

AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS 2018

NATIONAL REFERENCE METADATA IN SINGLE INTEGRATED METADATA STRUCTURE (SIMS)

CONCEPT 1 – CONTACT

Sub-Concept 1.1: Contact organisation

National Statistics Office (NSO) - Malta

Sub-Concept 1.2: Contact organisation unit

Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries Statistics
Directorate B – Business Statistics

Sub-Concept 1.3: Contact name

Mr. Ronald Tanti

Sub-Concept 1.4: Contact person function

Head of Unit

Sub-Concept 1.5: Contact mail address

National Statistics Office (NSO),
Lascaris, Valletta VLT 2000, Malta.

Sub-Concept 1.6: Contact e-mail address

ronald.tanti@gov.mt

Sub-Concept 1.7: Contact phone number

+356 2599 7333

CONCEPT 2 – METADATA UPDATE

Sub-Concept 2.1: Metadata last certified

29th November 2019.

Sub-Concept 2.2: Metadata last posted

23 September 2020

Sub-Concept 2.3: Metadata last update

23 September 2020

CONCEPT 3 – STATISTICAL PRESENTATION

Sub-Concept 3.1: Data description

Data collection comprises pesticide sales in Malta. The characteristics of the Plant Protection Products (PPPs) dataset consist essentially of yearly statistical data on the volume (in kilograms or in litres) of authorised plant protection products sold in Malta during an entire calendar year. These statistics are collected through an annual census conducted amongst all the identified commercial trading entities of such products.

Sub-Concept 3.2: Classification system

In summary, the comprehensive dataset that is collected through the said annual survey includes statistics on the volume of sales of authorised plant protection products by the identified traders of such products in Malta. The authorised list of products can be viewed through the official website of the competent Authority (namely, the Malta Competitions and Consumer Affairs Authority) through the internet link: <https://mccaa.org.mt/Section/Content?contentId=1156>

A comprehensive list of products is sent to each respondent and, upon submission of the requested data, the results are matched with the annual authorised list provided by the MCCA (compiled as at the end of the year under study) to ultimately collect information on the quantity of all the active substances used through the products purchased by resident consumers/farmers.

Sub-Concept 3.3: Sector coverage

All the main entities that are actively engaged in the commercial trading of authorised plant protection products in Malta.

Sub-Concept 3.4: Statistical concepts and definitions

Refer to sub-concept 3.2.

Sub-Concept 3.5: Statistical unit

Main trading enterprises/operators of authorised plant protection products in Malta.

Sub-Concept 3.6: Statistical population

The target population consists of the main trading enterprises/operators operating and selling the PPP products in Malta.

Sub-Concept 3.7: Reference area

Maltese islands: Malta and Gozo (NUTS 1 & Nuts 2).

Sub-Concept 3.8: Time coverage

Data collection covers the aggregated twelve calendar months preceding the year of the survey. A time series of data is available from year 2011 onwards.

Sub-Concept 3.9: Base period

Not applicable.

CONCEPT 4 – UNIT OF MEASURE

Depending on the marketed state (i.e. solid or liquid) of the product, the units of measurement that are used for the data-collection are either kilogrammes or litres; while, for data-dissemination purposes, the collated statistics are (as requested) converted and submitted in to kilogrammes of active substance/s.

CONCEPT 5 – REFERENCE PERIOD

The statistical variables collected refer to the preceding calendar year.

CONCEPT 6 – INSTITUTIONAL MANDATE

Sub-Concept 6.1: Legal acts and other agreements

[The Malta Statistics Authority Act, 2000.](#) The Act empowers the NSO to collect, compile, extract and release official statistics related to demographic, social, environment, economic and general activities and conditions of Malta;

The legal basis for the statistical data collection of sales in volume of plant protection products in Malta is [EC Regulation 1185/2009.](#)

Sub-Concept 6.2: Data sharing

Data are shared with the European Commission in line with the relevant data submission requirements.

CONCEPT 7 – CONFIDENTIALITY

Sub-Concept 7.1: Confidentiality – Policy

At National level:

The NSO requests information for the compilation of official statistics according to the articles of the [MSA Act – Cap. 422](#) and the [Data Protection Act – Cap. 586](#) of the Laws of Malta implementing the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Article 40 of the MSA Act stipulates the restrictions on the use of information while Article 41 stipulates the prohibition of disclosure of information. Furthermore, Section IX of the Act (Offences and Penalties) lays down the measures to be taken in case of unlawful exercise of any officer of statistics regarding confidentiality of data.

Since its inception, the NSO has always assured that all data collected remains confidential and that it is used for statistical purposes only according to the articles and derogations stipulated in the laws quoted above. The Office is obliged to protect the identify of data providers and refrain from divulging any data to third parties that might lead to the identification of persons or entities.

During 2009, the NSO has set up a Statistical Disclosure Committee to ensure that statistical confidentiality is observed, especially when requests for microdata are received.

Upon employment, all NSO employees are informed of the rules and duties pertaining to confidential information and its treatment. In line with stipulations of the MSA Act, before commencing work, every employee is required to take an oath of secrecy whose text is included in the same Act.

An internal policy on anonymisation and pseudo-anonymisation is in place to ascertain that adequate methods are used for the protection of data which the office collects and shares with the public in its capacity as the National Statistics Office. The policy is meant to safeguard confidentiality of both personal and business data entrusted to the NSO. The document provides guidance for all NSO employees who process data on a daily basis as to how anonymisation and pseudo-anonymisation methods should be applied. The policy applies to all confidential, restricted and internal information, regardless of form (paper or electronic documents, applications and databases) that is received, processed, stored and disseminated by the NSO.

At European level:

[Regulation \(EC\) No 223/2009](#) on European statistics (recital 24 and Article 20(4) of 11 March 2009 (OJ L 87, p. 164), stipulates the need to establish common principles and guidelines ensuring the confidentiality of data used for the production of European statistics and the access to those confidential data with due account for technical developments and the requirements of users in a democratic society.

Sub-Concept 7.2: Confidentiality – Data Treatment

Data are published in aggregate form to avoid the presence of low counts which could possibly lead to the identification of respondents within the industry. When the data provider is inevitably indirectly identifiable (due to the presence of unique combinations of particular characteristics), the information is not published and is flagged as 'confidential'.

CONCEPT 8 – RELEASE POLICY

Sub-Concept 8.1: Release Calendar

Not applicable. News Releases concerning pesticide statistics are not published locally.

Sub-Concept 8.2: Release Calendar access

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 8.3: User access

An internal policy on dissemination is in place to govern the dissemination of official statistics in an impartial, independent and timely manner, making them available simultaneously to all users. The NSO's primary channel for the dissemination of official statistics is the NSO website. Tailored requests for statistical information may also be submitted through the said website.

Pesticides' statistics are available and accessible on the Eurostat website (within the European Commission).

CONCEPT 9 – FREQUENCY OF DISSEMINATION

Annual.

CONCEPT 10 – ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY

Sub-Concept 10.1: News release

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 10.2: Publications

Aggregated data are published in the publication 'Malta in Figures'.

Sub-Concept 10.3: Online Database

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 10.4: Micro-data access

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 10.5: Other

Data are disseminated to Eurostat.

Sub-Concept 10.6: Documentation on methodology

Work processes and procedures for the compilation of environmental statistics are documented and available for internal purposes only.

Sub-Concept 10.6.1: Metadata completeness rate

Information about all required metadata concepts (and sub-concepts thereof) are provided.

Sub-Concept 10.7: Quality Documentation

A quality report related to the sales of plant protection products is compiled according to an established structure and sent to Eurostat every year.

SIMS reports are additionally available to the public on the NSO's metadata website including concepts related to metadata and quality.

CONCEPT 11 – QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Sub-Concept 11.1: Quality Assurance

The NSO ensures the accuracy of data released to the public and prepares clear methodological notes which explain the processes involved in the collection and production of official statistics. The collected, compiled and published data on sales of authorised plant protection products in Malta are thoroughly checked throughout all stages of the statistical production system.

The NSO has developed an internal Quality Management Framework (QMF) which is built on common requirements of the ESS Code of Practice (ESS CoP). A document was prepared to include a set of general quality guidelines spanning over all statistical domains. Assuring methodological soundness is an integral part of the QMF, nonetheless, the document spans also on other areas related to institutional aspects.

Every five to seven years, the NSO participates in a Peer Review exercise through which the compliance of its operations with principles of the ESS CoP is assessed by an expert team. Peer Reviews are indeed part of the European Statistical System (ESS) strategy to implement the ESS CoP. Each NSI is expected to provide information as requested by a standard self-assessment questionnaire. Following this an expert team visits the office to meet NSI representatives and main stakeholders. Peer Reviews result in a compliance report and the listing of a set of Improvement

Actions which need to be followed up by the NSI. The next round of Peer Reviews is planned to be carried out in 2022.

Sub-Concept 11.2: Quality Assessment

The collected, compiled and published data on sales of authorised plant protection products in Malta are thoroughly checked throughout all stages of the statistical production system.

CONCEPT 12 – RELEVANCE

Sub-Concept 12.1: User needs

Main users of the data include:

- Media
- Policy makers
- Academics
- Eurostat
- Other international organisations
- Data suppliers themselves
- General public

Sub-Concept 12.2: User satisfaction

[The last User Satisfaction Survey was held in 2014 with the aim to collect information about key users' satisfaction with statistical output.](#)

[The NSO keeps record of the number of News Releases and publications disseminated on its website, the users to whom statistical products are provided, as well as the number of requests that are processed every year.](#)

Sub-Concept 12.3: Data Completeness

[In general, the content of the statistical data satisfies the data-collection and submission requirements on the subject.](#)

CONCEPT 13 – ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY

Sub-Concept 13.1: Overall accuracy

[A system of checks both across time and across different administrative sources is in place to ensure a sound level of accuracy. Long-standing procedures carried out by the unit as well as several cross-checks conducted against any available audited financial statements, provides the NSO with enough confidence to publish the relevant data on an annual basis.](#)

Sub-Concept 13.2: Sampling errors

Not available. Data collection is census based.

Sub-Concept 13.3: Non-sampling errors

Main sources of non-sampling error relate to measurement and processing errors. Measurement errors are minimised through various cross-checks across time, as well as through several automatic validations and processing. The data inputted is re-checked by other statistical officers within the unit.

Sub-Concept 13.3.1: Coverage error

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 13.3.1.1: Over Coverage

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 13.3.1.2: Common Units Proportion

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 13.3.2: Measurement error

Measurement errors are minimised through various cross-checks across time, as well as through several automatic validations and processing.

Sub-Concept 13.3.3: Non-response error

Not applicable

Sub-Concept 13.3.3.1: Unit non-response

Not available.

Sub-Concept 13.3.3.2: Item non-response

Not applicable, the respondent is specifically directed to provide an all-inclusive list of the annual sales of such products sold by the trading entity.

Sub-Concept 13.3.4: Processing error

A series of checks (including automatic, in-built validation checks within the purposely-prepared software program) and re-checks are in place across the compilation process to minimise the processing errors; including the re-checking of the data-input by other statistical officers within the Unit.

Sub-Concept 13.3.5: Model assumption error

Not applicable.

CONCEPT 14 – TIMELINESS AND PUNCTUALITY

Sub-Concept 14.1: Timeliness

The compilation of the data starts with the data-request in mid-April of each year. The collection process usually takes around two months to complete; depending on the varying compilation procedures and records of respondents. Upon receipt of the data, each piece of information is validated and, if necessary, queried with the respondent through a written request or telephone contact. A follow-up process is eventually triggered until enough explanations related to the raised queries are provided. The compiled data are then generally submitted in December and consist of figures on the kilogramme quantity of active substances sold in Malta during the preceding calendar year.

Sub-Concept 14.2: Punctuality

The data is invariably submitted to Eurostat on schedule.

CONCEPT 15 – COHERENCE AND COMPARABILITY

Sub-Concept 15.1: Comparability – Geographical

Comparable/common methodology is adhered to by all countries. Comparisons with other EU and Non-EU countries are carried out as necessary but not regularly by the Unit.

Sub-Concept 15.2: Comparability – Over Time

As outlined in sub-concept 15.1, the data are, upon their receipt, compared across the latest years. The only significant change that has lately been carried out by the NSO concerns the method of collection and processing of the data. Such changes aim to achieve a faster and a higher standard of output in conformity with the latest international data-compilation and presentation requirements on active substances in marketed plant protection products.

Upon receipt, all data are compared with the latest years' records. The only significant change that was carried out by the NSO in 2018, concerns the method of collection and processing of the data.

Such changes aim to achieve a faster and a higher standard of output in conformity with the latest international data-compilation and presentation requirements on active substances in marketed plant protection products.

Sub-Concept 15.3: Coherence – Cross Domain

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 15.3.1: Coherence – Sub-Annual and Annual statistics

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 15.3.2: Coherence – National Accounts

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 15.4: Coherence – Internal

Not applicable.

CONCEPT 16 – COST AND BURDEN

Not applicable.

CONCEPT 17 – DATA REVISION

Sub-Concept 17.1: Data revision – Policy

Revision of data is compliant with the ESS Code of Practice principles. Any required revisions are carried out in the following year.

At the NSO, there is currently no internal policy governing revisions that occur for all statistics produced. Nonetheless, a revisions policy is being drafted to safeguard a coordinated revisions system across statistical domains.

This policy will take account of the need and causes for revisions; time and frequency of revisions; data and other statistical products affected by such revisions; and length of periods revised.

Sub-Concept 17.2: Data revision – Practice and Data Revision

Any required revisions are carried out in the following year.

CONCEPT 18 – STATISTICAL PROCESSING

Sub-Concept 18.1: Source data

The data are collected through a direct-reporting survey system based on a fill-in form distributed via electronic mail to all the traders active in this commercial activity.

Sub-Concept 18.2: Frequency of data collection

Annual.

Sub-Concept 18.3: Data Collection

The data are gathered through a survey form distributed and collected via email to all the traders engaged in this commercial activity.

Sub-Concept 18.4: Data Validation

Data are checked, re-checked and validated throughout the collection, compilation, presentation and submission processes.

Sub-Concept 18.5: Data Compilation

The unit ensures that information about all the requested variables in the survey form is duly provided. Any adjustments are carried out at a later stage after consulting with the data provider. No imputations are carried out.

Sub-Concept 18.5.1: Imputation

Not applicable.

Sub-Concept 18.6: Adjustment

Not applicable. The only adjustments that are carried out refer to the afore-mentioned alterations/updates that arise during the checking processes.

Sub-Concept 18.6.1: Seasonal Adjustment

Not applicable.

CONCEPT 19 – COMMENT

No further comments.