

Replies to the requests for information submitted to the National Audit Office by the Public Accounts Committee following discussions held regarding the report titled ‘A review of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 2: Addressing pre-obesity and obesity’

1. Jekk fil-Kunsill Konsultattiv dwar Stili ta’Hajja Sana hemmx rappreżentant tal-Ministeru responsabli mill-isports jew ta’ Sport Malta

The NAO’s review relating to the Advisory Council on Healthy Lifestyles focused on the period 2016-2021. Based on this Office’s understanding, the Advisory Council did not include a member representing the ministry responsible for sports or SportMalta. However, throughout the reviewed period, 2016-2021, an Education Officer specialised in physical education (an official of the ministry responsible for education) served as a member of the Advisory Council, and was referred to in the minutes of the Council as a representative of the sports sector.

2. Jekk teżistix xi forma ta’ margin of error fl-istudji li saru fit-tnejn għar-rapport

All statistics inevitably have a margin of error. Consequently, the studies referred to by the NAO in its report ‘A review of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 2: Addressing pre-obesity and obesity’ are subject to a margin of error. The information relating to the margin of error was not available to this Office. However, it is pertinent to note that prevalence rates cited in the reports referred to by the NAO were all presented as point estimates. This statement applies to the prevalence rates for pre-obesity, obesity and overweight for children and adolescents as obtained from the WHO European Office for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD Office) and the HBSC Data Management Centre in Bergen, respectively, and adult statistics accessed from the EUROSTAT website.

3. X’kienu l-livelli qabel l-2012 ta’ frott u ħaxix li persuna tikkonsma kuljum

The NAO does not have information relating to the level of consumption of fruit and vegetables prior to 2012. However, this Office obtained information relating to 2014 for adults (15+ year olds) and 2016 for children (7-year-olds). The ensuing tables refers.

The selection of 2014 EHIS data was conditioned by the fact that the NAO accessed this data through the EUROSTAT website, which website only retains data for 2014 and 2019. Similarly, the resort to the 2016 COSI was conditioned by availability and comparability. Adolescent data for previous waves of the survey were not readily available.

Figure 1 | Fruit and vegetable consumption by adults, EHIS 2014 and 2019

	EHIS 2014	EHIS 2019	Change (percentage points)
Percentage of population aged 15+ that consumes at least 400g (five portions) of fruit and vegetables per day	16.8	11.6	-5.2
Percentage of population aged 15+ that does not consume any fruit and vegetables daily	35.6	36.4	0.8
Percentage of population aged 15+ that consume vegetables at least once a day	40.0	29.6	-10.4
Percentage of population aged 15+ that consume fruit at least once a day	57.6	56.7	-0.9

Figure 2 | Fruit and vegetable consumption by children, COSI 2016 and 2019

	COSI 2016	COSI 2019	Change (percentage points)
Percentage of the 7-year-old population consuming fruit at least 4 times a week	65.4	66.8	1.4
Percentage of the 7-year-old population consuming vegetables at least 4 times a week	36.8	34.5	-2.3

4. Stakeholders Consulted

The following stakeholders were consulted:

- Ministry of Health, including the members of the Advisory Council on Healthy Lifestyles;
- other Ministries and Government entities, namely, the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights, the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, the Ministry for Finance and Employment, the Ministry for Social Policy and Children’s Rights, the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, Aġenzija Żagħżagħ, SportMalta and Transport Malta;
- non-governmental organisations, namely, the Malta Obesity Association, the Malta Health Network, the Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disability, the Anti-Poverty Forum, the Għaqda Bdiewa Attivi and the Arthritis and Rheumatism Association Malta;
- professional associations, comprising, the Association of Private Family Doctors, the Malta Association of Occupational Therapists, the Malta Association of Public Health Medicine, the Malta Chamber of Pharmacists, the Malta Exercise Health and Fitness Association and the Maltese Association of Social Workers;
- service providers, that is, representatives of the Superintendence of Public Health, the HPDP, the Primary HealthCare, Dar Kenn għal Saħhitek and the Diabetes and Endocrine Centre within the MDH;
- academics, namely, Prof Maria Attard, Dr Maresca Attard Pizzuto, Dr Therese Bajada, Dr Patricia Bonello, Dr Marie Briguglio, Ms Sina Bugeja, Dr Noel Buttigieg, Prof Sandra Buttigieg, Prof Neville Calleja, Dr Claire Copperstone, Dr Andrew Decelis, Mr Edgar Galea Curmi, Prof Julian Mamo, Dr Wendy Jo Mifsud, Dr Karen Mugliett, Prof Suzanne Piscopo, Dr Anthony Sacco, Dr Sarah Scheiber, Prof Josanne Vassallo and Dr Joseph Vella;
- Governmental officially appointed bodies, that is, the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability, the Environment and Resources Authority, the Health Policy and Strategy Board, Infrastructure Malta, the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development, the Office of the Commissioner for Children, the Office of the Commissioner for Older Persons and the Planning Authority;
- business stakeholders, comprising, the Malta Chamber and the Malta Chamber of SMEs;
- a World Health Organization expert, Dr Gauden Galea; and

- Hon. Robert Cutajar.