

PRESS INFORMATION NOTICE

4th September 2023

Peer Review Report for Malta

In October of 2022, the National Statistics Office (NSO) underwent a Peer Review conducted by a team of European experts. This review aimed to evaluate the NSO's operations and its adherence to the European Statistical System's (ESS) Code of Practice. The expert team also engaged in discussions with various NSO stakeholders, including representatives from the media. Additionally, the Directorate for Health Information and Research (DHIR), acting as an Other National Authority (ONA), was also included in the assessment due to its role as Malta's official body responsible for health statistics.

Peer Reviews represent a fundamental aspect of the ESS's strategy for implementing the 16 principles outlined in the ESS Code of Practice. Their purpose is to strengthen the integrity, independence, accountability, and overall quality of the statistical entities within the ESS. These reviews are conducted in "rounds," meaning that they are carried out periodically for the statistical institutions of each EU Member State. Previous rounds took place in 2007/8 and 2014/5.

Following a thorough evaluation of the NSO's operations and the input received from stakeholders, the team of experts compiled a report on the NSO's compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice, detailing recommendations for further enhancements.

Today marks the release of this Peer Review report. The report conveys a largely positive sentiment, highlighting the NSO's strong reputation and the deep respect it commands, extending beyond the Maltese public administration to encompass the broader Maltese society. In recent years, there has been a notable boost in both credibility and trust, resulting in improved adherence to the European Statistics Code of Practice.

Despite its modest size, the NSO manages a substantial workload concerning European-level statistical obligations. To meet these demands, significant investments have been made in data collection and production systems, with a primary focus on enhancing the quality, efficiency, and timeliness of all its statistical outputs. Furthermore, the NSO boasts a dedicated team, including enthusiastic young professionals, in the field of official statistics.

A strong commitment to quality management and an understanding of its significance are deeply ingrained in the NSO's operations, through comprehensive quality documentation, including metadata reports. The peer review team has acknowledged these metadata reports as an effective and innovative practice. Moreover, rigorous standards for confidentiality and data protection were validated by its first ISO 27001 certification in 2019. Furthermore, an IT Transformation Project has been initiated, aiming at standardising statistical processes, enhancing quality and efficiency.

It was also noted that significant emphasis has been placed by the NSO on its dissemination efforts, maintaining a positive relationship with the media. One noteworthy initiative within this domain is the ongoing rebranding project, which includes the launch of a new website focusing more on conveying information in Maltese over and above English.

With that said, the peer review team pinpointed specific areas in which the NSO and DHIR could enhance their collaboration to bolster the Maltese statistical system. To this end, the team formulated a total of sixteen recommendations, consisting of two compliance-related suggestions and fourteen improvement-oriented ones. These recommendations were categorised into four overarching themes:

- Enhancing Governance, Coordination, and Resource Allocation
- Reinforcing Quality Management
- Modernizing Statistical Processes and Approaches through Innovation and Efficiency
- Enhancing the Recognition and Value of Official Statistics through Improved Communication

[Click here to access the Peer Review report for Malta](#)