

PRESS INFORMATION NOTICE

10th October 2024

Household Budget Survey 2024

Introduction

Starting this month, a random sample of 7000 households across the Maltese islands will start receiving letters inviting them to participate in the 2024 Household Budget Survey (HBS) that will be carried out by the National Statistics Office (NSO). This survey is designed to cover one full year, with around 600 households from the main sample contacted by the Office every month.



This project was officially launched this morning by Mr Duncan Brincat (Director, Corporate Services) on behalf of Mr Etienne Caruana, Director General, of the NSO. Mr Brincat highlighted the significance of the HBS, emphasising its critical role in the compilation of the Retail Price Index. He also highlighted numerous other applications such as the updating of National Accounts

Statistics and compilation of consumption-based poverty indicators. Following Mr Brincat's remarks, Mr Silvan Zammit, Director, Data Resources, IT and Methodology at the NSO, delved into the operational aspects of the project. He explained the process of the upcoming survey, offering insight into the methodologies that will be employed. The launch was brought to a close by Dr Carl Camilleri, Chairman of the Malta Statistics Authority.

Scope

The HBS spans over one year and focuses on consumption expenditure behaviour of households residing in Malta and Gozo. It analyses the development and progression of households' expenditure on goods and services depending on their main social, economic, and demographic characteristics. The information compiled will then highlight patterns of household spending on all products and services.

For the first time this year, the HBS will be held under European Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples. This regulation will enable the collection and production of harmonised data across the European Union.



Results from this survey supplement consumption data in the compilation of National Accounts. They are also used as a main source for updating the base weights of the retail price index, which is used to gauge changes in inflation, and the eventual effect on households' purchasing power. The HBS is also used for socio-economic analysis, to compare expenditure patterns of

different household types and to compile consumption-based poverty indicators. Furthermore, the HBS is an important tool for research and academic purposes.

Mode of data collection

A total of 7,000 households were randomly selected and distributed over 52 consecutive weeks. These households will be systematically contacted by a team of trained interviewers over the next 12 months, according to their assigned survey week. This approach will ensure that around 134 households will be introduced to this survey every week.

At the start of each survey, households will be interviewed to gather background information about the household as well as specific non-regular household spending which is not normally captured over a two-week period. This part of the interview will be held by computer assisted personal interviewing.

Following the initial phase, participating households will be provided with two diaries and asked to record their daily and occasional expenditures over a two-week period. Throughout this process, the interviewers will offer assistance to the households, ensuring accuracy of the reported information. This approach will maintain data quality while mitigating the burden on the responding households.

Participation



This HBS is also being held under the Malta Statistics Authority Act, 2000, which makes the participation of all the selected households mandatory. All collected data will be utilised exclusively for the needs of official statistics and protected according to strict information security policies. Additionally, data will be disseminated and published in an aggregated form without the risk of

household or individual identification. Just like previous HBS projects, the NSO will provide €50 to every participating household, as a token of appreciation for their cooperation in this important statistical exercise.