

HBS_ESMS_A_MT_2008_0000

National Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS)

Compiling agency: National Statistics Office (NSO)

Time Dimension: 2008

Data Flow: HBS_ESMS_A

| Concept name | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Contact | |
| 1.1. Contact organisation | National Statistics Office (NSO) |
| 1.2. Contact organisation unit | Unit 01: Methodology and Research |
| 1.3. Contact name | Mr. Silvan Zammit |
| 1.4. Contact person function | Manager |
| 1.5. Contact mail address | National Statistics Office (NSO), Unit 01: Methodology and Research, Lascaris, Valletta, VLT2000, Malta |
| 1.6. Contact email address | silvan.zammit@gov.mt |
| 1.7. Contact phone number | +356 2599 7301 |
| 1.8. Contact fax number | +356 2599 7205 |
| 2. Metadata update | |
| 2.1. Metadata last certified | 30/06/2014 |
| 2.2. Metadata last posted | 30/06/2014 |

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| 2.3. Metadata last update | 30/06/2014 |
| 3. Statistical presentation | |
| 3.1. Data description | The HBS is a national inquiry based on a randomly-selected sample of persons living in private households, providing a wealthy source of information on a wide range of social and economic variables. The survey is harmonised within the European Union with regard to its concepts, definitions and classifications. The main aim of the survey is to illustrate household (consumption) expenditures and how they are distributed among different goods and services. It also aims to reveal any changes in the consumption patterns of Maltese households over a number of years for different socio-economic groups. This is possible because the HBS also collects socio-demographic and other information on all household members. |
| 3.2. Classification system | The following are the most important nomenclatures and classifications for HBS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COICOP-HBS 2003 (including the modifications proposed by the COICOP-HBS task force of 2002) - Breakdown of consumption expenditure of households; • NUTS (from 1 to 5 digit level) and LAU [1 and 2 digit) - Breakdown of territorial units and regions; • ISCED-1997 - Breakdown of education level; • ISCO88 - Breakdown of occupation; • NACE rev 1.1 - Breakdown of economic Sector in employment |
| 3.3. Coverage - sector | The HBS collects information on Consumption Expenditure according to the Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP) 2003. The main divisions include: <p>CP01 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages CP02 - Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics CP03 - Clothing and footwear CP04 - Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels CP05 - Furnishings, household equipment and routine maintenance of the house CP06 - Health CP07 - Transport CP08 - Communications CP09 - Recreation and culture CP10 - Education CP11 - Restaurants and hotels CP12 - Miscellaneous goods and services</p> |
| 3.4. Statistical concepts and definitions | A complete list of concepts and definitions used in the 2008 HBS may be found in the official publication which is available online, http://nso.gov.mt/en/publicatons/Publications_by_Unit/Documents/01_Methodology_and_Research/HBS2008.pdf |
| 3.5. Statistical unit | Private households and household members |
| 3.6. Statistical population | The target population consists of all private households and corresponding members. |
| 3.7. Reference area | The survey covers all private households in Malta. <p>The HBS has no legal basis, hence each country has its own targets, methodology and survey programming. Data supplied by each country are not perfectly harmonised. After each round, some harmonisation efforts are carried out and each new round of data collection is better harmonised than the previous one. However,</p> |

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| | <p>some problems of comparability among countries still remain. This is particularly true for income and expenditure components and ways how certain expenditure items are classified.</p> <p>Since the survey is harmonised within the European Union with regard to its concepts, definitions and classifications, results are comparable at EU level.</p> |
| 3.8. Coverage - Time | 2008/9 |
| 3.9. Base period | Not applicable |
| 4. Unit of measure | Expenditure and income are collected in Euros (in absolute amounts) while socio-demographic variables are collected in units. |
| 5. Reference Period | One complete year (February 2008 to February 2009). However, some expenditure items are collected over shorter periods (e.g. one or three months, daily basis) and then grossed over one year. |
| 6. Institutional Mandate | |
| 6.1. Institutional Mandate - legal acts and other agreements | The HBS is not regulated across the EU but is run under a Gentlemen's agreement. However the HBS in Malta is organised under the legal framework set in the Malta Statistics Authority Act of 2000 (http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NS0/Documents/Legislation/MaltaStatisticsAuthorityAct.pdf) |
| 6.2. Institutional Mandate - data sharing | Not applicable. |
| 7. Confidentiality | |
| 7.1. Confidentiality - policy | Confidentiality of HBS data is specified in the MSA Act of 2000 as well as in the Policy on the Confidentiality of Personal and Commercial Data (http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NS0/Documents/NS0_Policies/Confidentiality_of_personal_and_commercial_data.pdf). At EU level, confidentiality of data is safeguarded subject to the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics |
| 7.2. Confidentiality - data treatment | Anonymised HBS data is available for research purposes either through Eurostat's safe centre or through the NSO (http://nso.gov.mt/en/Pages/NSO-Home.aspx). Data disclosure control is carried out using a minimum frequency count threshold for a vast number of data combinations using tailored statistical software. |
| 8. Release policy | |
| 8.1. Release calendar | All news releases published by the NSO are disseminated at 1100 hrs as scheduled in the Advance Release Calendar. The calendar is published on the NSO website and includes a three-month advance notice. |
| 8.2. Release calendar access | The NSO News Release Calendar may be viewed here: http://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Releases-Calendar.aspx |
| 8.3. Release policy - user access | The NSO's Dissemination Policy is available online (http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NS0/Documents/NS0_Policies/Dissemination.pdf) |

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| 9. Frequency of dissemination | The HBS is normally carried out approximately every five years with the last ones being done in the years 2000, and 2008. |
| 10. Dissemination format | |
| 10.1. Dissemination format - News release | No press release has ever been issued on the 2008 HBS. |
| 10.2. Dissemination format - Publications | A one-off publication on the HBS is available through the NSO website (http://nso.gov.mt/en/publicatons/Publications_by_Unit/Documents/01_Methodology_and_Research/HBS2008.pdf). |
| 10.3. Dissemination format - online database | HBS microdata is not available through the NSO on-line database (known as StatDb). |
| 10.4. Dissemination format - microdata access | No information about the HBS is available in the StatDb |
| 10.5. Dissemination format - other | Not applicable. |
| 11. Accessibility of documentation | |
| 11.1. Documentation on methodology | Although the HBS is not regulated across the EU, and is run under a Gentlemen's agreement, a common set of guidelines are normally adhered to by most of the Member States. These are available online: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/statmanuals/files/KS-BF-03-003-__-N-EN.pdf |
| 11.2. Quality management - documentation | Quality-related metadata were transmitted to Eurostat in 2013. However these are available subject to authorisation through CIRCABC (https://circabc.europa.eu/). |
| 12. Quality management | |
| 12.1. Quality assurance | <p>A formal quality assurance framework is not available but quality in the HBS is ensured through various supervision processes which were in place to ensure that human errors were kept under control.</p> <p>Various quality control measures were applied throughout the survey process to ensure a high quality of work. The main types of error that affect the reliability of the survey results are sampling errors, non-sampling errors, non-response bias and some incorrect reporting of certain items like demographic, expenditure and income data.</p> <p>A large scale national publicity campaign was undertaken at the beginning of the fieldwork to enhance general public awareness on the importance of the survey. A pilot study of over 100 households was also carried out a few months prior to the actual survey to test the efficacy of the HBS questionnaire and identify</p> |

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| | <p>any potential interpretation problems.</p> <p>An introductory letter was sent to all sample households prior to the Interviewer’s visit explaining the nature and purpose of the survey. Interviewers generally had to make three to five separate visits to secure the co-operation of individual household members and to complete the household and personal questionnaires. Although the diaries were generally completed by the household members themselves, Interviewers made up a number of inspection visits during the two-week period to ensure that entries were being recorded correctly.</p> <p>Training of Interviewers was carried out through a number of briefing sessions, at the end of which, a specific manual highlighting the main points and tips of how to enhance interviewing efficacy was handed out to each Interviewer.</p> <p>Although the co-operation of sample households was mainly canvassed by Interviewers on the basis of the importance of the survey and the usefulness of the results, response also benefited from a monetary inducement offered to each participating household in appreciation of their participation.</p> <p>When required, households providing incomplete information were re-contacted by the Interviewers or Supervisors to collect the missing information. The remaining missing data were imputed using various statistical imputation methods.</p> <p>The data collection process was subject to a series of quality checks by a group of experienced NSO staff. Particular attention was made throughout the study to monitor and limit the occurrence of errors arising in the data processing, editing and coding phases of the study. In particular, considering the significant amount of coding required in the HBS, a sample of codes was regularly checked to ensure the quality of the coding process.</p> <p>In addition, the data entry program used in the process of transferring collected data to the computer for analysis, had a number of built-in validation rules to ensure the quality of captured data and that data-entry errors are kept to an absolute minimum. Data collection was then followed by a series of telephone audits that were carried out on a sample of households to ensure that all Interviewers complied with instructions.</p> <p>In addition, a set of design weights were constructed at individual level to align and gross sample estimates with the benchmark population distribution in terms of individuals’ sex, age and district of residence (as defined by the Local Administrative Unit classification). In addition, weights were systematically adjusted to project all monthly and daily purchases over the whole calendar year. This served to smooth the weekly variation of the consumption patterns evidenced by different households (in terms of equivalised household size). In addition to this, weights were systematically adjusted using a post-stratification technique to project all monthly and daily purchases over the whole calendar year. This served to smooth the weekly variation of the consumption patterns evidenced by different households (in terms of equivalised household size).</p> |
| <p>12.2. Quality management - assessment</p> | <p>As a sample survey, the results of the HBS are not likely to be a perfect representation of all Maltese households’ expenditure and income. The results are based on data collected from sampled households using the survey procedures described in the methodological part. These are therefore, estimates of the values which would have been obtained if all households in Malta had been perfectly surveyed.</p> <p>The degree of error will depend on how widely particular categories of expenditure (or income) vary between households and the degree of representativeness of the sample in each category.</p> <p>Human errors, such as non-response, the inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide accurate and complete particulars, errors and inconsistencies by Interviewers and office personnel etc., are also present in the survey but are difficult to quantify. While every effort was made to minimise these types of errors (through supervision of processes and IT tools), they are still present and must be borne in mind by the users of these data.</p> |
| <p>13. Relevance</p> | |

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| 13.1. Relevance - User Needs | The findings from the survey are of interest to a wide audience (e.g. the media, researchers, market research companies, etc), and results are used for planning, policy and monitoring purposes. Results are also used internally as the basis for calculations in National Accounts and the Consumer Price Index. |
| 13.2. Relevance - User Satisfaction | As indicated above, since the HBS is carried out under a common set of guidelines which are normally adhered to by most of the Member States, the quality of the data provided in the survey is considered as satisfactory. |
| 13.3. Completeness | As indicated above, since the HBS is carried out under a common set of guidelines which are normally adhered to by most of the Member States, the level of detail provided in the survey is considered as satisfactory. |
| 14. Accuracy | |
| 14.1. Accuracy - overall | Same as concept 12.2 |
| 14.2. Sampling error | A gross sample of 6965 households was selected using a systematic random approach from the population register maintained by the NSO. A net sample of 3232 units was achieved. Table 1 in Annex A provides estimates of variance for selected indicators. |
| 14.3. Non-sampling error | <p>The non-sampling errors in HBS can be summarised as follow:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sampling frame and coverage errors 2) Non-response and substitutions 3) Measurement and processing errors <p>For further information refer to concept 12.2 above.</p> |
| 15. Timeliness and punctuality | |
| 15.1. Timeliness | Between 1 and 3 years after the end of the reference period. |
| 15.2. Punctuality | Not applicable. |
| 16. Comparability | |
| 16.1. Comparability - geographical | Given that the HBS is voluntary and no legal basis exists at EU level, the survey structure and implementation arrangements are diverse; this has evident implications for comparability. However in recent years, all the participating countries and Eurostat have made great efforts to harmonise their HBS and to improve data comparability. |
| 16.2. Comparability - over time | <p>The general methodology (target population, sampling strategy, coverage, definitions, etc.) of the 2008 HBS is practically identical to that used in the previous national Household Budgetary Survey held in 2000. However some changes in the definitions and collection modes were made, particularly in consumption expenditure classifications and income and therefore a direct comparison between the two sources is not always 100% efficient.</p> <p>INCOME: In contrast to HBS 2000, income excludes certain receipts of an irregular and non-recurring nature such as the sale of own possessions, inheritance, lottery winnings, etc., which finance household purchases. For this reason, in accordance with Eurostat documentation, the term 'net income' has been used in the 2008 HBS report instead of disposable income to avoid any misinterpretation of results.</p> <p>CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE: Figures for consumption expenditure do not include all households'</p> |

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| | <p>expenditure performed during the reference period and are not directly comparable with those considered in 2000. The introduction of new items and the change in the coding schemes used in the two surveys make a comparison of expenditure items, in some categories between the two surveys, not directly possible. In order to harmonise the process and enhance comparability with other countries, consumption expenditure presented in the 2008 HBS report is in line with Eurostat HBS recommendations and COICOP definitions for final consumption expenditure.</p> <p>Major changes in definitions since 2000 are described in detail in table 2 included in Annex A.</p> |
| 17. Coherence | |
| 17.1. Coherence - cross domain | <p>In the case of the HBS, the most relevant sources for external comparison include the weights used in the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP), the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), Labour Force Surveys (LFS), National Accounts (NA) and various administrative and other sources. Considering that these are totally different instruments, with different methodologies, sources and even sometimes definitions, overall coherence is quite acceptable.</p> <p>In particular, the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) is an annual survey conducted by the NSO to obtain information on income and monetary-poverty indicators of different types of households. Information about annual EU-SILC data is also normally published by the NSO. The HBS also provides information on income but it is used primarily for categorical purposes (e.g. to analyse household consumption expenditure patterns according to different levels of income) rather than the provision of information on income levels.</p> <p>Income data in EU-SILC is recorded on a calendar year basis while in the HBS this information is provided directly by respondents based on the 12-month period preceding the interview. As a result of this, and other definitions which do not coincide perfectly, income data from the two sources are not directly comparable. It is because of the conceptual differences between the two sources that the term 'net income' is normally used in household budgetary surveys.</p> |
| 17.2. Coherence - internal | Normally there is very good internal coherence. However issues explained in concept 17.1 apply here. |
| 18. Cost and Burden | The HBS is one of the most demanding surveys that National Statistical Institutes carry out. Even more, the burden is especially felt by the households in the diary keeping phase, which lasts for two consecutive weeks. The estimated costs of the 2008 HBS amount to |
| 19. Data revision | |
| 19.1. Data revision - policy | The data revision policy employed at the NSO may be found here: http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NS0/Documents/NS0_Policies/Revisions_of_Official_Statistics.pdf |
| 19.2. Data revision - practice | As indicated above, after every data round, there are important methodological changes. Therefore, there is no guarantee about the comparability of data. |
| 20. Statistical processing | |
| 20.1. Source data | National HBS survey. |
| 20.2. Frequency of data collection | Approximately every five years. |

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| 20.3. Data collection | <p>Fieldwork was undertaken by a team of nearly 80 Interviewers and five Supervisors, the majority of whom were specially recruited for the survey. All data captured through face-to-face interviews and survey Interviewers were trained and made familiar with the survey to ensure an adequate and impartial data collection process.</p> <p>In view of the particular characteristics of the survey, data collection was carried out over a whole calendar year, between February 2008 and February 2009. In order to ensure a comprehensive coverage of the households along the year, the sample was randomly divided into 13 batches (sub-samples), each consisting of about 540 households. These batches were systematically allocated in a specific order to ensure that the whole sample is evenly distributed throughout the survey period by a number of selected criteria.</p> <p>The survey focused on the randomly selected sample of households at specific addresses and Interviewers were not permitted to introduce non-selected households into the sample. Interviewers endeavoured to secure the co-operation of all selected households, by delivering information about the survey and providing socio-economic information through the screening phase, main questionnaire and diaries.</p> <p>A screening phase was also introduced, during which, all households belonging to a specific batch were contacted in order to establish which households would be participating in the HBS. Additionally, the screening also served to pre-determine the allocation of households in each batch along the year to ensure a uniform spread of the sample as explained above.</p> <p>The screening phase also offered a means by which the NSO could obtain some key information on all households, including non-participating ones. Part of this information was required in order to gain further information on these households and to partly offset the imbalances in the distribution of the net sample. This information was collected by means of a screening form which had to be filled by the Interviewers on the first interview.</p> <p>The main questionnaire was filled by the Interviewers and was the first questionnaire to be compiled after the screening. It included a wide range of socio-economic questions including: a) A complete demographic profile of each household member; b) Basic information on the dwelling (in terms of its state of repair and contents); c) Income information at individual level; d) Irregular outlays (normally occurring on a quarterly or annual basis).</p> <p>On the other hand, the primary scope of the diaries was to collect regular expenditures and main product information such as physical quantities and places of purchase. Participating households had to list all their daily purchases in the diaries during the two-week period starting on the first Monday of the reference period. Diaries were expected to be filled by household members, although Interviewers assisted the households in case of difficulty. A total of 3 diaries were distributed to each participating household: a personal diary for the personal expenditures of each household member aged 18 or more and a household diary for each of the two reference weeks (compared to the three-week diary used in 2000).</p> |
| 20.4. Data validation | See concept 12.1. |
| 20.5. Data compilation | <p>Although all Member States collect their own data mainly to fulfil national requirements for RPI and National Accounts purposes, and there is no legal obligation to carry out the HBS in a specific manner, recommendations are in place to harmonise the process as far as possible in order to facilitate the comparison between different countries. Thus, although different definitions for income and expenditure exist, Member States are free to choose their own versions. While income is derived from a number of variables collected in the questionnaire, expenditure is collected by means of combinations of questionnaires and diaries over variable periods of time depending on the item and thus, final figures are adjusted accordingly.</p> |
| 20.6. Adjustment | Data is adjusted for season effects, different time periods (due to different data collection modes) and weights. |
| 21. Comment | Not applicable |

ANNEX A

Table 1. Estimates of variance

| Variable | Category | Mean Total Household Expenditure | 95 % confidence interval (lower bound) | 95 % confidence interval (upper bound) |
|---|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Age of household's reference person | 0-29 | 19,811 | 17,692 | 21,931 |
| | 30-44 | 21,882 | 21,064 | 22,699 |
| | 45-59 | 23,464 | 22,539 | 24,388 |
| | 60+ | 13,903 | 13,338 | 14,468 |
| Household type | One adult | 10,504 | 9,722 | 11,286 |
| | Two adults | 16,661 | 15,805 | 17,517 |
| | More than two adults | 23,213 | 22,046 | 24,379 |
| | One adult with dependent children | 16,578 | 14,544 | 18,612 |
| | Two adults with dependent children | 23,452 | 22,629 | 24,274 |
| | More than two adults with dependent children | 27,498 | 25,926 | 29,070 |
| Employment status of household's reference person | Manual worker except agriculture | 21,582 | 20,731 | 22,434 |
| | Non-manual worker except agriculture | 26,688 | 25,529 | 27,848 |
| | Self-employed person and farmer or agricultural worker | 23,568 | 21,927 | 25,209 |
| | Unemployed | 14,435 | 12,419 | 16,452 |
| | Retired | 13,950 | 13,353 | 14,547 |
| | Other inactive | 12,405 | 11,541 | 13,268 |

Table 2. Changes in definitions: 2000 TO 2008

Consumption expenditure classifications

A new classification system for expenditures based on COICOP (Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose) was adopted in 2008 which differs from the one used in 2000. The system is hierarchical and allows roughly the same level of detail of the previous system.

Although the main groups of expenditure have been retained, there have been some changes in the content of these groups such as classification changes and some new categories of expenditure which have been added.

In particular, some questions were enhanced while a number of new codes were added from 2000 to better reflect particular sectors where a more sophisticated coding structure was required. This also served to cater for the changing consumption patterns of the households. These mainly include the categories of Food and non-alcoholic beverages, Communication and Health. In particular, a section dedicated to Health was included in the main questionnaire, whereas in 2000 all related expenditure was collected through the diaries.

The following are the main differences in codes between 2000 and 2008 at the level of detail presented in this report. These constitute items for which the expenditure was collected as a whole in 2000 but were split in 2008 and were additionally recorded in different consumption expenditure categories:

| <u>Description</u> | <u>Consumption expenditure category (2000)</u> | <u>Consumption expenditure category (2008)</u> |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone loudspeakers • Loudspeakers, headphones, earphones and combined microphone/speaker sets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation and Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Recreation and culture |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel agents' commission (if separately priced for sales of travel tickets and package tours on a fee or contract basis) • Organization of package tour services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation and Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Recreation and culture |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows and their frames; doors and their frames and thresholds, made of wood • Parts of furniture (except seats, doors and windows), such as: shelves, drawers, chest of drawers, bookshelves etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels • Furnishings, household equipment and routine maintenance of the house |