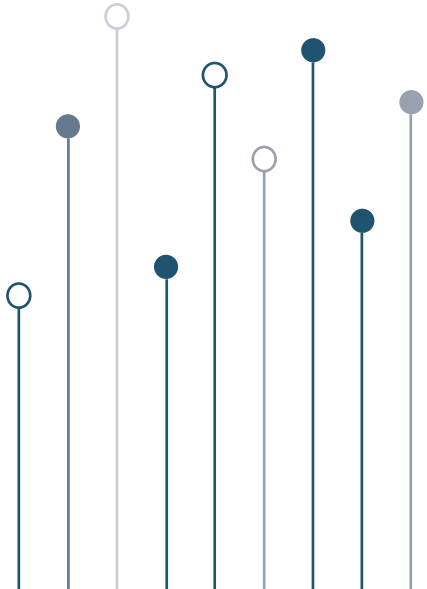
One of the most memorable aspects of my tenure was witnessing the way the staff embraced a shared vision. As with any period of change, there was initially some uncertainty, but I was continually impressed by the adaptability and commitment demonstrated by the team. Seeing colleagues develop, take on new responsibilities and contribute to the organisation's transformation remains a source of great satisfaction. It reinforced my belief that when people are empowered and united by a common purpose, organisations can achieve far more than might initially seem possible.

Without doubt, the organisation's greatest strength has always been its people. During my tenure I came to appreciate the depth of expertise, professionalism and dedication that exists within the NSO. Looking across the organisation's 25-year journey, it is clear that its achievements have been made possible by generations of committed employees who have consistently upheld the principles of quality, integrity and public service. They deserve enormous credit for the organisation's success and continued relevance.

Looking ahead

Today, we live in an environment where information is abundant and readily available. However, the increasing volume of information also highlights the importance of trusted, objective and evidence-based sources. In this context, the role of official statistics remains as important as ever. Reliable statistics provide an essential foundation for public policy, academic research, business decisions and informed public discussion.

My hope for the future is that the NSO continues to innovate, embrace new technologies and strengthen its engagement with users while remaining firmly committed to the principles of quality, independence and professionalism that underpin public trust. Public trust is one of the NSO's most valuable assets. Maintaining that trust requires not only adherence to the highest professional standards but also a continued commitment to transparency, impartiality and quality. If these principles remain at the heart of the organisation, the NSO will continue to serve Malta effectively for many years to come.





Mr Etienne Caruana

"Challenging and demanding, but ultimately truly rewarding."

A career shaped by statistics

My journey with official statistics began almost 25 years ago. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and Physics and subsequently obtained a Master's degree in Statistics and Operations Research from the University of Malta, being one of the first graduates of the programme. Shortly after completing my studies, I worked as a research assistant within the University's Department of Statistics before joining the Central Office of Statistics (COS) in June 2000 as a statistician. At the time, Malta was preparing for European Union (EU) membership, and the national statistical system was undergoing significant changes to align itself with EU standards. This provided the opportunity to tap expert international assistance to develop methodologies through several training opportunities. Just like many of my colleagues at that time, I benefitted from these opportunities, and this helped me grow professionally. Upon joining the COS I was assigned to the Survey Unit, where I became actively involved in the development of household and business surveys, sampling methodologies and analytical reporting. Much of my work focused on social statistics, including the Household Budgetary Survey (HBS), the Labour Force Survey (LFS), statistics on poverty and living conditions and the Population and Housing Census. These experiences laid the foundations for my professional specialisation in social demography and official statistics.

Over the years, I have progressed through several roles within the Office. I managed the Unit responsible for Living Conditions, Education and Demography, and later became Director for Social Statistics. I was appointed Acting Director General in 2018 before eventually assuming the role of Director General in 2019. Throughout this journey, I was fortunate to work alongside highly dedicated colleagues and to contribute to important developments at both national and European level, including the introduction of the European Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey in Malta, the development of European social statistics legislation and Malta's contribution to key European statistical initiatives.

Alongside my work at the NSO, I have maintained a strong connection with academia through my teaching activities at the University of Malta as well as through collaboration on other projects. This has allowed me to remain close to a constantly evolving academic environment while also encouraging students to consider careers in official statistics, a profession that continues to play an increasingly important role in society.

Looking back, I joined the organisation because it offered one of the few opportunities available at the time to build a career directly linked to my academic background while remaining in Malta. The COS was very different from the NSO we know today, yet even then, it was clear that the organisation possessed enormous potential. Through investment, training, the opportunities presented by EU accession and the dedication of its people, that potential

Signing of memorandum of understanding with ERA



gradually became a reality, alongside the professional growth experienced by those of us who remained during this transition.

Strengthening the organisation for the future

I view my time as Director General as a journey that can broadly be divided into three phases. The first focused on strengthening the organisation's structures and production systems. The second centred on enhancing the NSO's relevance at both national and international level. The third and current phase focuses on sustainability and modernisation. This journey of modernisation is underpinned by 40 strategic targets, designed to strengthen the way we operate and enhance how we communicate and disseminate our work in the future.

When I assumed leadership, one of my immediate priorities was to strengthen the production system that forms the backbone of the organisation. Working closely with the Board and senior management, we focused on establishing the foundations necessary for long-term stability and growth. For the first time, the organisation succeeded in establishing a complete senior management structure, filling managerial vacancies that had remained unoccupied for many years and aligning the organisational structure more closely with European standards.

A major milestone was the conclusion of a new six-year collective agreement, signed in 2019, that substantially improved remuneration packages and created additional career development opportunities for staff. Building on these foundations, a subsequent agreement signed in 2025 extended these benefits even further. These measures positioned NSO as a more attractive employer and strengthened our ability to recruit and retain talented professionals.



Rebranding 2023

Voluntary National Review



At the same time, we invested heavily in strengthening the data collection, data governance and information technology branches. Significant progress was also achieved in both social and economic statistics, leading to efficiency gains, new statistical products and improvements in data quality, also addressing longstanding data gaps and reservations. The substantial investments in business and environment statistics likewise bore fruit in a relatively short period, thereby reinforcing further the development of the national accounts system We also started investing more in our human resource, finance and procurement capabilities, since we deemed these functions as fundamental to sustain further organizational growth.

As Director General, I was also responsible for delivering the latest Population and Housing Census conducted in 2021 and overseeing other major statistical projects, including a large-scale skills survey conducted in 2022. Looking back, I believe these initiatives highlighted the organisation's capacity to respond to both national and European statistical requirements while continuing to innovate and modernise, despite the limitations of a small Office.

Ensuring relevance through collaboration

One of the most important developments in recent years has been the strengthening of our partnerships, both nationally and internationally. While a significant share of our resources is dedicated to fulfilling European obligations, we have always sought to remain responsive to national needs and to support evidence-based policymaking in Malta.



Launch of SDDS Plus

The NSO's presence within the European Statistical System has grown substantially. Today, we participate actively in practically all Eurostat working groups, technical task forces, international conferences and meetings. These meetings provide opportunities to our staff to exchange knowledge with their counterparts abroad, learn from best practices and contribute directly to the development of official statistics at European and international level. Closer collaboration with both local and international partners has also expanded our access to administrative data. Today, the NSO uses more than 90 administrative registers annually for statistical purposes. By linking multiple data sources, we can produce richer and more meaningful statistics while simultaneously reducing response burden and improving data quality.

The benefits of these sustained investments became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many organisations, the NSO faced enormous operational challenges during this pandemic. However, we recognised that in times of crisis, reliable and timely statistics are more important than ever, serving as a critical tool for informed decision-making and effective crisis management. NSO adapted rapidly, moving major operations, including fieldwork activities, to remote working arrangements while continuing to produce timely and relevant statistics. The ability to remain operational during such extraordinary circumstances demonstrated the resilience and adaptability of the organisation and its people.

Building trust through quality and transparency

For any national statistical office, trust is fundamental. Recent years have seen substantial investment in strengthening transparency, quality assurance and information security. We make peer review results publicly available, operate according to transparent dissemination policies and maintain a fully public statistical release calendar. We have also strengthened our information security framework to ensure that data entrusted to us is processed according to the highest standards and used solely for statistical purposes. In 2019, the Office reached an important milestone in information security when it achieved ISO/IEC 27001 certification for its information security management system.

The NSO's commitment to the European Statistics Code of Practice remains central to everything we do. During the latest Eurostat peer review exercise, the NSO received positive recognition for its progress in quality management and transparency, despite operating with limited resources. This was exemplified by the publication of the first multi-annual work programme in 2021 and the first Quality Management Framework published in 2025. Similar recognition has been received for our adherence to public financial and procurement regulations. In 2025, the Office received the Public Service "Good Governance Award".

We have also invested significantly in modernising the way statistics are disseminated. Our rebranding strategy marked the beginning of a journey towards this goal. We started by revamping our website, creating a more user-friendly and accessible platform, and this was followed by a series of other initiatives, including improvements to our online database and a stronger presence across social media and other digital channels. These changes are aimed at making official statistics easier to find, understand and use in everyday life. This underscores our commitment to enhancing statistical literacy. The NSO recognised the need to make our products and services more accessible to the public, and not only to experts and professional users. At the same time, we are working to make the NSO more accessible to the research and academic communities, including researchers and students. We see this as an important two-way relationship: while facilitating greater access to our data and expertise, we also benefit from the new ideas, perspectives and research that these communities bring. One particularly successful initiative has been our internship programme, developed



Visit by DG Eurostat Ms Kotseva 2024

in collaboration with the University of Malta. It is proving beneficial not only for collaboration, but also as a way of attracting promising young talent to the NSO and introducing students to the opportunities available within the organisation.

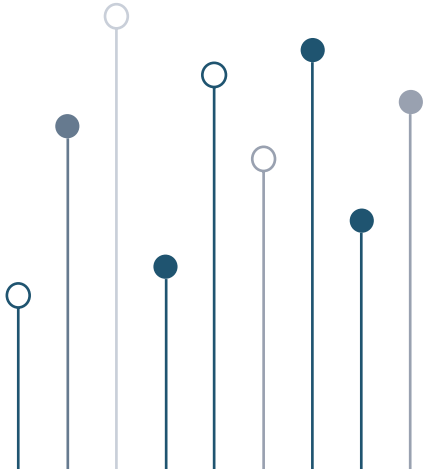
Challenges, people and the future

Like any organisation, the NSO continues to face several challenges, including increasing European reporting requirements, limited resources, skills shortages and staff turnover. At the same time, we must address misinformation, safeguard our professional independence in areas of heightened public interest, and promote greater statistical literacy. These realities inevitably influence priorities and the pace of development. However, I firmly believe that every challenge also presents an opportunity. While present difficulties may affect short-term ambitions, they should never divert us from our long-term strategic objectives.

I believe official statistics are more respected, more relevant and more trusted today than ever before. The NSO is more accessible to its users and more aware of their expectations. Nevertheless, our work is far from complete. We still need to continue strengthening trust, improving statistical literacy and helping users better understand the value of official statistics.

Looking to the future, I expect all national statistical institutes to assume an increasingly important data stewardship role, supporting their partners in the production and use of statistics that comply with international standards. Collaboration with both private and public stakeholders will become increasingly crucial, given that statistical production will rely more heavily on administrative registers. Statistical outputs will need to become more timely, more detailed and produced more frequently. The NSO must continue producing independent, high-quality statistics while remaining sensitive to the evolving needs of society. Relevance can never be taken for granted.

Having spent almost half my life at the NSO, statistics have inevitably become part of my identity. The organisation has shaped much of my professional journey and many of the experiences that define my career today. While I may leave it to others to judge how it has changed me as a person, there is no doubt that the NSO has played a central role in my life and I am grateful for the support of my family and my staff over the past 25 years.



EUROSTAT DG VISIT



Our Chairmen

A timeline of leadership, 2001-present

2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013



2001 - 2013

Mr Reno Camilleri

Guided the COS-NSO transition and EU preparations.



Strengthened statistical governance and secured access to tax and telecommunications data.

Prof. Albert Leone Ganado

2013 - 2022

2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026



2022 - Present

Dr Carl Camilleri

Champions innovation, independence and staff development.



Mr Reno Camilleri

"A rewarding experience, based on integrity, teamwork and service to Malta."

A lifetime in official statistics

I have spent much of my working life in the public service, mainly in official statistics. I joined the Civil Service in January 1957 as an Executive Officer in what was then the Department of Audit under the Ministry for Finance. Over the years, I served as Principal Government Statistician, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry for Economic Affairs and, from March 2001, the first Chairman of the Malta Statistics Authority, a position I held until my retirement in 2013.

Academically, I obtained a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of London and a Diploma in Public Administration from the University of Malta. However, my true passion always lay in demography and the national census. As Principal Government Statistician, I was the chief official responsible for the execution of the decennial census, most notably the 1985 Census of Population and Housing. Later, as Malta prepared for European Union membership, I was honoured to be entrusted with helping oversee the transformation of the old Central Office of Statistics into the modern National Statistics Office under the framework established by the Malta Statistics Authority Act.

From the COS to the NSO

Looking back, one of the most significant developments during my tenure was the transition from the Central Office of Statistics (COS) to the National Statistics Office (NSO). This was much more than a change of name. The organisation had to adapt its methods, develop new statistical domains and align its work with European standards as Malta prepared for EU accession in 2004. We expanded the work of the Office, strengthened internal controls and introduced new areas of statistical production.

The creation of the Malta Statistics Authority and the transition to the NSO remains, in my view, one of the most significant achievements of that period. The Malta Statistics Authority Act, which came into force in 2001, established a clearer framework for statistical independence, transparency and professional standards. Importantly, it reinforced the principle that official statistics should be produced free from political interference. During my years with the Authority, I can genuinely say that I never experienced political interference, either directly or indirectly.



It was also a period of significant change for Malta more broadly. EU accession required closer collaboration with European institutions, participation in international meetings and the adoption of methodologies that would ensure Malta's statistics were comparable with those of other European countries. It was a demanding period, but also a rewarding one as we saw the organisation grow in capacity, professionalism and international recognition.

A commitment to the Census

Throughout my career, the census occupied a special place. Before the establishment of the Malta Statistics Authority, I directed the 1985 Census of Population and Housing, which restored Malta to the traditional ten-year census cycle after it had been interrupted in the mid-1970s. Later, as Chairman of the Malta Statistics Authority, I was involved in overseeing both the 2005 and 2011 censuses and ensuring that they satisfied national as well as European requirements.

I have always regarded the census as one of the most important sources of demographic and social information available to a country. Census data supports decision-making in areas such as housing, education, healthcare, infrastructure and social services. Restoring the ten-year cycle and ensuring its continuation is something I remain particularly pleased to have contributed towards. The censuses were not without challenges. However, these experiences reinforced the importance of preparation, patience and attention to detail, qualities that remained valuable throughout my career.

Learning through Europe

The relationships that the NSO developed with Eurostat and other European National Statistical Institutes were extremely important. We made a conscious effort to participate actively in international meetings and maintain regular contact with our European counterparts. I also had the privilege of chairing the Conference of European Statisticians, which provided valuable opportunities to collaborate with specialists from many different countries.

My role as Malta's representative, and subsequently President, of the European Population Committee further strengthened these connections. Through this work, I contributed to discussions on demography, poverty and social exclusion while learning from the experiences and methodologies adopted by other countries.

These international relationships delivered tangible benefits to the NSO. They supported the introduction of important European methodologies, including ESA 1995 for national accounts and the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices. They also provided access to funding, technical assistance and peer review mechanisms. Most importantly, they helped strengthen confidence in Malta's statistics by ensuring they were comparable with those of other European countries.



Visit by Mr Radermacher

Building trust in official statistics

Over the years, I observed a gradual but important change in how official statistics were perceived and used. In earlier years, there was sometimes scepticism, particularly when statistical findings challenged prevailing narratives. However, as the Office consistently demonstrated its independence and adherence to sound methodology, confidence grew. Policymakers increasingly relied on official statistics, academics and students incorporated them into their research, and the media frequently turned to the NSO for reliable information on economic and social developments.

The way statistics were disseminated also evolved considerably. More information became available online and greater effort was made to explain methodologies and statistical processes. This helped improve public understanding and made official statistics more accessible to a wider audience.

For me, one of the organisation's greatest strengths throughout these 25 years has been its people. The professionalism, commitment and attention to quality demonstrated by staff have consistently enabled the organisation to deliver. Whether during major census operations or through the day-to-day production of statistics, success always depended on people working together towards a common objective.

Reflections on leadership and the future

There were undoubtedly challenging periods along the way. One that stands out was early 2007, when I was asked to serve as Acting Director General at a time when the methods and work of the NSO were being questioned publicly. Despite these difficulties, I remained confident in the professionalism of the organisation and in the robustness of its methodologies. These experiences reinforced my belief in the importance of maintaining strong safeguards for statistical independence.

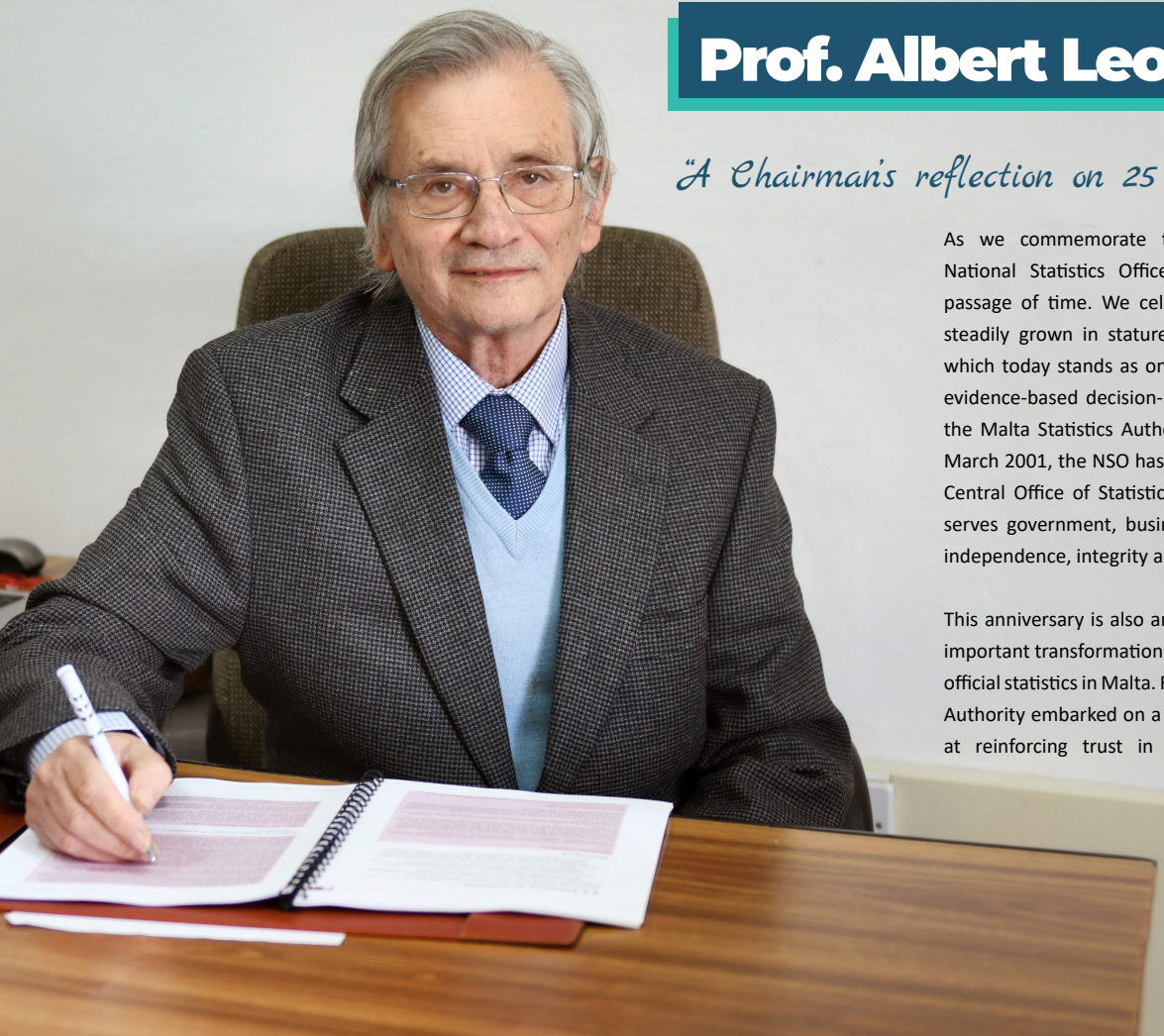
My approach to leadership was always based on discussion and cooperation. I found that most disagreements could be resolved when individuals remained focused on a common objective. This approach helped guide the organisation through periods of change while preserving its commitment to quality and independence.

As the NSO marks its 25th anniversary, I believe the role of official statistics is more important than ever. While information is abundant, not all of it is reliable. This makes the role of institutions such as the NSO crucial in providing trusted statistics that support decision-making by government, businesses, researchers and the general public.

My hope is that the NSO continues to embrace new technologies while remaining firmly committed to the principles of privacy, accuracy and independence. It is equally important that statistics continue to be communicated in a manner that is accessible and understandable to ordinary citizens, not only to specialists. If the organisation maintains the standards it has developed over the years, I am confident it will continue to serve Malta well.

My advice to current and future leaders is simple: protect the independence of the Office, invest in staff, continue learning from international best practices and maintain transparency in everything you do. Above all, statistics must be accurate, honest and clearly communicated. These principles are essential if public confidence is to be preserved.

Looking back, what I remember most is the collective effort that characterised the transition from the COS to the NSO. There were challenges and disagreements at times, but there was also a strong sense of purpose and commitment. Seeing what we achieved together during a period of significant change remains one of the most satisfying aspects of my career.



Prof. Albert Leone Ganado

"A Chairman's reflection on 25 years of the NSO."

As we commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the National Statistics Office, we celebrate far more than the passage of time. We celebrate a national institution that has steadily grown in stature, professionalism and relevance, and which today stands as one of Malta's most important pillars of evidence-based decision-making. Since its establishment under the Malta Statistics Authority Act, which came into force on 1 March 2001, the NSO has evolved from its historical roots in the Central Office of Statistics into a modern statistical office that serves government, business, researchers and the public with independence, integrity and a steadfast commitment to quality.

This anniversary is also an opportunity to reflect on a period of important transformation in the governance and development of official statistics in Malta. From 2013 onwards, the Malta Statistics Authority embarked on a number of significant initiatives aimed at reinforcing trust in statistics, strengthening institutional

arrangements and supporting the NSO in meeting increasingly demanding national and European obligations.

Strengthening governance and statistical independence

In 2013, the newly appointed minister for Finance Prof Edward Scicluna asked me whether I would be willing to assume the role of MSA Chairman with the objective of strengthening its academic functionality. Following this meeting, two-months later, he appointed me Chairman of the MSA supported by other members such as Dr Aaron G Grech from the Central Bank and Dr Ian Cassar from the University of Malta amongst other members.

On my appointment I met with the Director General of the NSO, Mr M. Pace Ross, where we agreed on the way forward to strengthen the operations of the NSO, working on a sound academic and professional foundation.

As Chairman, I felt it was essential to obtain an independent assessment of the National Statistics Office and its readiness for the challenges ahead. I was conscious that my predecessors had worked tirelessly to ensure that the NSO stood as an equal partner within the European Statistical System. My focus, in turn, was to help prepare the Office not only to meet future European statistical requirements, but also to expand its capacity to develop national metrics better suited to the realities and policy needs of a small island state. One of the earliest and most important steps during this period was the commissioning of an independent review by John Kidgell, an experienced British statistics expert with longstanding knowledge of Malta's statistical system. His review came at a critical moment and helped guide the strengthening of quality assurance, methodology and governance in the wake of concerns surrounding GDP figures. It was an important signal that the Authority was prepared to subject itself to external scrutiny in the interest of safeguarding public confidence.

This commitment to improvement was echoed in the second round of the European Statistical System peer reviews carried out between 2013 and 2015. These reviews highlighted the importance of reinforcing professional independence, clarifying governance arrangements, improving quality management, widening access to administrative data and strengthening communication with users. For Malta, the peer review process was not simply an assessment exercise; it became a roadmap for further reform. It helped sharpen the respective roles of the Malta Statistics Authority and the NSO, encouraged more structured oversight, and placed renewed emphasis on transparency, methodological rigour and user engagement.

Modernising statistics and expanding data sources

At the same time, the NSO was navigating complex methodological changes at European and international level. The implementation of ESA 2010 and BPM6 around 2014 and 2015 required significant technical preparation and institutional effort. These new frameworks modernised the compilation of national accounts and balance of payments statistics, ensuring that Malta's macroeconomic data remained aligned with international standards and better reflected the realities of a changing economy. The transition demanded expertise, adaptability and close coordination across statistical domains. It was one of the clearest demonstrations of the NSO's capacity to respond to change while maintaining the reliability and comparability of its outputs.

Two particularly important breakthroughs during my tenure were the successful arrangements that enabled the NSO to become a recipient of tax data and telecommunications information. The absence of both had long constrained the quality and depth of official statistics. Telecommunications data are methodologically essential because they serve as a primary variable in maintaining general population information. In the absence of a national population register, Malta depends heavily on signs-of-life information, and telecommunications data, together with information supplied by other institutions, play a crucial role in



Opening the Gozo Office

sustaining this core register. Tax data, on the other hand, constitute a direct input for business and economic statistical units. Beyond reducing the reporting burden on enterprises, they provide vital support for short-term business statistics and for wider macroeconomic work, including national accounts, public finance statistics and balance of payments analysis. Securing access to these data sources represented a major step forward in strengthening the statistical system and improving the evidence base on which national policy depends.

Another priority throughout my tenure was to ensure that the NSO was equipped not only with better data sources, but also with the skills and legislative framework needed to meet future challenges. Training was central to this vision. Under my watch, the Office succeeded in securing two important sources of European Union funding. The first was support under the Structural Reform Support Programme, which was dedicated to examining and modernising the legislative framework of the Malta Statistics Authority. Considerable work was carried out on redrafting the law so that it would better reflect contemporary statistical realities and emerging needs. This programme also enabled the Office to engage local legislative consultants whose expertise would otherwise have been beyond our financial reach, while at the same time fostering valuable working relationships at European level, particularly with Ireland and the Netherlands. These countries, though small in the wider EU context, are open economies and offered useful comparative legislative models. The ties established during that period have, fortunately, strengthened over time. A second major achievement was the successful application by the Secretariat for European Social Fund financing amounting to €350,000. This made possible a two-year training programme for staff across both statistical production and administrative functions, helping to prepare the Office for the demands of a rapidly changing environment. In hindsight, few could have foreseen the pace at which artificial intelligence would begin to transform the world, but investing in skills, adaptability and institutional readiness was already an essential part of preparing the NSO for the future.

Institutional strengthening was another major feature of this journey. The functions assigned to the Malta Statistics

Authority under the Act are wide-ranging and, to some extent, mirror the United Kingdom model, where the Office for National Statistics serves as the producer of statistics while the statistical authority exercises an oversight role, ensuring adherence to the relevant code of practice. To discharge this mandate effectively, the Authority required stronger internal capacity. Within the resources available, and in close collaboration with a Board composed of professionals from diverse backgrounds, I oversaw the establishment of a dedicated Secretariat and three committees to reinforce the Authority's role. These structures were intended to support independent post-review of statistics, assist the NSO in making greater use of administrative data sources to reduce statistical burden, and provide more regular financial oversight to help maintain a balanced budget. The creation of this dedicated Secretariat, together with sub-committees focusing on finance, governance and monitoring, marked an important step in the maturation of the Authority's own structures. These developments supported more regular oversight, more focused discussion of key issues and a more systematic approach to strategic and statutory responsibilities. The commissioning of external reviews in specific areas, including GDP, short-term statistics and the gaming sector, further reflected a culture of continuous improvement and accountability.

Building confidence and ensuring sustainability

A particularly notable milestone came in 2018 with Malta's formal Commitment on Confidence in Statistics. By approving this declaration, Government affirmed its support for the professional independence, quality and integrity of official statistics in line with the European Statistics Code of Practice. This was an important moment, not only symbolically but also institutionally, because it reinforced the principles on which public trust in statistics ultimately depends. In parallel, outreach with the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board helped place Malta's experience within the wider European discussion on governance, independence and the future resilience of official statistics.

The Authority also remained mindful that excellence in statistics must be supported by sound finances, capable leadership and investment in people. Over the years, improved budgetary support helped the NSO strengthen its statistical programme and respond to new data needs. The appointments of Director Generals Reuben Fenech and Etienne Caruana ensured continuity of leadership at different stages of the Office's development, while the collective agreement for staff covering 2017 to 2022 addressed a very practical but essential reality: the need to retain and motivate skilled professionals in an increasingly competitive labour market. Measures aimed at improving pay conditions and recognising educational advancement helped support the long-term sustainability of the Office. The opening of the Gozo branch was another significant step, reflecting a commitment to a broader national presence and improved accessibility.

Looking to the future

As Chairman, I look back on these milestones with a deep sense of pride and gratitude. The story of the NSO over the past twenty-five years is one of dedication, resilience and steady renewal. It is the story of people who understood that official statistics are not merely numbers on a page, but a public good that enables better policy, stronger institutions and a more informed society. As we celebrate this anniversary, we do so with confidence in the foundations that have been laid and with determination to continue building an institution that remains trusted, relevant and fit for the future. The achievements of the past twenty-five years give us every reason to look ahead with optimism.

Finally, I must thank the Secretariat and my Consultant and Board Secretary Mr Joseph Bonello for the excellent co-operation and measured advice provided during my tenure as Chairman. I must also give special thanks to Mr Keith Grech who led the first MSA Secretariat and for being a liaison with the various Directors General.

Dr Carl Camilleri

"Twenty-Five Years of official statistics in Malta."

A reflection

Twenty-five years ago, Malta embarked on an important institutional reform as part of its accession to the European Union. Among the many changes that strengthened our public administration was the establishment of several autonomous public entities, including the National Statistics Office (NSO). Through the enactment of the Malta Statistics Authority Act, the NSO assumed the responsibilities previously carried out by the Central Office of Statistics and became Malta's official representative within the European Statistical System (ESS). This marked the beginning of a journey characterised by growth, continuous adaptation and an unwavering commitment to professional independence and public service.

Today, as we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the NSO, we reflect on an institution that has become indispensable to our democratic and economic life. We live in an information society where decisions in government, business and everyday life are increasingly driven by data. Reliable official statistics have therefore never been more important.

While this anniversary celebrates twenty-five years of the NSO as an autonomous institution, Malta's statistical history extends much further back. Long before the establishment of the Office, generations of dedicated public servants working within the Central Office of Statistics and its predecessors laid the foundations of our national statistical system. Their efforts produced an invaluable body of



information at a time when statistics formed an integral part of the Civil Service, dating back to Malta's colonial administration. Their contribution to official statistics deserves recognition.

A lasting commitment to the nation

Throughout this evolving statistical landscape, the Malta Statistics Authority (MSA) has continued to fulfil its fundamental responsibility of safeguarding the professional independence of the National Statistics Office. This responsibility goes beyond statutory oversight; it represents a commitment to ensuring that official statistics are produced objectively, impartially and free from undue influence, fully respecting the principles established in the Malta Statistics Authority Act.

Through regular engagement with the Director General and the Office's leadership, the Authority monitors progress against NSO's statistical programme while ensuring that the organisation continues to uphold the high professional standards expected of a modern national statistical institute.

One important practice that has evolved over the years is the submission of the NSO's three-year rolling statistical work programme to Parliament alongside the Authority's Annual Report. Beyond fulfilling a statutory obligation, this serves as a public declaration of the Office's priorities and its continuing commitment to providing high-quality official statistics for the benefit of society.

Official statistics as the gold standard

National statistical institutes are entering a new era shaped by artificial intelligence, data centres and the rapid growth of the digital economy. As data becomes an increasingly valuable economic asset, NSIs must adapt quickly by embracing new technologies, innovative data sources and advanced analytical methods while continuing to uphold the highest standards of quality, impartiality and confidentiality. Artificial intelligence offers significant opportunities to improve the efficiency and timeliness of official statistics, from data collection and validation to analysis and dissemination. However, technological progress must always be accompanied by sound statistical methodology, transparency and professional judgement to preserve public trust. Equally important is investing in people. To remain competitive, NSIs must attract and retain highly skilled professionals in statistics, data science and artificial intelligence by offering continuous learning, opportunities for innovation and rewarding careers in public service. In an age of information overload, the role of official statistics extends beyond producing reliable figures. They must continue to serve as the gold standard of information, providing citizens, businesses and policymakers with trusted evidence on which informed decisions can confidently be made.

The importance of dialogue

One characteristic shared by successive Chairmans of the Malta Statistics Authority has been the belief that sound governance is built upon constructive dialogue. The presence of the Director General as an ex officio member of the Authority creates an effective forum through which operational developments can be discussed openly, while allowing the Board to provide strategic direction, independent oversight and advice whenever necessary.

The MSA Secretariat and the Authority's sub-committees, established after 2013, remain an integral part of the Authority's governance framework. They continue to support the Board in the fulfillment of its statutory responsibilities, while ensuring that appropriate checks and balances are maintained. Ultimately, this collaborative model enables the Authority to exercise effective oversight while respecting the operational independence of the National Statistics Office, allowing it to remain focused on its principal mission of producing high-quality official statistics in the public interest.



Signing of the MSA-UĦM collective agreement 2026

Looking ahead

The future of the National Statistics Office will largely depend on its ability to embrace technological change while remaining faithful to the principles that have guided it over the past twenty-five years.

Tomorrow's statisticians will require a broader and more sophisticated set of skills. Alongside traditional statistical methodologies, they will increasingly rely on advanced analytics, data science, machine learning, artificial intelligence and innovative data sources. These developments will not replace official statistics; rather, they will enhance the way statistics are produced and disseminated.

At the same time, the role of the NSO is naturally expanding beyond the production of mandatory official statistics. Experimental statistics, new analytical methods and innovative datasets are becoming increasingly important in helping society understand rapidly evolving economic and social phenomena.

Strengthening collaboration with industry, academia and other public institutions will also become increasingly important. Such partnerships enrich the national statistical system, improve relevance and encourage innovation while ensuring that official statistics continue to respond to the changing needs of policymakers, businesses and citizens alike.

By embracing these opportunities, the Office will remain responsive to an increasingly complex information environment while continuing to uphold the principles of quality, professional independence and public trust that define official statistics.

Concluding reflections

Twenty-five years represent an important milestone, but they also mark the beginning of the next chapter.

The National Statistics Office has earned a reputation as one of Malta's most respected public institutions because it has consistently placed professionalism, integrity and service above all else. As new technologies reshape the statistical landscape, these values will remain its greatest strength.

I conclude these reflections by expressing my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the Office's success during the past twenty-five years. Every employee, past and present, has played a part in building the institution we celebrate today.

My special appreciation goes to the Director General, Mr Etienne Caruana, whose professional journey through every level of the organisation exemplifies dedication to public service. His leadership comes at a particularly exciting moment, as the Office continues to evolve in response to new challenges and opportunities.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to the Deputy Chairman of the Malta Statistics Authority, Dr Aaron G. Grech, together with my fellow Board members, for their wisdom, commitment and sound counsel in carrying out the Authority's responsibilities under the Malta Statistics Authority Act.

As Chairman of the Malta Statistics Authority, I remain confident that the NSO will continue to evolve, innovate and inspire confidence in official statistics for many years to come. The Authority will remain steadfast in supporting both the institution and its people as together we continue serving Malta through independent, trust ed and high-quality official statistics.

Good Governance Award



Staff Contributions




























Cardphone


















2005







Ms Alison Magro

Administration Officer 5 - National Accounts (Methods, Standards and Sector Accounts Unit)

"Over the years, I've watched the NSO change and grow, but its people and purpose have remained constant. Being part of the NSO's journey has been truly rewarding."



Ms Fiona Borg Halford

Administration Officer 5 - Budget, Financial Management and Control

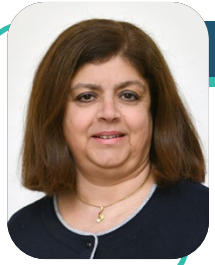
"What has kept me at the NSO for more than 25 years is knowing that no challenge is faced alone. Together, we find solutions and keep moving forward."



Mr Godwin Zerafa

Principal Statistician - Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries

"I joined the NSO because I wanted to turn numbers into meaningful insights that can help shape decisions. The opportunity to keep learning, share knowledge and connect with people has made the journey deeply rewarding."



Ms Helen Vella

Administration Officer 5 - Labour Market and Information Society

"After so many years, I'm still inspired by the vital role statistics play in serving the public good. The variety of roles, continuous learning, and dedicated colleagues have kept me engaged and proud to be part of the organisation."



Ms Joanne Zammit

Administration Officer 5 - Short-term Business Statistics

"Job satisfaction, security, a healthy work-life balance, and, above all, the strong relationships I've built over the years have kept me here for 25+ years."



Mr Joseph Vella

Principal Statistical Officer - Public Finance

"The strong sense of community and the opportunity to contribute to work that plays such an important role in Maltese society have kept me at the NSO over the years."



Ms Josette Bartolo

Administration Officer 5 - Data Collection

"25 years on, it's the teamwork, friendships and mutual respect that keep me inspired, alongside the stability and new opportunities that keep me motivated."



Ms Josianne Galea

Head of Unit - Living Conditions and Tourism

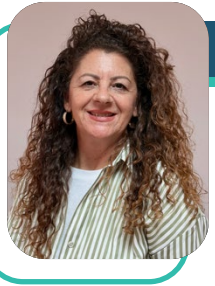
"The NSO has given me stability while continually challenging me to learn, grow and persevere. The strong sense of security and friendly culture have kept me committed to the organisation over the years."



Ms Joslyn Magro

Head of Unit - Labour Market and Information Society

"What began as a temporary step became a rewarding career. The opportunities to grow, the purpose behind our work, and the people I've met along the way have made staying at the NSO a decision I've never regretted."



Ms Louisa Grima

Administration Officer 5 - Data Collection

"More than a workplace, the NSO has been a place to grow, make a difference, and build lasting friendships. That's what has made 25 years here so meaningful."



Ms Rosemarie Debono

Administration Officer 5 - Communication and Dissemination

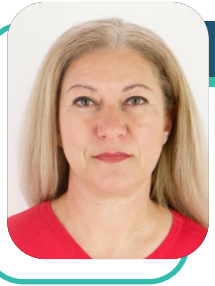
"Feeling valued and supported, together with the variety of my work, has kept my journey at the NSO rewarding."



Ms Sarah Cachia

Director - Finance and Premises Management Directorate

"Being part of the NSO since its establishment has been a source of great pride and gratitude. Feeling valued as a person, together with the opportunities to learn, grow and take on new challenges, has made the journey truly rewarding."



Ms Shirley Cutajar

Principal Statistical Officer - Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries

"Over the years, the NSO has kept me learning, challenged me to grow, and motivated me to keep contributing—even when the journey wasn't always easy. I hope that same spirit continues for generations to come."



Ms Jennifer Vassallo

Head of Unit - National Accounts (Production Unit)

"Working in the field I'm passionate about, economic statistics, while continuing to learn and take on new challenges has kept me at the NSO. The strong relationships and work-life balance have made the journey even more rewarding."



Ms Silvana Scerri

Administration Officer 5 - Office of the DG

"Over my forty years since joining COS, I've seen immense change. Yet, the people always made NSO a second family. I'm deeply grateful for the friendships that turned this job into a home."



Mr Omar Muscat

Administration Officer 5 - Procurement Support and Resources

"I am grateful to have been part of this organisation for so many years, and especially thankful for the colleagues and friendships. It has been a journey of challenges, learning, change and many rewarding experiences."



Ms Claire Marie Ellul

Administration Officer 4 - Communication and Dissemination

"Reflecting on my 25 years at NSO, starting as a Survey Interviewer at the airport, I deeply appreciate the organisation's meaningful work, growth opportunities, recognition, and positive work-life balance."



Ms Marika Borg

Administration Officer 4 - Business Register, Research and Innovation

"Looking back on my 36 years, 11 with COS and 25 with NSO I feel truly grateful for the experiences, friendships and opportunities that have shaped my journey. It has been an incredible privilege to be part of this team, and I look forward to continuing to contribute to its success."



Ms Vanessa Dimech

Head of Unit - National Accounts (Methods, Standards and Sector Accounts Unit)

"Celebrating 25 years in official statistics, shaped by dedication, collaboration, and a shared commitment to serving the nation through data, while being grateful for the opportunities, collaborations, and experiences that have defined this journey."



Mr Ivan Salomone

Head of Unit - Information Technology

"Being part of the NSO's journey over the years has been a truly rewarding experience. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the organisation's transformation into the modern institution it is today."



Mr James Briscoe

Head of Unit - Procurement Support and Resources

"When I joined COS 39 years ago, I surely did not think that I would be here so many years later. The difficulties presented by the various challenges over the years, is far outweighed by the feeling of belonging, merit to my colleagues both present and past, which has made my journey fulfilling and unique."



Ms Sharon Migliore

Administration Officer 5 - Communication and Dissemination

"I am grateful to have been part of this organisation for so many years, and especially thankful for the colleagues and friendships. It has been a journey of challenges, learning, change and many rewarding experiences."



Ms Mary Grace Buttigieg

Principal Statistical Officer - National Accounts (Production Unit)

"Working at the NSO has been a continuous learning experience, although challenging at times. Over the years, the supportive work environment, strong work-life balance, and dedicated colleagues have made the NSO feel like a second home."



Mr Mario Micallef

Administration Officer 5 - International Trade in Goods

"I look back with a positive outlook, seeing the NSO transform from data collection by hand to everything digitised, from a seldom News Release to a daily feed of useful information. I have been given opportunities to progress and most of all learn which I am forever grateful."

Thank you for your contribution.

Malta NSO
National Statistics Office
Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Istatistika

MSA
Malta Statistics Authority
Awtorità tal-Istatistika ta' Malta