



National Statistics Office
Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Istatistika

MQU-POL-001: Quality Policy

February 2025

1. Overview

- 1.1. The National Statistics Office of Malta (NSO) is committed to providing high-quality, reliable, and timely statistical information that meets the needs of users, including government, businesses, researchers, and the public. This policy outlines the principles, organisational structure, and tools the NSO uses to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of its statistics and services.

2. Abbreviations

CoP:	European Statistics Code of Practice
ESS:	European Statistical System
GSBPM:	Generic Statistical Business Process Model
ISMS:	Information Security Management System
ISO:	International Organisation for Standardisation
NSO:	National Statistics Office
ONA:	Other National Authority
QAF:	Quality Assurance Framework
QMF:	Quality Management Framework

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP):** A Eurostat document¹ that establishes the quality framework for European statistics, outlining 16 key principles for the institutional environment, statistical processes, and outputs of EU and national authorities. It also includes 84 best practice indicators for these principles, serving as a reference for reviewing implementation and enhancing transparency within the ESS.
- 3.2. **Quality Assurance Framework (QAF):** Focuses on the assurance that quality processes are correctly followed throughout specific phases of production, thus preventing issues and ensuring adherence to standards. It is a component of the QMF, ensuring specific processes adhere to established quality standards.
- 3.3. **Quality Management Framework (QMF):** A set of tools and procedures in place to ensure the production of high-quality statistics, with a focus on statistical processes and outputs as outlined in principles 4, 7 to 15 of the CoP. The QMF covers the entire management system related to quality, focusing on leadership, strategy, and continuous improvement.

4. Policy Objectives

- 4.1. To produce accurate, consistent, and timely statistics that reflect the social and economic conditions of Malta in line with the Office's Commitment to Quality published on the NSO website².
- 4.2. To adhere to European and international statistical standards, ensuring comparability and coherence across datasets.
- 4.3. To continuously improve the relevance, accuracy, efficiency, and user-friendliness of the NSO's statistical outputs.
- 4.4. To foster a culture of quality at all levels of the organisation.

¹ <https://nso.gov.mt/code-of-practice/>

² <https://nso.gov.mt/commitment-on-confidence/>

5. Scope

- 5.1. This Quality Policy applies to all employees of the NSO, ONAs, contractors and sub-contractors, whether directly or indirectly involved in the production of statistical information. This includes both subject matter and supporting horizontal units, such as staff responsible for the collection, processing, and dissemination of statistical data.

6. Policy Statements

- The NSO is committed to delivering high-quality statistical information that meets the needs of users, aligning all policies and practices with the organisation's mission and vision. A strong focus is placed on users, both internal and external, with a commitment to continuously enhance statistical products and services based on feedback to maintain public trust and satisfaction.
- The NSO prioritises continuous improvement, recognising the need to adapt to evolving user needs and technological advancements, and is dedicated to refining its work methods and processes. Ensuring product quality is paramount, with a commitment to producing data that adheres to scientific standards of objectivity, confidentiality, relevance, accuracy, timeliness, coherence, accessibility, and clarity.
- Work processes are regularly documented, typically every 3-5 years, to promote standardisation, enhance transparency, and support the implementation of quality and risk management frameworks. This practice also enables the NSO to conduct periodic reviews, facilitating greater process automation and the integration of statistical processes.
- Internal processes are reviewed across various domains to identify strengths and weaknesses, implementing improvements to enhance the quality and efficiency of its statistical activities. A robust QMF supported by the domain specific process documentation in GSBPM form, provide the necessary guidelines, documentation, and infrastructure to support quality assurance efforts. These are also extended to cover business processes from an IT-standpoint.
- Staff development is also a priority, with leadership dedicated to offering training and fostering continuous learning on not only the topics included in the QMF but also other technical subject matter content. Collaboration with other institutions and stakeholders is emphasized, promoting knowledge sharing and enhancing the effectiveness of the NSO's statistical activities.
- Confidentiality and information security are strictly maintained, with compliance to regulations such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation and ISO 27001 (see [1]). Multiple annual audits are held to measure compliance with such standards. Additionally, the NSO ensures adherence to international standards, such as the CoP, to uphold best practices in statistical production. Leadership plays a critical role in fostering a culture of quality, innovation, and continuous improvement, providing the direction and support needed for staff to excel.

7. Responsibilities

- 7.1. The NSO has established a well-defined organisational structure to manage and uphold the quality of its outputs. This structure includes:
- 7.1.1. **Director General:** Responsible for overall strategic direction and ensuring quality policies are aligned with NSO's objectives.
 - 7.1.2. **Directors:** All Directors shall be responsible for agreeing the business needs for the NSO, communicating their ongoing commitment to it and assigning appropriate resources necessary to manage and operate the processes outline above effectively.
 - 7.1.3. **Director for Data Resources, IT and Methodology:** Responsible for overseeing the organisation's quality assurance process and, in collaboration with the Director for Corporate Services and the

Director General, ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated to carry out all quality-related practices efficiently and on time.

- 7.1.4. **Subject matter domain units:** Each statistical domain (e.g., economic, business, social, etc.) has its own division, tasked with adhering to quality guidelines and ensuring the accuracy and relevance of their outputs. They are also responsible for regularly reviewing datasets for completeness, accuracy, and reliability.
- 7.1.5. **Head of Methodology and Quality Unit:** Tasked with compiling, publishing, and regularly updating the QMF, this unit oversees the implementation of quality standards, monitors compliance, and promotes continuous improvement initiatives across all statistical processes. It also offers technical support to ensure that all data collection, analysis, and reporting methodologies adhere to high scientific and professional standards.
- 7.1.6. **Head of Information Security:** To lead the NSO on all matters relating to information security (including training and audit processes), and be responsible for the daily operations relating to the ISMS
- 7.1.7. **Head of IT Unit:** To facilitate technical discussions with other units aimed at effectively automating work processes and redesigning IT tools. This may involve a complete revamp of the IT systems supporting various phases of business processes within certain domains, covering aspects from data collection to storage and, ultimately, dissemination through centralized tools.
- 7.1.8. **Heads of Unit/Domain Managers:** Staff working in specific domains shall be responsible to remain receptive to change management and collaborate with the key players referred to above to enhance internal practices, ensuring process automation and full compliance with the QMF.

8. References

- [1] ISU-POL-001: Information Security Policy

9. Document Control

- 9.1. This policy needs to be formally reviewed by the Policy Owner at least once a year to address any of the following issues:
 - 9.1.1. A change in business activities, which will or could possibly affect the current operation of the NSO.
 - 9.1.2. A change in the CoP or how the NSO manages or operates its quality assurance or management framework.
 - 9.1.3. An identified shortcoming in the effectiveness of this policy.
- 9.2. The current version of this policy, together with its previous versions, shall be recorded below.

Version History		
Version	Description	
1.00	Date Live:	February 2025
	Version Notes	First version of the policy

Version 1.00	
	Full Name & Role
Policy Owner:	Silvan Zammit (Director of Data Resources, IT and Methodology)
Reviewed by:	Anne Marie Pace (Head of Methodology and Quality)
Reviewed by:	Alan Cordina (Head of Central Management Unit)
Approved by:	Etienne Caruana (Director General)