

STAT and General Audit Chamber Clarify Scope of Audit on Official Statistics

PHILIPSBURG, Sint Maarten – The Department of Statistics (STAT), in collaboration with the General Audit Chamber, wishes to clarify the scope and intended interpretation of the recently published audit concerning the environment in which official statistics are produced in Sint Maarten.

This clarification is necessary in light of recent public commentary and media coverage that may have created the impression that the audit concluded that Sint Maarten’s official statistics are inaccurate or unreliable. That interpretation is incorrect.

The audit reviewed the institutional, operational, and resource environment in which STAT carries out its work, including matters such as staffing, governance, data access, stakeholder coordination, documentation, and internal processes. Importantly, the audit did not test, validate, or verify the accuracy of STAT’s published statistical figures or outputs. The report itself makes clear that the review focused on the conditions under which statistics are produced, rather than on testing the figures already published.

A clear distinction must therefore be made between:

- the operating environment in which official statistics are produced; and
- the technical methodologies and standards used in the production of those statistics.

STAT continues to produce official statistics using internationally recognized scientific and statistical methodologies, including established approaches to sampling, weighting, estimation, and validation. These methods are aligned with accepted international standards and are supported, where relevant, through technical collaboration with recognized institutions such as CARTAC and Statistics Netherlands (CBS).

The Department of Statistics also operates in accordance with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which guide the production of official data based on professionalism, scientific rigor, impartiality, and transparency.

The audit identifies important areas where the broader statistical system can and should be strengthened, particularly in relation to staffing, methodological documentation, data-sharing arrangements, quality control procedures, and inter-agency coordination. These findings are constructive and relevant to the continued development of the national statistical system. They do not constitute a finding that the official statistics currently published by STAT have been invalidated or found to be inaccurate.

As with national statistical offices worldwide, STAT relies in part on data received from households, businesses, and partner institutions across both the public and private sectors. Timely, complete, and consistent cooperation from these stakeholders remains essential to maintaining a strong, responsive, and resilient national statistical system. In this regard, the audit's recommendations support the continued strengthening of the broader environment in which official statistics are produced.

STAT and the General Audit Chamber therefore underscore that the report should be understood as a constructive assessment aimed at strengthening the systems, coordination, and institutional conditions that support official statistics in Sint Maarten. It should not be interpreted as a conclusion that the official statistics themselves were tested and found to be unreliable.

STAT remains committed to transparency, continuous improvement, and the production of high-quality official statistics that support sound policymaking, informed public dialogue, and national development.

For further information or clarification, please contact the Department of Statistics at statinfo@sintmaartengov.org.