



National Statistics Office
Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Istatistika

CDU-POL-002: Revisions of Official Statistics Policy

June 2022

1. Overview

- 1.1. Statistical data produced by the NSO may be subject to revisions in accordance with Principle 8 of the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#). Revisions of statistical data are normal and necessary to progressively increase the quality and precision of data, while ensuring the consistency of data over time and across domains.
- 1.2. This document outlines the general principles and procedures followed by the NSO for any revisions of data and are meant for both users and producers of statistics to gain a better understanding of the revision process and its analysis.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. Revisions are defined broadly as any change in a value of a statistic released by the NSO to the public.
- 2.2. Revisions occur either when new observations become available and/or some past values are modified for any of the reasons outline below.
- 2.3. Statistics can be subject to three main types of revisions:
 - 2.3.1. **Routine Revisions** aim at including better source data and do not entail critical changes in the methodologies and definitions used. They mainly entail the incorporation of source data which is considered more updated, complete and/or of better quality; and updating of base periods and/or seasonal factors. This type of revision may be expected to occur regularly in almost all domains based on ongoing data collection processes and/or multiple data sources and administrative information.
 - 2.3.2. **Routine Ad-hoc Revisions** result mostly from the incorporation of new data sources to replace past estimates with more robust figures; and/or possibly methodological changes which may cause more significant changes than those outlined in 2.3.1. Routine ad-hoc revisions are subject to advance communication by the Office to its users.
 - 2.3.3. **Benchmark Revisions** aim to reflect improved methodologies caused by changes in statistical methods, concepts, sources of data, definitions and classifications to collect and/or compile the data being affected by the revision. Benchmark revisions often affect longer time series data, the reason being avoidance, to the extent possible, of breaks in the time series. Benchmark revisions often affect more than one statistical domain and are conducted in a coordinated way to ensure coherence between the domains affected by these revisions.
 - 2.3.4. In statistical work, errors in source data and computations occasionally occur. While every effort is made to minimise errors, the Office has a long-standing policy to correct errors as soon as they are detected and to inform users by means of an errata corrige.

3. Implementation of Revisions

- 3.1. All news releases that will be affected by revisions are appropriately flagged in the news release calendar.
- 3.2. Revisions are referred to in the methodological notes accompanying the release and explained/pre-announced as appropriate.
- 3.3. For each statistical domain subject to revision, the specific characteristics of the revision are incorporated in an internal Revisions Inventory. Such characteristics include: type of revision, types of data affected by the revision, frequency of revisions, periods revised and causes of revision.
- 3.4. Routine ad-hoc revisions only take place at intervals, limited to not more than twice a year. Reasonable effort is made to explain routine ad-hoc revisions in advance, through appropriate information on the online news release calendar. As much as possible, the NSO provides indications of the statistical measures which will be affected by the routine ad-hoc revision, the magnitude of the revision and its potential impact on other important indicators.
- 3.5. Benchmark revisions take place at distant intervals and when absolutely necessary. They are pre-announced well beforehand and implemented retrospectively. Benchmark revisions are coordinated across statistical domains to ensure coherence. Efforts are made to coordinate benchmark revisions with related EU initiatives, to ensure comparability of results across the EU. As much as possible, the NSO provides indications of the statistical measures which will be affected by the benchmark revision, the magnitude of the revision and its potential impact on other important indicators.
- 3.6. Breaks in series brought about by a revision are flagged to users and explained.
- 3.7 The procedure for handling errors entails issuing an errata corrige notification indicating the correction made and the date when the correction was made. Corrections are flagged to ensure clarity and transparency.

4. References

- [1] European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6.6 “Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies.”
- [2] European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 8.5 “Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures.”
- [3] European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 12.3 “Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve source data, statistical processes and outputs.”

5. Document Control

- 5.1. This policy needs to be formally reviewed by the Policy Owner every two (2) years from coming into effect.
- 5.2. The current version of this policy, together with any previous versions, shall be recorded below.

Version History		
Version	Description	
1.0	Date Live:	June 2022
	Version Notes:	First version of the policy

	Full Name & Role
Policy Owner:	Duncan Brincat (Director Corporate Services)
Reviewed by:	Lara Friggieri Cordina (Head of Communication and Dissemination Unit)
Reviewed by:	Catherine Vella (Head of Office of the Director General)
Approved by:	Etienne Caruana (Director General, NSO)