

ANNUAL REPORT

2024





Mission

**‘EVERY
WORKER
COUNTS’**



Chairperson's Foreword

PIERRE FAVA

Chairperson

During 2024 the Occupational Health and Safety Authority had a year of transition, having been established over twenty years ago through the then Health and Safety Act 424, both the legislation and the Authority had never been overhauled and this major step was undertaken last year with the enactment of the Health and Safety Act 646.

Apart from the many changes that this new legislation brought along it also established a new structure for the Board and the specific responsibilities of the board are now enshrined into the law. It was a bold and significant step that the new legislation was approved by both sides of Parliament and likewise it was also important that the nomination of a new Chairperson was also unanimously approved by Parliament's Public Appointments Committee. This has given both the position of the Chairperson and the Board in particular a crucial role in effectively overseeing that the transition being undertaken by the OHSA is both effective and successful in all respects.

During most of last year the OHSA has undergone a number of crucial changes which were being heralded by the new CEO, Dr Josianne Cutajar. The structural change and updated mindset that has been introduced have paved the way for a more forward thinking and pro-active Authority which is more suited to today's challenges being faced on the workplace. From the onset my outlook has been that of overseeing Governance, which is a vital aspect for the success of the work that is being undertaken by the OHSA. Another important aspect, and one that has been in place also during the implementation of



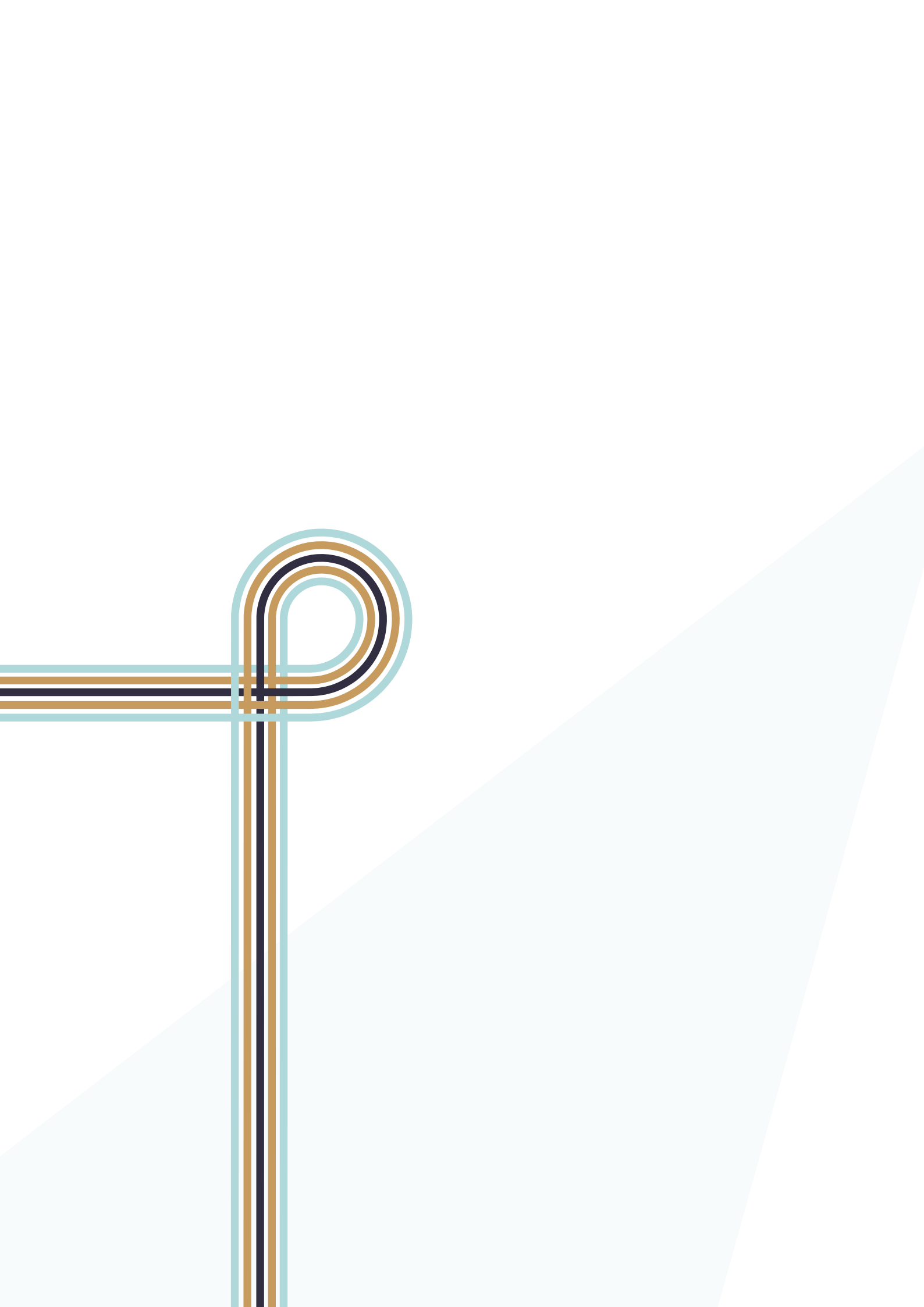
the new legislation, is that of dialogue with all social partners and stakeholders. This is an important part in achieving the objective that everyone conforms to the new legislation and ultimately safeguard occupational health and safety at the workplace.

Two important developments that the Board has been actively involved in are the setting up of a Competent Persons Register and the implementation of the Administrative Fines. Both these shall ensure that the OHSA has clear guidelines within which to act and that all workplaces are secure environments for all concerned. A vital aspect of this is also the empowerment of the OHSA to effectively take all the necessary action when and where necessary.

Whilst looking forward to this next year of working at the helm of the Board I am sure that 2025 shall be exciting and one that shall see the full implementation of all the new measures being foreseen in the new legislation.

A handwritten signature of Pierre Fava in black ink on a light background.

Pierre Fava
Chairperson



Executive Summary

Dr JOSIANNE CUTAJAR
Chief Executive Officer

The year 2024 marks a transformative year for occupational health and safety in Malta, recognised as the 'Year of Reforms'. The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) spearheaded these reforms through an extensive consultative process, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including employers, workers, professionals, and academics. This collaborative effort culminated in the enactment of the **Health and Safety at Work Act 646**, which was unanimously approved in Parliament. Officially enacted by the Minister for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector, Dr Jonathan Attard, on the 26th of November 2024, the legislation adopts a holistic approach to safeguarding the physical and mental well-being of workers. With its enabling clauses, the new Act lays the foundation for continuous improvements in workplace health and safety standards in Malta for years to come.

In response to the extended responsibilities outlined in the new legislation, the OHSA underwent significant organisational development in 2024. Key administrative structures were established, including the **Finance, Human Resources, and Policy & Programmes Units**, while **the Communications & PR, European Union (EU) Affairs, and Technical Units** were strengthened. By recruiting additional human resources and adopting streamlined operating procedures, the Authority improved accountability, transparency, and operational efficiency.

The Technical Unit experienced a comprehensive overhaul, leading to the creation of specialised areas,



including the Accident and Investigations Section, the Chemical and Biohazards Section, and the Technical Legal Section. These changes enabled better resource utilisation and a broader surveillance footprint. New initiatives – such as the introduction of occupational health and safety trainees, joint inspections with other authorities, the addition of field officers to the construction sector, and enhanced use of information technology – further solidified the Authority's capacity for impactful intervention.

These reforms yielded remarkable results. **By the end of 2024, the OHSA workforce had grown by 48%**, enabling the Authority to conduct **over 9,381 surveillance interventions** – more than double the annual average of 4,000 visits in previous years. This increase in activity resulted in the issuance of **980 improvement notices, 543 administrative fines, and 331 stop orders**, marking the highest figures recorded in five years. Most notably, workplace fatalities decreased from 3.9 per 100,000 workers in 2022 to **1.22 per 100,000 workers** in 2024, representing the lowest rate in recent years.

In the third quarter of the year, the OHSA also launched a **rebranding initiative**, unveiling a new logo that incorporates a quarter of the Maltese eight-pointed cross. This symbol reflects the Authority's dedication to protection, vigilance, and service to the community, while reflecting its commitment to ensuring a safe and healthy working environment across all sectors. The motto, "Kull Haddiem Jgħodd" (Every Worker Counts), encapsulates this renewed vision.

The **Sofia Public Inquiry Report**, published in March, provided valuable insights that further shaped OHSA's strategic actions for 2024. While many of its recommendations aligned with the existing action plan, the introduction of the **138 Helpline** stood out as an innovative step toward enhancing greater accessibility for the public. Since its launch in August, the helpline registered over 700 calls, more than doubling the annual average of 350 complaints received in previous years. This initiative has brought the Authority closer to the community, solidifying trust and engagement.

The achievements obtained in 2024 could not have been possible without the unwavering commitment and synergy of the OHSA's dynamic team. This strong, dedicated workforce – a blend of experienced professionals and new recruits – has risen to the challenge, transforming the Authority into a forward-

thinking, proactive entity. Together, they have embodied the core vision of putting the health and safety of every worker at the forefront of their agenda. These achievements, including significant organisational development and remarkable results, reflect this dedication and collaborative spirit. This commitment to teamwork and impactful leadership was further recognised when I, as OHSA's CEO, was honoured with the Leader of the Year award during the Worker of the Year awards.

The milestones achieved this year are not just a testament to the Authority's hard work but a foundation for a safer and healthier future for all workers. With the new Act, enhanced resources, and a renewed vision, the OHSA is poised to continue driving meaningful change, delivering long-lasting impact, and ensuring that "Kull Haddiem Jgħodd" is not just a slogan, but a tangible reality for all workers across Malta and Gozo.



Dr Josianne Cutajar
Chief Executive Officer

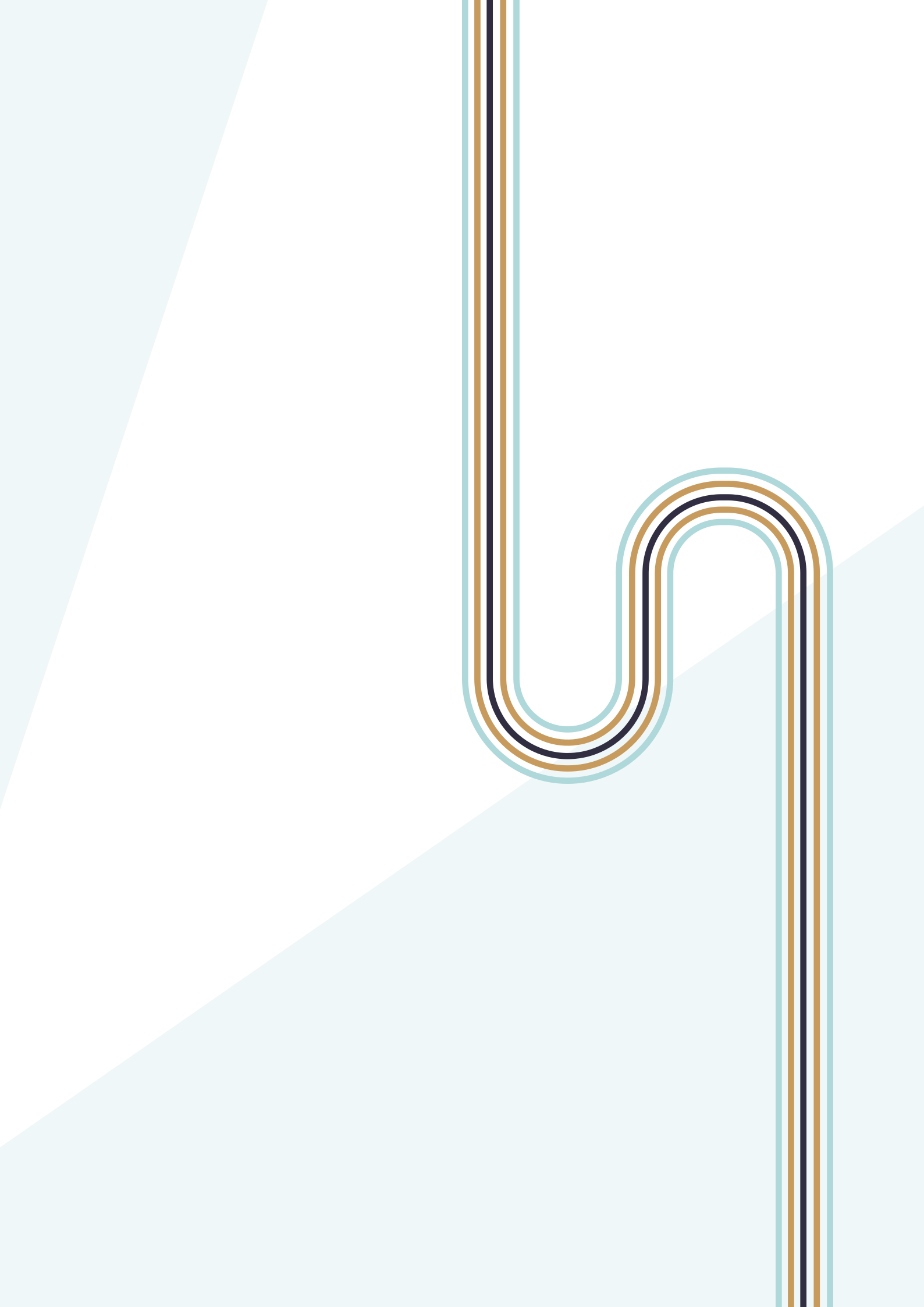
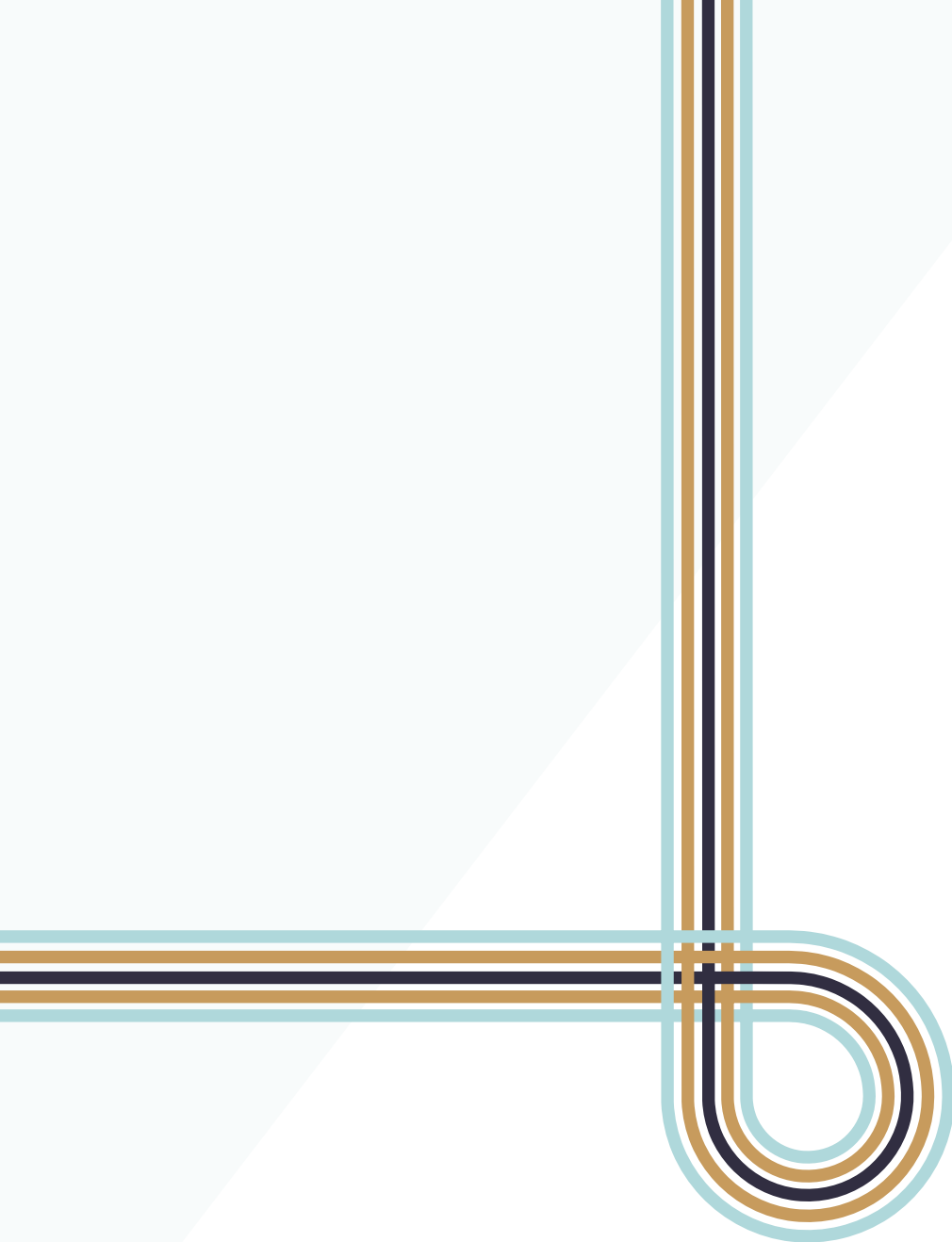




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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
ACSH	Advisory Committee on Safety and Health
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BCA	Building and Construction Authority
BI	Business Intelligence
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazards
CPD	Civil Protection Department
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DCS	Directorate Corporate Services
DDI	Direct Dialling In
DPO	Data Protection Officer
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
eMARS	Major Accident Report System
eSPIRS	SEVESO Plants Information Retrieval System
EU	European Union
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
EV	Electric Vehicles
FPO	Finance & Procurement Office
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HR	Human Resources
HSRO	Health & Safety Reporting Officer
HTO	Head, Technical Operations
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
KSS	Knowledge Sharing Site
MACHEX	Machinery Expert Group
MCAST	The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
MCCAA	Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority
MFCC	Malta Fairs & Conventions Centre
MHRA	Malta Hotels & Restaurants Association
MIS	Management Information System
OHS	Occupational Health & Safety
OHSA	Occupational Health & Safety Authority

Abbreviation	Definition
OiRA	Online interactive Risk Assessment
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PABX	Private Automatic Branch Exchange
PC	Personal Computer
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SL	Subsidiary Legislation
SLIC	Senior Labour Inspectors Committee
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UK	United Kingdom
UoM	University of Malta
UV	Ultra Violet
VR	Virtual Reality

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Members of the Board

Chairperson

- ▶ Mr Pierre Fava

Deputy Chairperson

- ▶ Mr Adrian Cauchi

Members

- ▶ Ms Diane Vella Muscat
- ▶ Dr Zaid Teebi
- ▶ Mr Dolan Debattista
- ▶ Mr Victor Carachi
- ▶ Ms Isabelle Farrugia
- ▶ Mr Joseph Delia
- ▶ Mr Andrew Aquilina

Secretary

- ▶ Dr Marouska Debono



Members of the Management Team



Dr Josianne Cutajar

Dr Cutajar is a specialist in Family Medicine and has read for a master's degree in Health Service Management (Malta) and a master's degree in Primary Care and General Practice (Ulster). Following a career in the management of several healthcare entities as well as 10 years as Chief Executive Officer of the State's largest elderly care institution, Dr Cutajar now leads the reforms in occupational health and safety as the CEO of the Occupational Health and Safety Authority in Malta. Teamwork and strategic management are the main values guiding her work.



Mr Silvio Farrugia

Mr Farrugia is the Senior Manager (Policy & Programmes), responsible for policy development and the implementation of initiatives falling under the policy and programmes remit at OHSA.



Mr David Saliba

Mr Saliba is the Head of Technical (Legal & Operations), overseeing the Technical Unit, which comprises all the specialised and general technical sections of the OHSA, with a primary focus on ensuring workplace health and safety.



Ms Romina Rieck Zahra

Ms Rieck Zahra is Senior Manager (Communications & PR), responsible for developing and executing strategic communications plans to promote OHS and stakeholder engagement. She ensures alignment with the OHSA's objectives and the organisation's core mission, while serving as the liaison between the OHSA and its stakeholders..



Ms Roberta Mallia

Ms Mallia is the Senior Manager (Executive), directly supporting the Office of the Chief Executive Officer and Operations. Her main responsibility is to coordinate and oversee operations across all OHSA units, including Human Resources Management, Project Management, and Interviewing Boards. She also contributes to policymaking and strategy formulation.



Mr Adrian P. Sciberras

Mr Sciberras is the Senior Manager (Finance), responsible for overseeing end-to-end finance operations, financial planning and analysis, the budgetary process, and managing ad-hoc projects and requests as they arise.



1

Policies & Programmes

The Policies and Programmes Unit plays a pivotal role in aiding and supporting the Occupational Health and Safety Authority's (OHSA) main actions: enforcement, legislative review, capacity building and awareness promotion. Over the past year, the Unit has been deeply involved in a variety of key activities, ranging from the introduction of the new Health and Safety at Work Act, the ongoing reforms within OHSA, the review of subsidiary OHS legislation, while keeping abreast of EU-related developments.

In 2024, OHSA appointed a new Manager for EU Affairs, Policy Development, and Programme Implementation. This role primarily focuses on managing and overseeing EU-related matters within the organisation, ensuring that OHSA remains aligned with European Union policies and standards. The addition of this role is part of OHSA's ongoing efforts to enhance its involvement in EU affairs and to strengthen its policy development and programme implementation processes.

Furthermore, OHSA is in the process of recruiting a Manager for Research, aimed at expanding the organisation's research capabilities. This new position will play a critical role in advancing OHSA's research initiatives, enabling the organisation to better support evidence-based decision-making and contribute to the development of innovative strategies in the field of occupational health and safety.

1.1 Maltese Legislative Reforms in Occupational Health and Safety

The year 2024 will be remembered as a landmark year in the protection of OHS in Malta, particularly due to the significant legislative reforms led by OHSA. A key milestone in this process was the introduction of Chapter 646 of the Laws of Malta – The Health and Safety at Work Act, which marks a pivotal development in the country's OHS legal framework. This reform, driven by OHSA's leadership, represents a critical step towards enhancing regulatory standards and ensuring a more robust and comprehensive approach to health and safety at work. The enactment of Chapter 646 will be remembered not only for its legal significance but also for the far-reaching positive impact it will have on the various stakeholders.

1.1.1 THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT - CHAPTER 646 OF THE LAWS OF MALTA

Cap 646 was published following a public consultation process and thorough discussions with stakeholders and culminated in the public debate in Parliament. The new Act was unanimously approved by the House of Representatives in July 2024. Presidential assent to this new Act was given on the 9th of August 2024 and the Act was brought into effect on the 26th of November 2024.

The new Act brought important changes to the OHS legal framework including:

- (a) The restructuring of OHSA, with a clear delineation between the Governing Board and the Executive. A clearer function of the Governing Board has thus been established.
- (b) More powers to OHSA, especially the power to issue administrative instruments to address urgent matters, which require fast action by OHSA.
- (c) The introduction of a new duty on employers to appoint a Health and Safety Reporting Officer (HSRO), when directed by regulations or by OHSA, to address serious issues within that organisation.
- (d) A new structure of penalties, which now covers failures of a purely administrative nature (shortcomings for which a special compromise procedure applies), and the retention of action through Courts.

- (e) Increasing deterrents against breaches of the law. Penalties under Cap 646 have increased as follows: administrative penalties have been set up to a maximum of €20,000 and up to €50,000 for fines of a special compromise procedure. Convictions through a Court may lead to imprisonment for a term of not more than two (2) years, or to a fine of not less than €1,000 but not exceeding €50,000 or to both such fine and imprisonment. On a second or subsequent conviction such person shall be liable to a fine of not less than €2,000 but not exceeding €50,000, or to imprisonment for a term of not less than one (1) year and not exceeding four (4) years, or to both such fine and imprisonment.
- (f) OHSa will publish an offenders' register on its website to enhance the visibility of enforcement actions taken. This register is scheduled to go live during 2025.
- (g) The establishment of an independent and impartial Health and Safety Tribunal to hear and decide appeals against administrative penalties, and against decisions, orders, or administrative instruments issued by the Authority.

1.1.2 INFORMATION SESSIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON THE NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT

Following the Presidential approval of the new Health and Safety at Work Act, OHSa launched an awareness campaign spear-headed by the Communications & PR Unit, to inform all relevant parties about the contents of the legislation and key changes to the legal framework. A high-level conference in September 2024 marked the start of this initiative. The event, attended by a diverse group of stakeholders, provided an opportunity for OHSa to explain the key features of the new law, including the obligations for employers, the role of the HSRO, the new penalty systems, the establishment of the new Tribunal, the responsibilities of the Governing Board, and the expanded powers granted to OHSa.

In November and December, OHSa organised a series of information sessions with various stakeholders to

provide a deeper understanding of the new Act and allow participants to engage in detailed discussions on its key aspects, particularly the new obligations and sanctions. These information sessions included participation of employers' associations, Trade Unions, the Malta Developers Association, the public administration, and Local Councils. Additional sessions were also held in Gozo.

The new Act and its key features were also explained in various OHSa interventions on local TV and radio stations over the last months of 2024.

1.1.3 WORKPLACE (MINIMUM HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR WORK AT CONSTRUCTION SITES) REGULATIONS

Discussions continued by OHSa to amend the Workplace (Minimum Health and Safety Requirements for Work at Construction Sites) Regulations, 2018 (Legal Notice 88 of 2018). Various consultation meetings were held with OHS practitioners, project supervisors, developers and contractors who will be mainly impacted by the changes. An advanced draft of the new regulations is currently being finalised.

1.1.4 TRANSPOSITION OF EUROPEAN UNION DIRECTIVES

During 2024, OHSa published Legal Notice 102 of 2024, to amend S.L. 424.22, which by virtue of the new Act, was renumbered as S.L. 646.14. The amendments transpose Directive (EU) 2022/431 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work. These amendments mainly address the biological limit values and health surveillance measures for lead and its ionic compounds, as well as the inclusion of reprotoxic substances with these regulations. S.L. 646.14 also includes the measures needed to protect workers from risks as a result of exposure to carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances at work.

1.2 The Sofia Public Inquiry Report

With the publication of the conclusions of the Public Inquiry announced by the Government to investigate the death of Jean Paul Sofia in 2022, OHSA immediately commenced the implementation of the various recommendations referring to improvements in the national OHS model.

An internal focus group was set up within OHSA, involving the CEO and senior management, to oversee the implementation of the various measures falling within its remit. Regular meetings were held, both internally and at Ministerial level, to ensure the successful execution of these reforms.

To this end, OHSA:

- (a) Engaged with other government entities to build on common experiences and establish data-sharing agreements, facilitating enforcement efforts and avoiding duplication of work.
- (b) Updated the OHS legislative framework, including the subsidiary legislation regulating construction safety. The Inquiry findings recommended, among other matters, amendments to Cap. 424, clarifying contractors' legal obligations and more powers and protection of project supervisors. While new construction safety regulations are set for publication in 2025, preparatory work has been ongoing throughout 2024.
- (c) Implemented proactive monitoring measures which were already in place before the Inquiry's publication. These include appointing field officers to assist the enforcement by OHS Officers, the development of a software solution for the Technical Division and finalising data-sharing agreements with other entities. Following the publication of the Inquiry, OHSA, through its Communications & PR Unit, further publicised these initiatives to enhance transparency and fulfil its mandate.

- (d) Secured additional funding to support increased recruitment, especially in the Technical Unit. This initiative was already being addressed by OHSA prior to the publication of the Inquiry's recommendations.
- (e) Implemented measures to ensure the competence of those working in the construction sector. OHSA supported this initiative by assisting the BCA in the development of the skill card / safety card system and by signing a memorandum of understanding with the University of Malta, to collaborate on the BSc course in OHS offered by the University.
- (f) Established a joint national helpline in collaboration with the BCA through *Servizz.gov*, to provide assistance on construction matters and on all occupational health and safety issues. This service, launched in August 2024 (Helpline 138), was coordinated on behalf of OHSA by its Communications & PR Unit and the Technical Unit.

OHSA remains committed to improving the national OHS framework and engage stakeholders having genuinely at heart the health, safety and well-being of workers at work.

1.3 Data Protection

The Manager for EU Affairs, Policy Development, and Programme Implementation also serves as OHSA's Data Protection Officer (DPO), responsible for overseeing compliance with all applicable data protection laws and regulations. This role envisages the implementation of robust procedures to safeguard sensitive information while providing guidance on proper personal data handling to uphold security and privacy standards. The role is pivotal in ensuring that OHSA remains compliant with data protection obligations, while fostering a culture of data privacy within the organisation.

1.4 Collaboration with Stakeholders

Previously, OHSA relied on limited internal and stand-alone third-party data, which was not integrated into a centralised system. This limitation hindered OHSA's ability to analyse and leverage the data effectively. To address this, OHSA has engaged in discussions with various government entities, facilitating data sharing for research and enforcement purposes. Beyond an existing Memorandum of Understanding with the National Statistics Office, OHSA has initiated agreements with the Department of Social Security, Jobsplus, the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority, and the Building and Construction Authority.

During 2024, OHSA also signed memoranda of understanding with two key organizations: the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency and the University of Malta.

The recruitment of a dedicated Research Manager will further strengthen this collaborative framework, enabling more structured data analysis and interpretation. This initiative enhances OHSA's ability to generate actionable insights, support the Technical (Legal & Surveillance) and Communications & PR Units, and identify key priorities for enforcement and awareness-raising.

Additionally, the deployment of a Management Information System (MIS) by OHSA's Technical (Legal & Surveillance) Unit will significantly enhance OHSA's data analysis and interpretation capabilities. This system will provide detailed and real-time statistical information, improving visibility and accessibility across various domains, while also helping policymakers stay connected with emerging trends and developments, ensuring that policies are both responsive and grounded in accurate and timely information.



2

International & EU Affairs

The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) fully recognises the critical importance of cultivating productive and positive relationships with international institutions. These collaborations, particularly at EU level, but also with global bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), are fundamental to OHSA's ability to effectively discharge its responsibilities in Malta. Such partnerships facilitate the exchange of best practice, access to leading-edge research and expertise, and the harmonisation of standards and regulations.

By engaging with these international organisations, OHSA can bolster its capacity to promote and enforce occupational health and safety, ultimately contributing to a healthier and safer working environment for everyone in Malta. This collaborative approach enables OHSA to remain informed of evolving challenges and emerging risks, ensuring its strategies and interventions remain pertinent and impactful. Moreover, these partnerships furnish valuable opportunities for OHSA to contribute to the development of international OHS standards and influence global best practice, positioning Malta as a proactive contributor in the field of occupational safety and health.

2.1 European Union Affairs

2.1.1 EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) is the European Union's information agency for OHS and works closely with EU institutions, national governments, and the social partners to promote and raise awareness on OHS issues across the European Union.

FOCAL POINT ACTIVITIES

During 2024, the Manager (EU Affairs, Policies Development & Programme Implementation) was appointed by OHSA as the national Focal Point for the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. The focal points are the primary contributors to the implementation of the EU-OSHA's work programmes in their respective countries. This arrangement ensures the dissemination of products and information to national stakeholders. In addition, the focal points are active in the planning and implementation of EU-OSHA campaigns at a local level and ensure alignment with broader EU-OSHA strategies. The focal point was assisted by the Communications & PR Unit in preparing the application submitted to the Agency for assistance with OHSA's awareness-raising initiatives, under the Agency's work programme, which are scheduled for 2025.

During November 2024, the national focal point participated in the European Focal Point meeting held in Visegrad, Hungary, which also included a seminar organised jointly with the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. A key highlight of

this seminar was the focus on the significant impact of robotic technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace. The seminar explored AI's potential to:

- **Address labour shortages:** AI's ability to attract new workers and alleviate labour shortages which are being experienced across most economies; and
- **Enhance safety:** The role of AI-driven automation in reducing physical strain on workers, preventing injuries, and improving overall safety.

EU-OSHA continues to provide practical support, promote the sharing of best practices, and strengthen prevention and preparedness measures across industries. During the Focal Point meeting, there were discussions regarding the allocation of credits for awareness campaigns and initiatives by member states as well as at an EU level, aimed at promoting healthy workplaces, as well as initiating discussions on the next EU-OSHA's Healthy Workplaces Campaign for 2026-2028, which will focus on mental health and psychosocial risks.

AWARENESS-RAISING INITIATIVES SUPPORTED BY EU-OSHA

As the Focal Point of EU-OSHA, this section has an obligation to play an active role in raising awareness around European healthy workplace initiatives, particularly through campaigns promoting safety and well-being. In 2024, this unit assisted the Communications & PR Unit to organise two major conferences with support from EU-OSHA. These conferences addressed two significant challenges in today's work environment: the impact of health and safety in the digital age and the increasing effects of climate change on workplace safety. The conference on *Health and Safety at Work in the Digital Age* highlighted the need to balance technological progress with worker health and safety, emphasising the importance of safeguarding workforce well-being. Discussions explored the risks and benefits of emerging digital technologies, including the use of work control systems and remote working health considerations. The conference also examined the legal framework for the digital workspace and the need for comprehensive risk assessments, particularly with automation and AI. A human-centred approach to workplace safety was advocated, with a commitment to developing guidelines for risk assessments in the digital age to ensure worker protection.

The conference on *Climate Change and Workplace Safety* attracted strong participation from various sectors, highlighting the widespread concern over climate change and its implications for occupational health and safety. The conference addressed the significant challenges Malta faces due to climate change, including rising sea levels, extreme heatwaves, and resource scarcity, and their impact on society and the workforce. Key topics included the potential for a one-metre sea level rise by 2100, the effects of the 2023 heatwave, and the increasing vulnerability of groups like the elderly. Climate change was identified as the second-largest concern for the Maltese, after the cost of living. The event emphasised Malta's commitment to a sustainable transition, highlighting the need for training and awareness to help workers and organisations build resilience. Measures such as heat stress management, air quality monitoring, and UV protection were discussed, along with the need for collaboration among climate experts, health professionals, and OHS practitioners to address emerging health challenges from green industries and climate change.

2.1.2 THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

The EU's Advisory Committee on Health and Safety at Work (ACSH) is a body that provides expert advice and assistance to the European Commission on OHS issues. It plays a key role in the development of EU policies and legislation on workplace safety and health. The ACSH consists of representatives from various stakeholders, including workers' and employers' organisations, government representatives from EU member states, and other relevant bodies.

During 2024 discussions at the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (ACSH) focused on amendments of various EU Directives, including those related to workplace safety, display screen equipment, carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances at work and chemical safety; these discussions will continue in 2025.

The ACSH has also begun discussions on psychosocial risks, with more in-depth talks planned in the coming months to determine the best approach, balancing guidance and legislative measures. Moreover, the Committee has also started addressing the impact of climate change on workers' health and safety, aiming to identify gaps in the legal framework and provide recommendations to the European Commission. Further discussions on this issue are expected in 2025.

2.1.3 THE COMMITTEE OF THE SENIOR LABOUR INSPECTORS (SLIC)

The Committee of Senior Labour Inspectors (SLIC), established by the European Commission in 1995, serves as a forum for dialogue between the Commission and national authorities responsible for enforcing OHS laws. It facilitates the sharing of enforcement experiences and identifies issues related to the implementation of EU OHS regulations.

In 2024, OHSA representatives attended two SLIC plenaries. The 85th Plenary in Brussels addressed enforcement measures for artists, updates to the Reference Manual, and preparations for the 2025–2027 SLIC campaign. Discussions included OHS challenges in a changing work environment, such as AI integration, 3D technology, and psychosocial challenges faced by inspectors. A thematic focus on “Good Practices in Inspections” was finalised for Poland’s EU Presidency.

The **Hungarian Presidency** in October featured a thematic day on OHS enforcement challenges in robotics and AI, including discussions on risk assessment and mobile apps in accident investigations.

OHSA also participated in the 2024 **SLIC Workplace Accident Campaign**, which focused on accident investigations in the construction, agriculture, and transportation sectors. The campaign aimed to enhance inspectors’ skills and harmonize approaches across the EU. OHSA’s participation involved inspecting micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and submitting data for analysis by the SLIC Working Group.

The **SLIC Working Group on Knowledge Sharing (KSS)** developed an online platform for EU labour inspectorates to exchange information on OHS matters, discuss policy issues, and issue alerts about serious health and safety risks. The platform, accessible only in English, allows member states to post inquiries and respond within six weeks. Complex queries are coordinated into comprehensive responses. Two Principal OHS Officers attended a training event in March 2024 in Luxembourg, learning to effectively use the platform for knowledge sharing, and will continue to engage in this initiative. A follow-up training event is scheduled for March 2025.

In 2024, OHSA chaired the **SLIC evaluation of the Austrian Labour Inspectorate**, presenting the evaluation report and key recommendations at the SLIC Plenary in October. This evaluation aims to assess the national labour inspection systems’ ability to enforce EU health and safety directives and ensure consistent implementation across member states.

2.1.4 EUROPEAN COMMISSION PEER REVIEW ON LEGISLATIVE AND ENFORCEMENT APPROACHES TO PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS AT WORK

Psychosocial risks at work have become a critical issue for both employee well-being and organisational success. Factors like increased workloads, digital transformation, and work-life balance challenges have heightened mental health concerns. Different EU Member States have adopted varied legislative approaches to address these risks, reflecting diverse national contexts and cultures.

In June 2024, OHSA participated in a European Commission peer review to assess these approaches, ranging from legislation and guidelines to risk assessment tools and inspectorate actions.

Represented by the Technical Division, OHSA shared its experiences in managing psychosocial risks.

Malta’s OHS legislation recognises both physical and psychosocial well-being, with provisions covering workplace design, risk management, and preventive measures. Additionally, specialised University courses for OHS practitioners, including labour inspectors, focus on psychosocial risks and workplace well-being, ensuring effective enforcement of regulations.

2.2 The International Labour Organisation

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Health and Safety section plays a pivotal role in the global promotion and advancement of decent work through safe and healthy working conditions. Its work encompasses a wide range of activities, from developing international labour standards and providing technical guidance to conducting research and advocating for improved OHS practices worldwide. The ILO's tripartite structure, bringing together governments, employers, and workers, ensures that its initiatives are relevant, balanced, and effectively address the real-world challenges faced in diverse workplaces. The section's expertise is instrumental in assisting member states in developing national OHS policies and systems, strengthening enforcement mechanisms, and building a preventative safety and health culture. Furthermore, the ILO's collaborative efforts with other international organisations, such as the WHO, amplify its impact and contribute to a more coordinated and effective global approach to OHS.

During 2024, OHSA was represented at the ILO's international meeting, "From Beans to Coffee", which focused on workplace health and safety, highlighting the coffee industry's risks, especially in third world and South American regions. The conference praised Europe's progress in health and safety, which has led to better work practices and gender equality.

Key outcomes of the conference included IOSH's strategies for reducing workplace hazards, the call for governments to enact protective legislation, and the Ugandan Labour Minister's push for basic safety regulations. The ILO pledged to fund initiatives aimed at global commitments, legal framework strengthening, and insurance coverage expansion, while banning child labour. The event successfully outlined global health and safety conditions.

2.2.1 WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

A key highlight of the ILO's work in this area is its annual observance of World Day for Safety and Health at Work on the 28th of April. This internationally recognised day serves as a powerful platform to raise awareness about the importance of OHS and to promote preventative measures to reduce work-related injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. Each year, the ILO selects a specific theme relevant to current OHS challenges, providing resources and guidance to support national and local initiatives. The World Day campaign not only commemorates the victims of work-related accidents and diseases but also emphasises the need for continuous improvement in OHS practices. The ILO also supports the International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS), a vital resource for disseminating OHS information globally, further strengthening its commitment to knowledge sharing and capacity building in the field. OHSA marks this day on an annual basis.



3

Technical Unit



In 2024, the Technical (Legal & Surveillance) Unit of OHSA addressed a variety of challenges, ranging from internal restructuring to innovative strategies implementation. Key initiatives included re-organising internal units, refining inspection methods, increasing the presence of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) officers in workplaces - particularly in the construction sector - and recruiting additional staff. Despite the complexities of these initiatives, significant progress was made during their implementation.

The Technical (Legal & Surveillance) Unit played a very crucial role in the development of the new Occupational Health and Safety at Work Cap 646 as described in detail under the Policies and Programmes section (*vide Section 7*).

The Technical (Legal & Surveillance) Unit is structured to ensure workplace health and safety through its specialised and general technical divisions. This unit played a crucial role in the development of the new Occupational Health and Safety at Work Act 626, as outlined in the Policy and Programmes chapter. The unit is structured to ensure workplace health and safety through its specialized and general technical divisions.

All technical divisions, including the newly established Technical (Legal) Section, are overseen by the Head of Technical (Legal & Surveillance).

3.1 Technical (Legal) Section

A warranted lawyer joined the OHSA's Technical (Legal) Section enhancing the unit's capacity for legal support. To decrease bureaucratic red tape and ensure further efficiency, this section has diversified its focus from prosecuting to issuing administrative fines. One of its main endeavours will be to reach and impose agreed fines through the special compromise fine procedure introduced in the new OHSA Act. Additionally, the legal unit remains committed to providing investigative support and advisory assistance to OHS officers. This includes guiding evidence collection and preservation practices which are critical to advancing cases through the legal system. The introduction of improved administrative

fines as well as the compromise procedure will see a fairer and more transparent way of reaching out-of-court settlements once a workplace is found to have breached health and safety legislation.

The new legislation also establishes its first ever Tribunal. The Minister for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector has already nominated the panel of three learned professional personnel who will hear and adjudicate appeals and claims related to occupational health and safety matters.

In order to fulfil its obligations, several key initiatives will be implemented over the coming years.

3.1.1 STREAMLINED PROSECUTION PROCESS

A new work process has been implemented to improve efficiency in handling offences, specifically by reducing court case volumes. The key aspects of this new approach include:

- (a) **Administrative Fines as Primary Enforcement:** Rather than pursuing prosecution for multiple offences, the unit has prioritised administrative fines, in accordance with the now repealed legal notice governing administrative penalties.
- (b) **Court Proceedings under the New Health and Safety Act:** With the introduction of the new Health and Safety Act, OHSA will only initiate court proceedings in cases involving failures which are deemed to constitute an offence against Chapter 646 of the Laws of Malta and are thus not subject to an administrative penalty.

- (c) **Case Management and Documentation:** The section manages the issuance of administrative fines and ensures the proper processing and dispatch of relevant documents to offenders. By prioritising fines over court appointments, OHSA has minimised the need for court attendance, thereby reducing prolonged testimony sessions and improving overall time management. Additionally, through the introduction of the Management Information System (MIS), officers recording breaches of Health and Safety legislation will electronically make internal recommendations, refer case files to the legal unit for the recommendation which will then be sent immediately to the defaulter through electronic mail. Each step of the process is documented and monitored for follow-up actions as needed, in accordance with legal requirements.
- (d) **Reduced Court Caseload and Financial Benefits:** By opting for administrative fines over legal proceedings, OHSA has effectively reduced the number of cases that require court appointments, resulting in quicker resolutions and generating additional revenue.

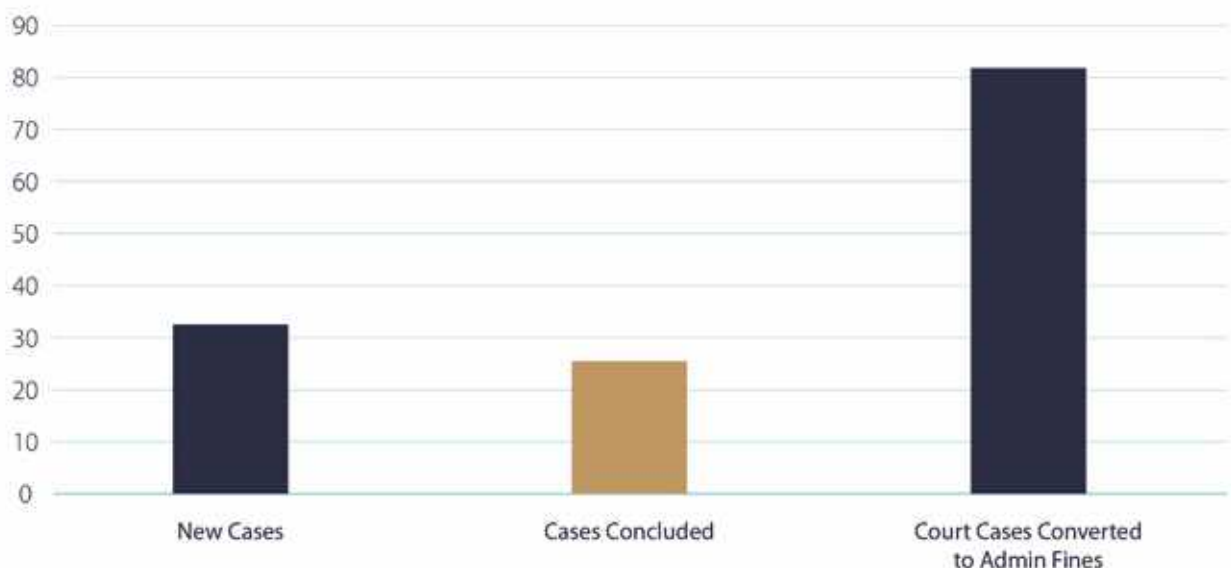
3.1.2 COURT PROCEEDINGS AND SUPPORT FOR COMPLEX CASES

While administrative fines remain the primary enforcement tool, prosecution still remains necessary for certain cases requiring formal legal action in the Courts of Magistrates in both Malta and Gozo. In such instances, this section supports ad-hoc hearings and provides expert legal assistance, including cases handled in collaboration with the Police Department. This support is especially vital in complex cases, including those involving fatal workplace accidents.

In instances of major accidents, which are often subject to magisterial inquiries, the Technical (Legal) Section collaborates with the Attorney General's office and law enforcement agencies to ensure effective prosecution. This collaboration streamlines evidence-handling and strengthens OHSA's legal response in high-stake cases.

With the addition of a senior lawyer and a refined approach to prosecution, the OHSA's Technical (Legal & Surveillance) Unit has reinforced its commitment to effective enforcement while optimising resource allocation. The strategic shift toward administrative fines as the primary enforcement mechanism minimises court caseloads, enhances efficiency, and aligns with OHSA's broader objectives of workplace safety compliance and legal efficacy.

FIGURE 1: CRIMINAL CASES (2024)



3.2 Technical (Surveillance) Section

In an effort to enhance operational efficiency, OHSA undertook a comprehensive re-engineering process for its technical sections this year. This restructuring aims to improve coordination and effectiveness in workplace safety enforcement by optimising department layouts and workflows.

The Technical (Surveillance) Section within OHSA can be divided into five divisions:

- (a) Engineering
- (b) Accident Investigations
- (c) Chemical & Biological Inspections
- (d) Construction Inspections
- (e) General Workplace Inspections

3.2.1 KEY CHANGES

The restructuring process involved more than just renaming departments; it entailed a comprehensive physical reorganisation aimed at centralising expertise and creating additional space for new staff members. The key benefits of this reorganisation include:

- ▶ **Enhanced Collaboration:** By physically bringing divisions together, OHSA has improved interdivisional communication, especially for cases requiring multidisciplinary expertise.
- ▶ **Resource Optimisation:** This new layout allows each team to make better use of its specific skills while maintaining close collaboration, leading to more comprehensive and responsive surveillance efforts.
- ▶ **Increased Capacity:** The reorganisation has created space for new OHS officers as well as trainees, aligning resources with OHSA's growth and evolving operational needs.
- ▶ **Field Officer Role:** A totally new concept introduced this year, the role of the Field Officer, allows for targeted site visits where active construction works are going on. This initiative has enabled OHS officers to conduct inspections on-site, eliminating the need for core OHS staff to search for locations where their intervention may be ineffective.
- ▶ **Information Technology-Assisted Inspections and Reporting:** Throughout the year and particularly towards the end, officers were equipped with electronic tablets linked to a central Management Information System (MIS). This system enables real-time monitoring of inspection results, issuance of orders, and recommendations.

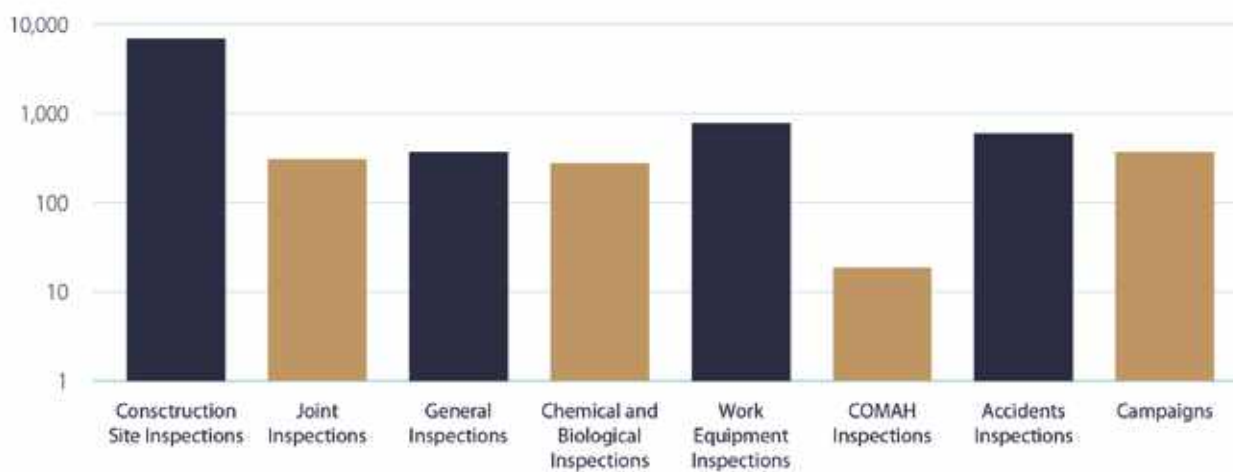
The re-engineering reflects OHSA's commitment to a streamlined, highly functional approach to workplace health and safety, reinforcing its proactive stance in compliance, monitoring, and enforcement across various industries.

3.2.2 WORKPLACE INSPECTIONS BY OHS OFFICERS

OHSA conducted a wide range of inspections to ensure compliance with health and safety standards. The main categories included:

- ▶ Construction site inspections (active workplaces and follow-ups)
- ▶ Joint inspections with other entities
- ▶ General workplace hazards
- ▶ Chemical and biological hazard evaluations
- ▶ Inspections related to work equipment particularly but not limited to tower and mobile cranes, scaffolds, and machinery.
- ▶ Fatal accident investigations
- ▶ COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) inspections
- ▶ Campaigns focused on aspects pertaining to health and safety such as, but not limited to, chemicals and vibration hazards.

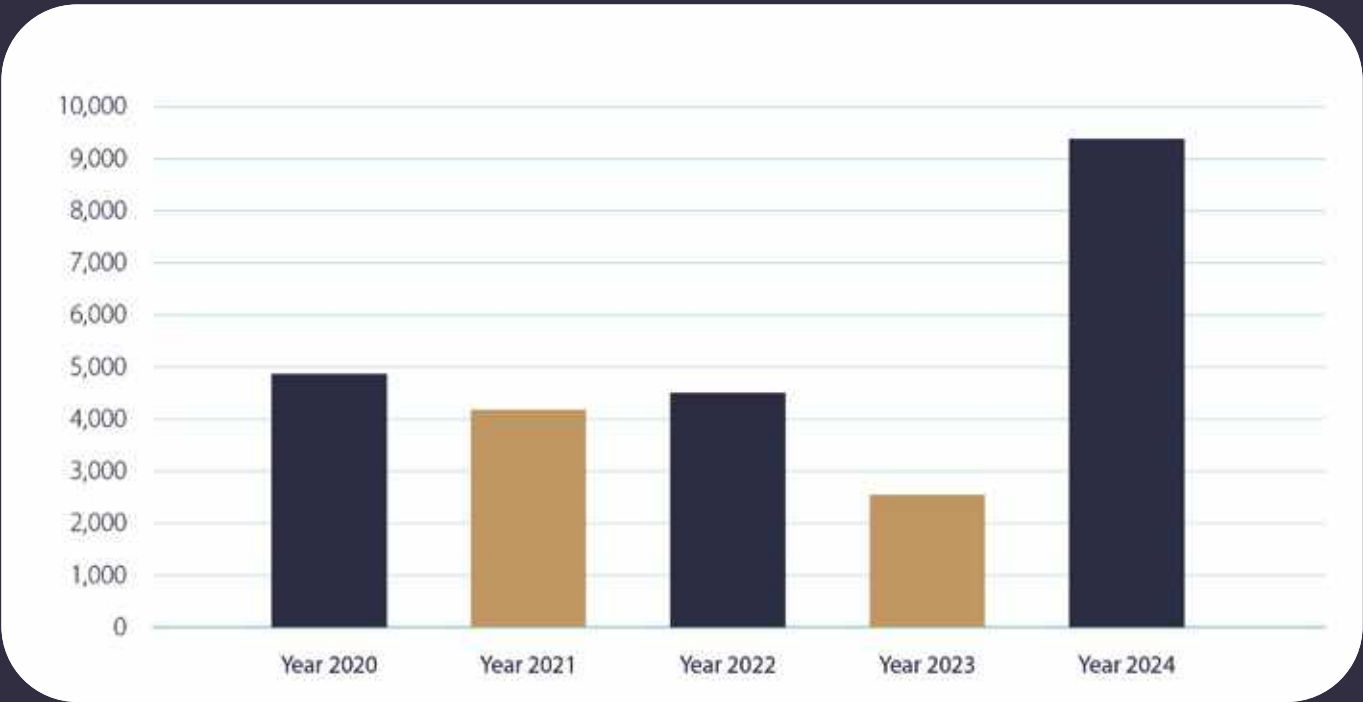
FIGURE 2: TOTAL INSPECTIONS 2024 – ALL DIVISIONS



Through these initiatives, OHSA reinforced its dedication to promoting a culture of safety and education, making workplaces safer and healthier for everyone.

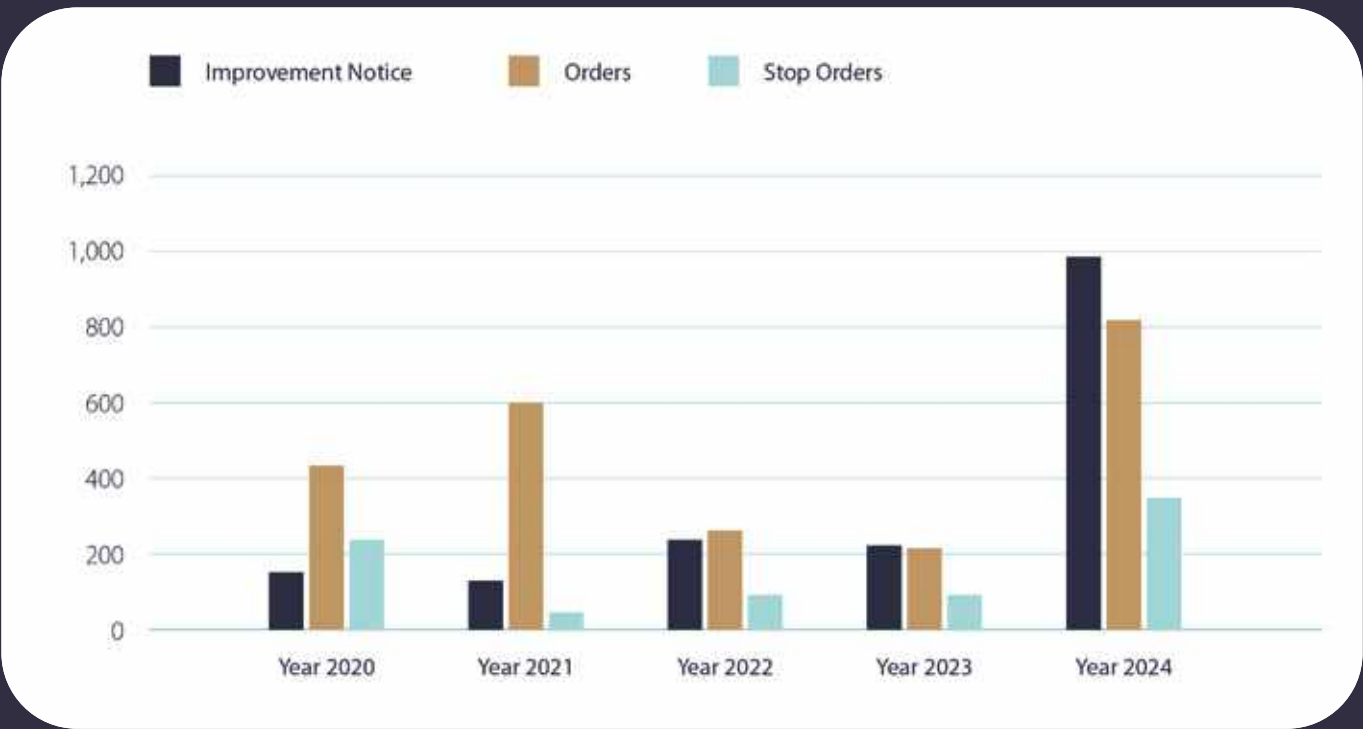
These changes resulted into an unprecedented increase of activity leading to higher levels of surveillance and monitoring by OHSA. This can be seen in the following table of activities performed by the different divisions.

FIGURE 3: TOTAL NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS IN THE LAST 5 YEARS



Moreover, the increased surveillance activities were effective in the efforts made by the Authority to ensure compliance and a drive towards higher standards of health safety regulations.

FIGURE 4: NUMBER OF ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE LAST 5 YEARS



3.2.3 ENGINEERING DIVISION

The Engineering Division, previously known as MEPI (Machinery, Equipment, Plant & Installations), played a pivotal role in advancing occupational health and safety initiatives throughout 2024. Despite the challenges of restructuring due to the retirement of two key members, the division maintained high standards of service delivery by leveraging the expertise of remaining staff and onboarding new talent.

Key achievements for the year spanned several critical areas, including compliance with international directives, inspection and database management, public outreach, and collaboration with stakeholders.

SEVESO DIRECTIVES AND COMAH OBLIGATIONS

The Engineering Division, led by an engineer, fulfilled its responsibilities as part of the Competent Authority for COMAH under Legal Notice 179 of 2015 (S.L. 424.19). The division completed all scheduled inspections across 10 COMAH sites (seven Upper Tier and three Lower Tier) and reviewed updated documentation for three sites, resulting in revised consultation zones.

Notable activities included:

- ▶ Providing feedback on the temporary power generation setup at the Delimara Power Station.
- ▶ Monitoring the motor vessel Ruby, a Maltese-flagged cargo ship transporting hazardous substances.
- ▶ Coordinating four emergency response exercises in collaboration with the Civil Protection Department (CPD). A tabletop exercise at Marsaxlokk Harbour further refined response coordination for major accidents.

EU COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING

The division ensured adherence to international obligations by maintaining and reporting data on eMARS (Major Accident Reporting System) and eSPIRS (Seveso Plants Information Retrieval System). These efforts enhanced both local and EU-wide safety frameworks.

Additionally, the Engineer actively participated in EU-level meetings related to the Seveso III Directive, as well as the SLIC MACHEx Working Group.

Management of Work Equipment and Lifting Systems

- ▶ **Lift System Reports:** The Engineering Division processed 4189 passenger and goods lift reports, 125 tower crane examination reports, and 531 reports on other work equipment, demonstrating a consistent level of activity compared to previous years.
- ▶ **Tower Crane Database:** In collaboration with Y&P Cranes, the division developed a comprehensive database of tower cranes, recording over 100 new entries by year-end. This resource will optimise future inspection campaigns and ensure robust oversight.
- ▶ **Coordination with MCCA:** The Engineering Division worked with the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCA) to harmonise data on passenger lifts. This collaboration supported OHSA's ongoing digitalisation efforts, with automated lift report processing integrated into the Management Information System (MIS).

WORKPLACE VIBRATION CAMPAIGN

In line with the mission to improve workplace safety, the division launched an awareness campaign targeting industries with high exposure to vibrations, such as engineering workshops and operations involving heavy machinery. This campaign reached approximately 300 companies and set the groundwork for publishing comprehensive technical guidelines on managing vibration hazards.

INNOVATION AND MODERNISATION PARTICULARLY THE DIGITALISATION OF PROCESSES

The Engineering Division took significant steps to modernise operations by supporting the development of OHSA's MIS. Key advancements include:

- ▶ Automation of lift report processing.
- ▶ Real-time data entry capabilities for work equipment inspections. These enhancements aim to improve efficiency, data accuracy, and accessibility for internal and external stakeholders.

The Engineering Division remains committed to its mission of advancing occupational health and safety standards through innovation, collaboration, and technical excellence. The strides made in 2024 set a strong foundation for continued success in the coming year.

3.2.4 THE ACCIDENT AND INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

In 2024, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) received 573 notifications of workplace accidents. These notifications involved injuries sustained by workers during their employment activities, leading to absences exceeding three (3) consecutive days or hospitalisation for more than 24 hours beyond observation. Out of this number, a high percentage were investigated. In addition, OHSA also investigated 91 workplace accidents reported by the Malta Police Force, many of which were later reported by the respective employers. In cases involving grievous injuries or fatalities, where the police determined the need for magisterial inquiries, OHSA officers have actively participated in investigative sessions authorised by the Duty Magistrate.

Accident investigations are essential not only for ensuring compliance but also for addressing the root causes of workplace incidents. This dual focus allows OHSA officers to guide employers in prioritising critical areas for improvement. This newly established division has expanded the competences of the Authority especially in its investigations and analytic activities.

In the forthcoming year, all information gathered through these investigations will be incorporated into OHSA's Management Information System (MIS). This integration will enhance the analysis of trends and contribute to improving workplace safety across all sectors.

TYPES OF REPORTED INCIDENTS

During 2024, the most common reported incidents pertained to the following:

- Falls from heights
- Amputations

- Being struck by falling objects
- Injuries due to slips and trips

OHSA investigated five (5) fatal accidents, all of which remain subject to magisterial inquiries.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION: SLIC CAMPAIGN

In 2024, OHSA's Accident and Investigations Division contributed to the SLIC Workplace Accident Campaign, an initiative involving all 27 EU member states. The campaign focused on accident investigation and compliance in the construction, agricultural/forestry, and transportation sectors.

OHSA's participation included:

- Inspections of eight construction contractors, one agricultural contractor, and one transportation contractor.
- Administering a standardised questionnaire in collaboration with the 27 member states.

The data collected has been submitted to the SLIC working group for analysis, with results pending publication at the SLIC plenary.

3.2.5 CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL AGENTS DIVISION

Inspections conducted from members of this division oversee factors related to chemical and/or biological agents at workplaces. During this year, a concentrated effort was made to ascertain compliance and a good level of health and safety at fuel stations, pharmaceutical industries and nurseries registered as pesticide users.

INSPECTION CAMPAIGN IN FUEL STATIONS

During 2024, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) conducted a number of follow-up inspections in all fuel stations across Malta and Gozo, visiting a total of 75 locations.

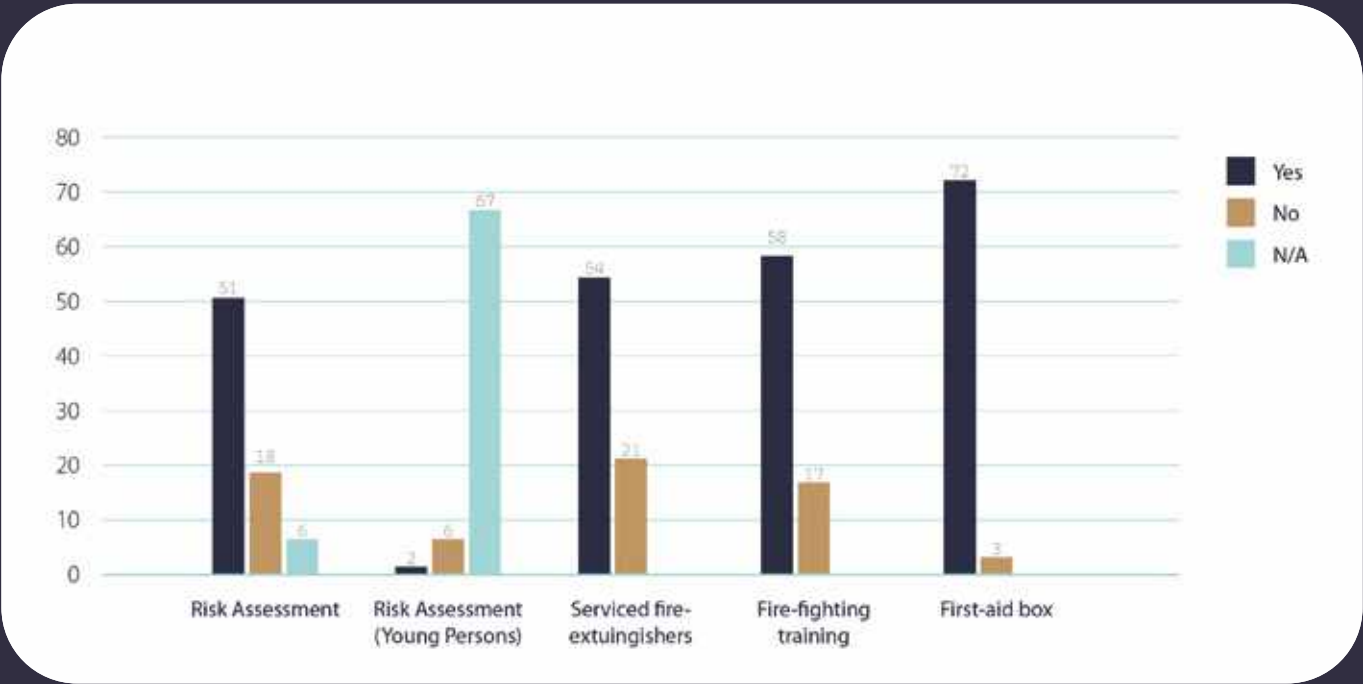
The primary objective of these inspections was to verify compliance with applicable health and safety regulations, particularly concerning the protection of workers from hazardous substances in the workplace.

A specific focus was placed on implementing measures to control vapour exposure during the refuelling of tanks and vehicles.

Additionally, the inspections emphasised the correct safety protocols to follow in the event of accidental spills or leaks, as well as the importance of providing health and safety training to all employees. Other obligations under health and safety regulations were assessed, including the proper storage and segregation of hazardous substances, the identification of machinery hazards, first aid provisions, and fire safety measures. This included ensuring that fire extinguishers were properly serviced and that employees received necessary fire-fighting training, in addition to ensuring the adequate provision and use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Where non-compliance was identified, OHSA issued orders to facilitate compliance, often stipulating a timeframe for corrective action to meet health and safety requirements.

FIGURE 5: FUEL STATIONS DATA



Following an awareness campaign in late 2022 and in 2023, follow-up inspections at fuel stations revealed significant non-compliance, with 97% initially found non-compliant, which decreased to 18% after further inspections. Recurring violations, particularly in fire safety and chemical risk assessments, led to legal actions. However, notable improvements in health and safety standards were observed. Despite progress, ongoing monitoring and enforcement in high-risk sectors remain essential, and OHSA remains committed to ensuring compliance and a safe work environment.

The findings of this campaign will be discussed in detail in 2025.

ASBESTOS NOTIFICATIONS

In 2024 a total of 88 asbestos removal notifications were received by OHSA.

All asbestos removal notifications are accompanied by several other documents, all of which were vetted by OHSA prior to the commencement of works. During 2024, OHSA received a record number of notifications when

compared to the five previous years. In fact, this section received 25 complaints, conducted 257 investigations, issued 167 orders, and recommended legal action in 15 instances.

During 2024, this newly composed unit also commenced to gather and retain statistics specifically in relation to this field, therefore enabling the monitoring of progress made in the future.

The increase in the number of inspections and orders issued by this specialised division is encouraging, yet the sector still requires further attention. This will be achieved through an anticipated increase in manpower within this division, with additional human resources, particularly aided by trainees accompanying OHS officers.

INSPECTIONS IN PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES

Officers from this division within the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) conducted thorough inspections of all pharmaceutical companies in Malta in 2024, visiting a total of 22 companies.

The primary goal of these inspections was to assess compliance with relevant health and safety regulations, specifically focusing on safeguarding workers from hazardous substances present at the workplace. Emphasis was placed on the implementation of measures to control exposure to carcinogenic substances and biological agents.

Through our inspections, OHS officers reviewed the necessary documentation that outlines control measures for managing exposure to flammable, toxic, corrosive, and carcinogenic substances throughout various phases of the work activity. Other obligations under health and safety regulations were evaluated, including mandatory training for employees, proper storage and segregation of hazardous materials, adequate laboratory ventilation, and health surveillance measures identified in risk assessments, first aid provisions, and fire safety protocols. This included ensuring fire extinguishers were adequately serviced and that employees received requisite fire-fighting training, alongside the provision and utilization of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Where non-compliance was identified, OHSA issued orders requiring corrective actions with immediate effect to meet health and safety requirements.

The findings of this inspection campaign will be presented during 2025.

FIGURE 6: RISK ASSESSMENT CARRIED OUT IN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES

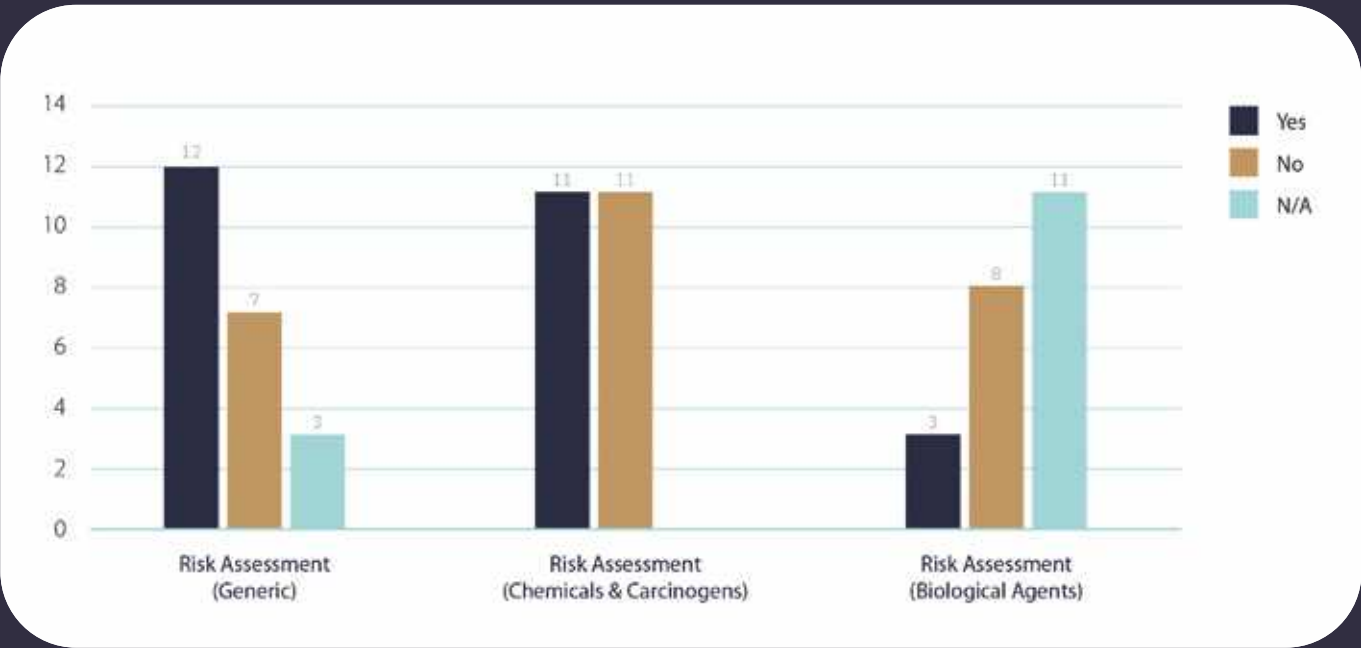


FIGURE 7: HEALTH SURVEILLANCE CARRIED OUT IN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES

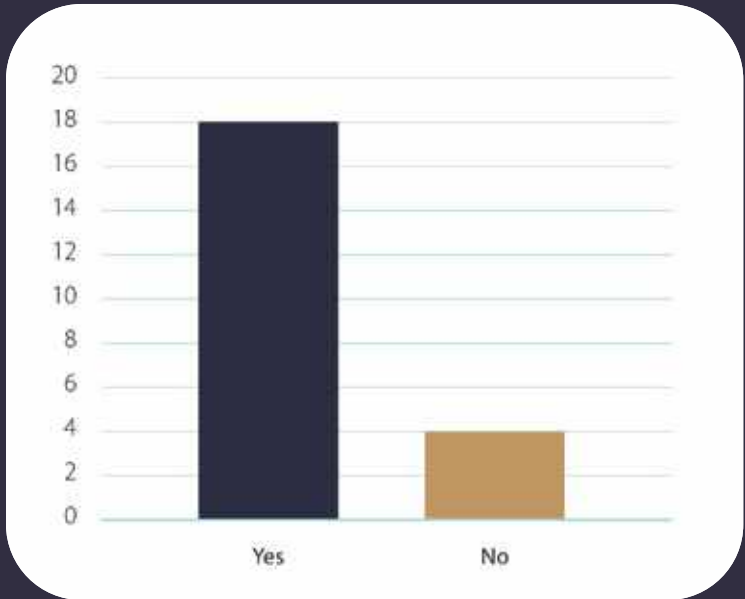
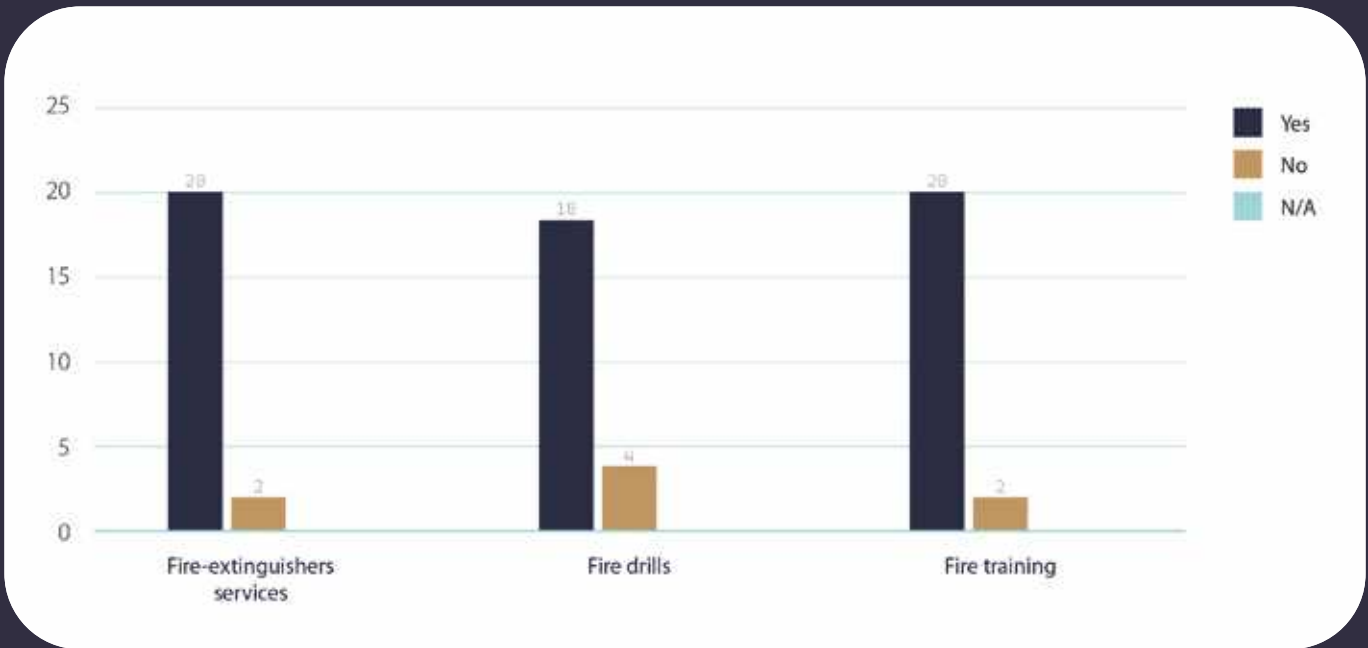


FIGURE 8: TOTAL NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS IN THE GENERAL DIVISION



INSPECTIONS IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

In the final quarter of 2024, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) initiated a series of health and safety inspections at nurseries registered as pesticide users both in Malta and Gozo.

The primary aim of these inspections entailed verification that appropriate health and safety measures were being followed, particularly in relation to pesticide usage. This includes ensuring the use of proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and the completion of a comprehensive risk assessment to identify potential hazards and implement necessary control measures.

A total of 40 nurseries are scheduled for a follow up inspection, and should non-compliance with health and safety regulations result, enforcement will be stepped up accordingly.

3.2.6 CONSTRUCTION DIVISION

The Construction division remains a top priority for OHSA due to the high-risk nature of this sector. With construction sites being dynamic and constantly changing, OHSA has implemented significant operational adjustments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its inspection efforts.

KEY OPERATIONAL CHANGES IN 2024

To address inefficiencies from past inspection methods, OHSA has re-engineered its inspection process and will now focus only on active construction sites where work is currently taking place. This shift aims to reduce the time wasted on inspecting sites with no active work, which has previously resulted in lost man hours.

Key aspects of this new approach include:

1. Targeted Inspections through Real-Time Monitoring:

- ▶ Inspections will no longer be conducted randomly but will be based on a proactive data-gathering system that tracks active construction sites.
- ▶ A **field officer** will conduct regular, predetermined visits to local areas to identify and report on active construction sites.
- ▶ This initial visit will not involve interventions; instead, findings will be relayed to the technical department to determine if a formal inspection is necessary. Active construction is recorded, and locations are communicated with OHS officers to carry out inspections on a daily basis.

2. Focused Follow-Up on Non-Active Sites:

- ▶ For construction sites deemed non-active, an initial assessment will still be made, with findings documented for both statistical purposes as well as any communication with stakeholders. This allows OHSA to maintain data on inactive sites while minimising unnecessary follow-ups.

3. Enhanced Coverage through Additional Field Officers:

- ▶ By recruiting more field officers, OHSA will be able to conduct more site visits and prioritise inspections on sites where hazards are immediately visible, or safety issues are prevalent.
- ▶ This new methodology offers multiple advantages:
- ▶ Reduction in Wasted Resources: By avoiding non-active sites, OHSA inspectors can focus on active sites where safety risks are actively present, thus improving productivity.
- ▶ Increased Enforcement Actions: With more precise targeting, OHSA expects an increase in the issuance of “stop work” orders, enhancing compliance in the sector.
- ▶ Data Collection and Qualitative Analysis: OHSA will continue to record findings from both active and non-active sites, providing valuable statistics to guide further improvements in inspection strategies.

3.2.7 GENERAL DIVISION (EXCLUDING CONSTRUCTION, CHEMICALS AND MACHINERY INSPECTIONS)

In 2024, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) conducted extensive inspections across various sectors in Malta and Gozo. These inspections were prompted by employee and third-party complaints, alongside proactive, routine checks aimed at ensuring compliance with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation.

When inspections are initiated in response to specific complaints, OHSA officers not only address the particular issue raised but also conduct comprehensive evaluations of the workplace to confirm adherence to all legislative requirements. This holistic approach allows OHSA to address immediate concerns while also assessing overall workplace safety.

By the end of December 2024, OHSA had inspected a total of 376 workplaces across a diverse range of sectors, including hospitality, retail, manufacturing, education, government, and more. During these inspections, officers focused on several critical compliance areas, such as:

- ▶ **Risk Assessments:** Ensuring employers conduct general and specific assessments, including those for pregnant workers and young persons.
- ▶ **Health and Safety Representation:** Confirming that employers appointed workers health and safety representatives.
- ▶ **Workplace Environment:** Checking for adequate ventilation, appropriate temperatures, and readiness for fire safety and emergency situations.
- ▶ **First Aid Arrangements:** Ensuring accessible and sufficient first aid provisions are in place.

The most frequent issues involved the absence of proper risk assessments and inadequate servicing of fire extinguishers. OHSA responded by issuing orders for corrective actions and, in cases of serious non-compliance, imposing administrative fines or initiating legal proceedings.

For minor infringements, OHSA officers engaged in constructive discussions with employers, providing guidance and recommendations. This

collaborative approach was generally well-received by both employers and workers' health and safety representatives, fostering a culture of proactive compliance.

The increase in inspections in 2024 was enabled by the recruitment of additional OHSA officers, significantly boosting the Authority's operational capacity. In comparison, OHSA conducted 148 inspections in 2022 and 134 inspections in 2023. The substantial rise in 2024 underscores the Authority's commitment to expanding its reach and enhancing workplace safety across the country.

Based on 2024 statistics, OHSA anticipates that the number of workplace inspections will continue to rise in 2025, supported by further staff additions and improvements in organisational efficiency. Additionally, the opening of a Gozo branch, expected in 2025, will enhance OHSA's presence on the sister island. This new branch will facilitate more frequent inspections, enabling OHSA officers to provide guidance on health and safety practices while closely monitoring previously inspected workplaces.

FIGURE 9: TOTAL NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS IN THE GENERAL DIVISION

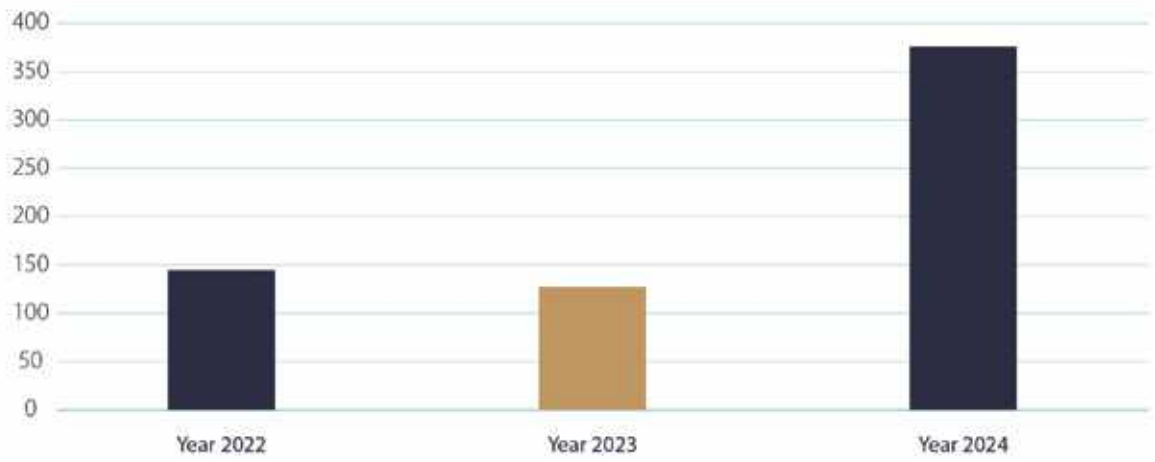
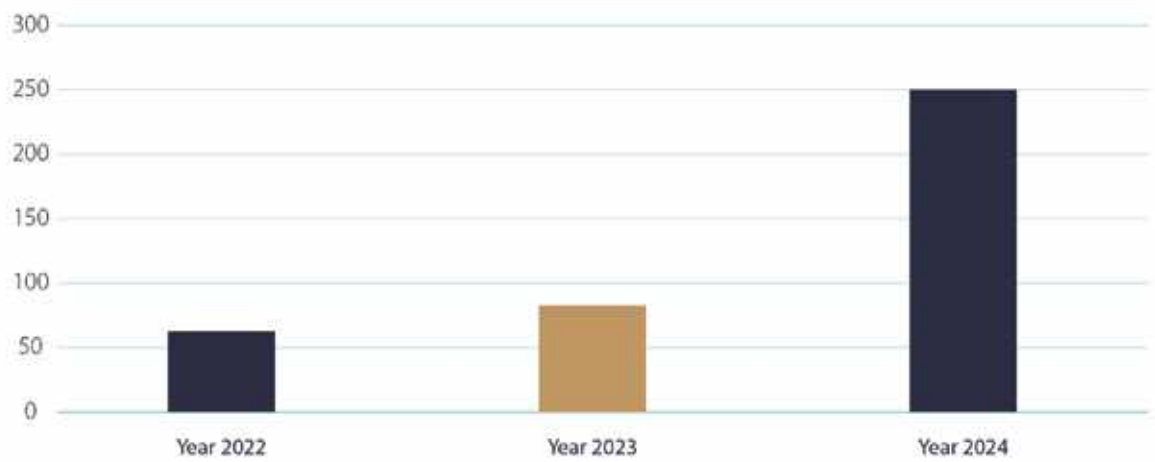


FIGURE 10: NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED IN THE GENERAL DIVISION



3.3 Additional Activities

3.3.1 EU-OSHA CAMPAIGN ON 'FALLS FROM HEIGHT'

As part of a broader EU-OSHA campaign, the Construction Division prioritised inspections related to falls from height, a leading cause of injuries and fatalities in construction.

3.3.2 JOINT INSPECTIONS WITH THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY (BCA)

Following the publication of the Sofia Inquiry report on the 28th of February 2024, the Prime Minister announced five immediate initiatives, one of which emphasised the need for intensified enforcement through a centralised unit overseeing sector enforcement.

In alignment with this directive, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was established between BCA and OHSA to strengthen collaboration and facilitate joint inspections. Starting from mid-2024, joint inspections with the BCA were organised, with one officer from each entity visiting active construction sites twice a week. This frequency was later increased to daily joint inspections and shall continue to run throughout the coming years. Officers from both entities focused on irregularities within their respective areas of responsibility.

The success of these joint inspections has led to the continuation of daily inspections, aimed at ensuring regulatory alignment and addressing complex safety challenges. Through these efforts, OHSA aims to conduct more efficient, data-driven, and impactful inspections, ensuring regular monitoring of construction sites and the prompt resolution of high-risk conditions to safeguard workers.

3.3.3 THE INSPECTIONS COORDINATION OFFICE - 2024

In 2024, OHSA continued its active collaboration with the Inspections Coordination Office, which is part of the Implementation Division under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Through this partnership, the Inspections Coordination Office submitted 299

cases (tickets) to OHSA via an online platform. Out of these, 133 cases highlighted deficiencies that required OHSA to conduct targeted inspections to address Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) concerns.

The inspections were conducted across a diverse range of workplaces, including cold storage facilities, elderly care homes, broiler chicken farms, fish farms, junkyards, packaging manufacturers, quarries, restaurants, and stationery stores. The primary OHS violations observed included:

- ▶ Lack of proper health and safety signage
- ▶ Absence of necessary certification for forklifts and lifts (for both goods and passengers)
- ▶ Insufficient firefighting equipment and arrangements
- ▶ Inadequate emergency evacuation procedures
- ▶ Deficiencies in first aid provisions

OHS Officers carried out unannounced visits and conducted thorough inspections at each site to assess compliance with health and safety regulations. After identifying violations, officers issued official orders instructing employers to rectify the issues within a designated timeframe. An un-announced follow-up inspection was scheduled for each case to ensure that corrective actions were taken. In instances where employers failed to comply with these orders, OHSA imposed administrative fines as a further measure to enforce adherence to OHS standards.

This structured approach, combining inspection, enforcement, and follow-up, underscores OHSA's commitment to improving workplace safety across various sectors and ensuring that businesses uphold essential health and safety practices.

3.3.4 EUROPEAN JOINT INSPECTIONS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

In 2024, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA), in collaboration with the European Labour Authority (ELA) and various national entities, successfully conducted a series of coordinated

inspections across Malta's construction sites. These inspections were part of a broader ELA initiative aimed at enforcing health and safety regulations and improving working conditions within the EU.

OHSA emphasised the critical importance of maintaining stringent health and safety standards on construction sites. The inspections, which involved cooperation from the Department for Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER), Jobsplus, the Immigration Police, and Bulgarian labour inspectors as observers, highlighted the value of joint efforts in ensuring these standards are upheld.

During the inspections, several infringements were identified, including issues with scaffolding, fall risks from heights, and non-compliance with labour laws, such as unpaid overtime and the absence of proper contracts. These findings underscored the ongoing challenges within the construction industry and the need for continuous vigilance. The joint inspections not only streamlined the enforcement process but also fostered a culture of compliance and safety, safeguarding all workers involved.

3.3.5 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR THE TECHNICAL (LEGAL & SURVEILLANCE) UNIT

The implementation of a Management Information System (MIS) aims to provide an efficient digital solution to streamline OHSA's data handling, reduce or eliminate paper use, and support data-driven decision-making through a centralised, secure system. This system will also enable monitoring of performance based on the number of inspections, localities, and various data analysis methods.

- ▶ **Project Scope:** To replace manual, paper-based methods with a comprehensive automated system that centralises and secures information from inspections and compliance actions.
- ▶ **Benefits:** Improved data security, real-time access, enhanced reporting capabilities, and stronger compliance with evolving legislative requirements.
- ▶ **Phases and Timeline:** The project is structured into design, implementation, and support phases, with targeted sprint cycles to ensure steady progress.

- ▶ **Reduced Paper Dependence:** Transitioning to digital records to eliminate risks of physical loss and streamlining record-keeping.
- ▶ **Centralised Data Storage:** Consolidating records into a single database, addressing data redundancy and inconsistencies.
- ▶ **Automated Processes:** Improving efficiency and accuracy in data handling, storage, and retrieval.
- ▶ **Enhanced Reporting and Analysis:** Integrating advanced analysis tools to gain insights into occupational health and safety trends.
- ▶ **Future Plans:** Collaboration with other entities for better cross-agency collaboration and data sharing, enhancing OHSA's enforcement impact. By integrating common data, users can access all relevant services and information from a single platform. This eliminates the need to navigate multiple systems, reducing time and effort spent on administrative tasks.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS - ENHANCED OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

- ▶ The MIS automates enforcement and reporting processes, saving officers time to focus more on thorough inspections. This system will also provide comprehensive notifications for non-compliance and schedule follow-up inspections as needed, improving workflow efficiency and planning.
- ▶ Built-in business tools within the system will offer valuable insights, allowing OHSA to target high-risk areas more effectively and prioritise actions where they are most needed.

PROJECT DESIGN, MONITORING, ADJUSTMENTS, AND INTRODUCTION OF AD-HOC WORK PROCESSES.

Throughout the entire duration of this project, a task group of OHS personnel made themselves available to collaborate with the appointed contractor, facilitating progress through the following:

- ▶ Weekly meetings were planned; however, due to the complexity of the project, these meetings became frequent to address emerging challenges.

- Internal feedback from OHSA's MIS team has been instrumental in making real-time adjustments based on user needs and observations during inspections.

RESPONSE TO LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Adjustments to the new OHSA Act have been incorporated into the MIS, ensuring alignment with updated regulatory requirements, and enhancing legal consistency and enforcement capabilities.

PROJECTED RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- Increased efficiency due to reduced paperwork.
- Decreased risk of data loss and enhanced, data-driven enforcement.

TESTING AND PILOT

- **Pilot Testing:** Daily module testing during real-time inspections allowed for the system's responsiveness and adaptability to be assessed, while providing operational officers with direct experience of its use.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Feedback from officers during pilot testing facilitated rapid adjustments, ensuring the system's functionality was optimised and ready for full-scale deployment.

The MIS project marks a significant advancement in OHSA's operations, enabling more comprehensive and responsive occupational health and safety enforcement. Through streamlined data handling, automated reporting, and strategic business intelligence (BI) insights, OHSA is better equipped to fulfil its mission effectively and efficiently.

3.3.6 INCREASED NUMBER OF OHS OFFICERS IN 2024: A POSITIVE IMPACT

The increase in the number of OHS officers during 2024 marked a significant step forward, demonstrating a strong political commitment to improving workplace health and safety. This progress was achieved through both legislative reforms and by equipping OHSA with the necessary resources to enhance its operations. With the additional manpower, OHSA was able to conduct more inspections across various sectors,

resulting in notable improvements in addressing health and safety concerns. However, this growth in capacity also led to a higher workload, as an increased number of infringements was detected, not just in the construction industry but across a broad spectrum of workplaces.

3.3.7 ARCHIVE MANAGEMENT AND SPACE OPTIMISATION

In 2024, OHSA undertook a comprehensive review of its archives, which contained inspection-related files dating back to the organisation's inception. Many of these records were no longer required, as they had exceeded the legally mandated retention period outlined by data protection regulations.

A systematic exercise was conducted to discard these outdated files. Documents were physically shredded and, where possible, sent for recycling. This effort not only ensured compliance with data protection laws but also freed up valuable space, allowing for more efficient use of OHSA's premises.

3.3.8 REVIEW OF STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES RELATED TO PENALTIES

Following the introduction of the new Health and Safety at Work Act (Chapter 646), offences of an administrative nature are now regulated by the Health and Safety at Work (Procedures in Relation to the Issuance of Administrative Penalties) Regulations, SL 646.26. The scope of these regulations is to establish a non-exhaustive list of breaches under Article 25 of Chapter 646 for which OHSA may issue administrative penalties.

In this regard, the Act provides that failures related to filing of documentation, provision of risk assessments, and appointment of workers health and safety representatives are now subject to an administrative penalty.

In addition to the Act's revisions, OHSA has also revised the Legal Notice on Administrative Fines, with specific changes to the penalties schedule to reflect the fact that penalty fees have been adjusted to correspond with the severity of breaches, ensuring penalties serve as a strong deterrent against non-compliance.

BENEFITS OF THE NEW LEGISLATION

- ▶ **Enhanced Compliance and Enforcement:** The updated penalty structures will enable OHSA to take swift, proportionate action on violations, encouraging greater compliance.
- ▶ **Reduced Legal Workload from Courts:** A number of breaches now handled administratively, will alleviate pressure on the legal system, enabling OHSA to present only cases which merit referral to the courts.
- ▶ **Greater Industry Clarity:** Regular updates to the OHSA Act and administrative fines provide clear, up-to-date guidance to the industry, making it easier for companies to understand and meet their compliance obligations.

These changes aim to strengthen OHSA's regulatory framework, streamline enforcement, and enhance overall workplace safety standards in line with recent legislative updates.

3.3.9 INTERNAL STAFF TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR OHSA OFFICERS

As part of OHSA's ongoing commitment to ensuring compliance and up-to-date practices, internal technical training was provided to staff, particularly to OHS officers. This training focused on the recent legislative reforms and new regulations, ensuring that all officers are equipped with the necessary knowledge to correctly interpret and apply these changes.

Introduction of MIS tablets used in inspections and how their way of conducting inspections will be instantaneously recorded, and how orders and improvement notices are dispatched to employers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

- 1. Understanding Legislative Reforms:** The primary goal was to ensure that OHS officers fully understand the new regulations and legislative changes that are being introduced, particularly in relation to construction, workplace safety standards, and compliance.
- 2. Accurate Interpretation of Regulations:** Officers were trained on how to accurately interpret and

implement the updated laws and guidelines in their daily inspections and enforcement activities.

- 3. Ensuring Compliance:** By equipping OHS officers with the necessary legal knowledge, OHSA ensured that regulatory enforcement is conducted with consistency and accuracy, leading to better compliance across industries.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE TRAINING

- ▶ **Legal Framework and Updates:** Detailed sessions on the new regulations, including the construction sector-specific laws and any other changes affecting workplace safety standards.
- ▶ **Practical Application:** Case studies and real-life scenarios were used to illustrate how the new laws should be applied in various workplace settings.
- ▶ **Interactive Learning:** Workshops and discussion forums were organised to encourage interaction and address any questions or concerns officers may have regarding the changes.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ **Increased Knowledge and Confidence:** OHS officers have a deeper understanding of the legal requirements, which will increase their confidence in enforcing regulations.
- ▶ **Efficient Enforcement:** Proper interpretation of the legislative changes enabled OHSA officers to enforce the laws effectively and uniformly.
- ▶ **Streamlined Compliance:** By having all officers on the same page regarding the new regulations, OHSA can ensure a more consistent approach to inspections and enforcement across different divisions.

This internal training programme was essential for maintaining a high standard of health and safety enforcement, ensuring that OHSA continues to operate effectively in line with evolving legal frameworks.

3.3.10 OHSA HEALTH AND SAFETY COURSES FOR 2024

As part of its commitment to workplace health and safety education, OHSA expanded its Health and Safety Courses programme. These courses cover a variety of topics essential for improving safety practices and awareness in workplaces across different sectors. A lecturer has been assigned to lead and organise the courses, ensuring they meet both industry needs and OHSA's educational standards.

OHSA has earmarked a selection of topics for these courses, which cover fundamental and advanced aspects of workplace health and safety. These include:

- ▶ General Workplace Safety Practices
- ▶ Risk Assessment and Management
- ▶ First Aid and Emergency Preparedness
- ▶ Occupational Health and Ergonomics
- ▶ Construction Site Safety
- ▶ Accident Prevention and Investigation

These courses are designed to develop foundational knowledge and practical skills among participants, fostering a culture of safety across various workplaces.

KEY BENEFITS

- ▶ **Industry-Relevant Education:** Topics are carefully selected to address real-world safety challenges across various sectors.
- ▶ **Improved Compliance:** Through education, OHSA helps ensure that both workers and employers comply with safety regulations.
- ▶ **Adaptability:** Course frequency and content can be adjusted based on demand, allowing OHSA to efficiently allocate resources.

Through these courses, OHSA maintains its proactive approach to workplace health and safety, providing valuable training opportunities that contribute to a safer work environment.

- ▶ **2022:** Delivered 12 courses with a total of 141 participants.
- ▶ **2023:** A slight decrease in both the number of courses and participation, with 11 courses attended by 127 individuals.

- ▶ **2024:** Initially, only 10 courses were planned, however demand more than doubled, resulting in 21 courses and a record 200 participants.

This upwards surge in 2024 highlights the success of OHSA's strategy to use external providers to meet growing demand.

3.3.11 OHSA ENGAGEMENTS AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES IN 2024

Throughout 2024, the Technical (Legal & Surveillance) actively participated in various initiatives and events aimed at raising awareness, enhancing industry standards, and promoting a culture of workplace safety across diverse sectors. These efforts underscored OHSA's commitment to fostering safer workplaces through education, collaboration, and legislative updates.



4

Communications & PR Unit

The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) values awareness as a major pillar in its strategy to safeguard the health and safety of workers. Hence, the Communications & PR unit within OHSA plays a critical role in shaping public perception, promoting workplace health and safety, and ensuring effective internal and external communication. The unit recognises the importance of delivering clear, consistent messaging that educates stakeholders, raises awareness on safety issues, and supports compliance with health and safety regulations. By leveraging media relations, digital platforms, and targeted campaigns, the unit helps to enhance OHSA's visibility, reinforce its mission, and foster a culture of safety across industries. Effective communication is key to building trust, ensuring transparency, and driving positive change in workplace safety standards.

To further enhance the effectiveness of our communications efforts, the unit was strengthened with the addition of two managers and a clerk, under the direction of the Senior Manager (Communications & PR). This expansion has enabled better management of responsibilities, improved OHSA's outreach, and ensured more efficient and targeted communication strategies. With these added resources, the Unit is now better equipped to support OHSA's mission, raise awareness about workplace health and safety, and drive meaningful engagement with all stakeholders.

4.1 Reforms and Initiatives

In 2024, the OHSA implemented several vital reforms aimed at enhancing workplace safety and improving operational efficiency, with the Communications & PR unit playing a pivotal role in ensuring their success. These reforms include the introduction of Act 646 which establishes updated health and safety regulations and compliance protocols, as well as the digitalisation of inspection tools to streamline processes. By modernising our systems, OHSA is now better positioned to respond more effectively and proactively to emerging workplace hazards, while aligning with international best practices and maintaining a high standard of safety and compliance.

4.2 Rebranding Process

To modernise the Authority's image and improve recognition, the OHSA undertook a rebranding campaign. This initiative involved a refreshed logo and brand image with new corporate colours, updated communication materials, and discussions for the design of a more user-friendly website aimed at improving accessibility for a broader audience. These changes reflect OHSA's commitment to transparency, innovation, and the ongoing importance of health and safety in the workplace in an ever-changing landscape.

The main scope of this rebranding exercise was to blend innovative design with a strategic approach to reposition the Authority for continued relevance in the years ahead. This redesign also focused on enhancing communication across both digital and print marketing platforms. This included updating the logo and brand image, as well as refreshing the corporate colours and materials. These updates reflect the Authority's commitment to transparency, innovation, and workplace safety.

The concept of the novel OHSA rebranding exercise emphasises its commitment to the core values of protection, vigilance, and service to the community, mirroring the cross's historical association with care and safeguarding. The quartered logo design highlights OHSA's focus on specific sectors within occupational health and safety, underlining its dedication to promoting a safe and healthy working environment across all industries in Malta.

The visual identity of OHSA, seen across its website, print materials, and social media, uses a distinct overlapping triangular design in light blue, gold, and dark navy. This iconography reinforces the brand identity and communicates the Authority's values of precision, collaboration, and safety.

The colours chosen in the rebranding exercise also symbolise different emotional facets, with light blue representing clarity, safety, and a reassuring presence in the occupational health and safety sector. Moreover, the clean, modern Calibri typography lends itself perfectly to clear cut communication practises, ensuring that digital and print publications are clear and easy to read.

4.3 Extending Awareness Through Conferences

Engaging stakeholders through conferences is a crucial strategy for fostering meaningful dialogue, sharing industry insights, and strengthening relationships. Conferences provide a platform for OHSA to connect directly with key stakeholders, including industry leaders, policymakers, and safety professionals, ensuring that the Authority's messages about workplace health and safety are effectively communicated. These events allow for the exchange of best practices, the presentation of new developments in regulations and safety protocols, and the opportunity to showcase OHSA's commitment to innovation and improvement. By participating in and organising conferences, the Communications & PR Unit plays an essential role in enhancing OHSA's visibility, building trust, and promoting collaboration within the occupational health and safety community. To this end, a number of conferences were organised throughout 2024.

4.3.1 OHS IN THE HEALTH AND ELDERLY CARE SETTING

Recognising the unique occupational health and safety (OHS) challenges within the health and elderly care sectors, the OHSA hosted a specialised business breakfast in 2024, entitled "OHS in the Health and Elderly-Care Setting". This targeted event was specifically designed for managers and leaders within hospitals, primary health facilities, and elderly care homes, with the overarching goal of providing valuable insights, fostering meaningful dialogue, and promoting a proactive approach to OHS principles within these critical industries. The strong participation, with representatives from 28 elderly care

homes, 14 hospitals, and 10 primary care facilities in attendance, underscored the widespread recognition of the importance of robust OHS practices in these sectors and the commitment of healthcare leaders to prioritizing the safety and well-being of their staff.

The business breakfast served as a vital forum for in-depth discussions centred on core health and safety principles in the workplace, emphasizing their critical significance in the context of healthcare environments. A key focus of the event was elucidating the legal responsibilities of employers to ensure the safety and well-being of their employees, clarifying the often-complex regulatory landscape, and highlighting the importance of compliance. Participants explored the essential role of conducting thorough and regular risk assessments to proactively minimise hazards and safeguard both staff and organisational assets. The discussions extended beyond general principles to delve into a detailed analysis of the specific health and safety challenges faced by healthcare professionals, addressing the complexities inherent in these demanding professions. This included examining issues such as exposure to infectious diseases, the physical demands of patient care, the psychological impact of stressful work environments, and the prevention of musculoskeletal injuries.

Beyond the formal presentations and discussions, the business breakfast provided a valuable interactive platform for attendees to share best practices, exchange specialised knowledge, and learn from the experiences of their peers. This peer-to-peer learning was a crucial component of the event, allowing participants to gain practical insights and

adapt successful strategies to their own unique settings. Furthermore, the event offered an excellent opportunity for attendees to expand their professional networks and forge valuable connections within the broader healthcare community. These connections can serve as ongoing resources for information sharing, collaboration, and mutual support in the ongoing pursuit of OHS excellence. The Business Breakfast served not only as an educational event but also as a catalyst for building a stronger, more connected network of healthcare professionals dedicated to prioritising the safety and well-being of those who provide care.

4.3.2 EMPOWERING OHS PRACTITIONERS: SETTING HIGHER STANDARDS FOR SAFETY EXCELLENCE

Occupational health and safety (OHS) professionals are indispensable to the advancement of national safety standards. Their specialised knowledge and practical skills are critical in preventing workplace injuries and illnesses, thereby safeguarding the workforce and cultivating a proactive safety culture. These professionals serve as the front line of defence against workplace hazards, proactively identifying and mitigating risks before they can lead to harm. Their dedication to staying abreast of evolving best practices, technological advancements, and regulatory changes is a cornerstone of building and maintaining safer working environments, reflecting the collaborative spirit embodied by the adage, “Together we help build in safety”. This commitment to continuous learning and adaptation is essential in a dynamic work environment where new challenges and potential hazards constantly emerge.

This fundamental understanding of the crucial role of OHS professionals served as the impetus for the conference, “Empowering OHS Practitioners: Setting Higher Standards for Safety Excellence”. This collaborative initiative, jointly organized by the OHSA, the Malta Occupational Safety and Health Practitioners Association (MOSHPA), and the Union of Health and Safety Practitioners (UHSP), provided a vital platform for exploring and disseminating strategies to enhance professional practices within the field of occupational health and safety. The conference offered a unique

opportunity for OHS professionals to connect with peers, share experiences, and learn from leading experts. A distinguished international expert shared valuable insights into UK best practices, providing a comparative perspective and further solidifying a shared commitment to achieving and exceeding international standards of safety excellence.

Furthermore, well-attended and highly interactive workshops facilitated in-depth discussions on a range of critical topics, including the complexities of competence registration, the importance of continuous professional development to maintain expertise, and the essential role of providing effective guidance and support to project supervisors. These workshops fostered a collaborative environment where participants could engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange ideas, and contribute to the ongoing evolution of best practices in occupational health and safety.

4.3.3 PROMOTING AND SAFEGUARDING HEALTH AND SAFETY OF EMPLOYEES AT WORK

The OHSA hosted a significant conference, “Promoting and Safeguarding Health and Safety of Employees at Work,” which served as the official launch event for the newly enacted Health and Safety at Work Act and the unveiling of the OHSA’s refreshed brand identity. This important event brought together key stakeholders, including senior representatives from various sectors, demonstrating the broad interest in and impact of the new legislation. The conference was honoured by the presence of distinguished guests, including Dr Jonathan Attard, Minister for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector, and Mr Tony Sultana, Principal Permanent Secretary, underscoring the government’s commitment to prioritising occupational health and safety.

The event provided a valuable platform for disseminating information about the new Act, clarifying its provisions, and emphasising its implications for employers and employees alike. Furthermore, the unveiling of the OHSA’s new branding signalled a renewed commitment to its mission and a modern approach to promoting

and enforcing workplace safety standards. The conference facilitated productive dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders, setting the stage for effective implementation of the new legislation and a strengthened focus on occupational health and safety across Malta.

4.3.4 SAFE AND HEALTHY WORK IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Digitalisation has rapidly transformed the modern workplace, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While digital tools have become integral to various sectors, driving efficiency and flexibility, they also present new and intensified occupational health and safety (OHS) challenges. Traditional hazards are compounded by the fast-paced nature of digital work, and novel risks emerge, including stress from rapid technological implementation, blurred boundaries between work and personal life due to constant connectivity, and the need for new risk assessment strategies for remote and hybrid work models. These evolving circumstances necessitate a proactive approach to OHS that addresses both the benefits and the potential drawbacks of digital technologies.

The conference 'Safe and Healthy Work in the Digital Age' explored the complex OHS issues arising from increasing digitalisation in the workplace. Research was presented on the impact of robotics, AI, remote work, and platform work on worker well-being, considering both physical and psychosocial risks and potential benefits. Trends such as the increasing use of systems controlling work content and pace, the shift towards analytical work, and the varied effects of remote work were highlighted. The importance of employers' legal obligations regarding digital solutions was emphasised, along with the need for comprehensive risk assessments covering emerging risks like automation and AI, and the crucial role of worker and OHS personnel involvement. Malta's commitment to a holistic, human-centred approach to workplace safety under the new Act was affirmed, with a focus on developing practices for balanced and protected engagement with technology. The development of guidelines for digital technology risk assessments was identified as a key step towards stronger legislative frameworks.

4.3.5 CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE IMPACT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA), in collaboration with EU-OSHA, convened experts to address the impact of climate change on workplace health and safety in Malta. The conference provided an in-depth analysis of the specific effects of climate change on workers, focusing on the Mediterranean context, and its implications across various sectors. Discussions highlighted the urgent need for collaborative action among stakeholders, including public health authorities, researchers, employers, and workers, to develop effective mitigation strategies and integrate them into workplace policies and risk assessments. Emphasis was placed on the importance of knowledge, awareness, and proactive measures to create adaptive solutions and safeguard worker well-being.

Experts outlined the significant challenges Malta faces due to climate change, including rising sea levels, extreme heatwaves, and resource scarcity, emphasising the humanitarian dimension of the crisis. The growing risks to occupational health and safety were detailed, including heat stress, air pollution, UV radiation, and extreme weather events, necessitating adaptive OHS practices. The importance of collaboration among climate experts, health professionals, and OHS practitioners, along with ongoing research, was stressed. Malta's commitment to a just and clean transition was reaffirmed, with a focus on awareness and training to build resilience. The conference acknowledged the potential economic implications of necessary changes in working conditions and served as a platform for collaboration, learning, and planning to safeguard the well-being of workers both now and in the future.

4.3.6 WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

OHSA participated in the Malta Chamber of Commerce conference 'Women in Construction', underscoring its commitment to gender equality within the construction industry. The Authority supports the diversification of roles for women in the sector, from professional and administrative positions

to skilled trades, and emphasises the importance of providing them with the necessary competencies. Early career exposure and accredited certifications are seen as crucial tools to challenge the traditional image of the industry and promote fair recruitment.

The conference highlighted the valuable contributions women make to construction, particularly in emotional intelligence, which, combined with relevant skills,

can raise standards and enhance team well-being. The OHSA is dedicated to playing a leading role in building a more inclusive and diverse construction sector, recognising the positive impact this will have on the industry.

4.4 Information Sessions on the New Health and Safety at Work Act Chapter 626 for Key Stakeholders

OHSA conducted a series of briefing sessions for key stakeholders to provide detailed information on the new Health and Safety at Work Act, Chapter 626 (Act 646). These sessions covered all chapters of the legislation, including subsidiary legislation pertaining to penalties and fines. The aim was to ensure stakeholders were fully informed about the Act’s provisions and their implications.

Eight sessions were held during November and December 2024, including two in Gozo, targeting a diverse audience ranging from ministries and union representatives to health and safety practitioners and local councils. The sessions were well-received, generating positive feedback and requests for further information sessions in 2025, indicating a strong interest in and need for ongoing guidance on the new legislation.

TABLE 1. INFORMATION SESSIONS

22nd November 2024	
Session 1	Malta Chamber of SMEs
	Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility
	Malta Development Association
Session 2	Malta Occupational Safety & Health Practitioners Association
	Union of Safety and Health Practitioners
25th November 2024	
Session 1	Transport Malta
	Board of Directors OHSA
	Public Works Department
	Ministry for National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government
	Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Public Works
	Ministry for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector
	Office of the Prime Minister
	Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd
	Infrastructure Malta
	Mental Health Association

26th November 2024

Session 1	Union Haddiema Magħqudin General Workers Union
Session 2	Malta Local Councils Reġjun Nofsinhar Reġjun Tramuntana Reġjun Lvant Reġjun Punent

10th December 2024

Session 1	Gozo Ministry Gozo Permanent Secretary
Session 2	MCAST Gozo Wasteserv MFG Ltd Country Terrace Distinct Homes Karkanja Gozo Business Chamber

4.5 Information Session at the DCS Forum

A discussion on health and safety legislation and related obligations was facilitated within the Directors of Corporate Services Forum. The session provided a platform for members to explore key aspects of current legislation and clarify their responsibilities in ensuring workplace safety.

The interactive discussion covered practical topics such as how to conduct effective risk assessments, enabling participants to identify and mitigate potential hazards within their organisations. Information on construction regulations was also shared, ensuring attendees were up to date with the specific requirements relevant to that sector.

4.6 Use of Virtual Reality

To remain at the forefront of digital advancements and enhance occupational health and safety (OHS) training, the OHSA has invested in state-of-the-art virtual reality (VR) equipment and software. This forward-thinking initiative represents a significant step, marking the first time such technology has been deployed to practically improve OHS knowledge within the Maltese sector. The VR system creates immersive and interactive training experiences, allowing participants to safely explore simulated work environments and encounter realistic hazard scenarios without any real-world risk. This approach offers a powerful alternative to traditional training methods, enabling a deeper understanding of potential dangers and best practices.

The VR technology is being strategically integrated into both public awareness campaigns and targeted training sessions conducted by the OHSA. Its use in public activities aims to raise general awareness about key OHS principles and promote a proactive safety culture across various industries. Within dedicated training sessions, the VR platform offers OHS professionals and other relevant personnel a unique opportunity to hone their skills, practise risk assessment, and develop effective responses to various workplace hazards. This dual application of

VR technology ensures that both the general public and those directly involved in OHS management benefit from this innovative and engaging learning tool.

4.7 Public Engagement Through Conventions

Public and stakeholder engagement has been a key priority for the OHSA throughout the year. The Authority has actively increased its participation in national exhibitions, media appearances, and conferences, leveraging these platforms to raise occupational health and safety awareness and promote best practices. This proactive approach has allowed the OHSA to connect with a broader audience and disseminate vital information about workplace safety.

Furthermore, the OHSA has significantly expanded its social media presence, enabling the Authority to reach a wider demographic with educational content, event promotion, and general health and safety awareness campaigns. This digital engagement has been complemented by a successful recruitment campaign, which attracted highly skilled professionals to join the Authority, strengthening its capacity to deliver on its mission.

4.7.1 PUBLIC SERVICE EXPO 2024

OHSA participated in the Public Service Expo on the stand of the Ministry for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector. The Expo, designed to showcase the work of various government ministries and entities, provided a platform for the OHSA to engage with the public and promote occupational health and safety awareness. The OHSA stand featured the use of virtual reality (VR) technology, offering visitors an interactive and engaging experience.

In addition to the VR demonstrations, the OHSA team interacted with members of the public, distributing educational and informative literature, along with promotional materials. The Expo, which included a diverse range of attractions from food and entertainment to information and services, provided a valuable opportunity for the OHSA to connect with a broad audience and highlight the importance of workplace safety.

4.7.2 THE MARE SUMMIT

OHSA participated in the Mare Summit, co-hosting an insightful panel discussion on “Safety on Construction Sites” with the Building and Construction Authority (BCA). OHSA delivered a detailed presentation, sharing expertise and practical solutions for improving site safety. Together with representatives from the BCA, Assoċjazzjoni Bennejja u Kuntratturi, and the Malta Occupational Safety & Health Practitioners Association, OHSA subsequently participated in a dynamic panel discussion on the topic.

OHSA also hosted an information stand at the summit, showcasing cutting-edge virtual reality (VR) training. This provided attendees with a hands-on opportunity to experience the future of safety training and engage with OHSA experts to explore innovative tools designed to create safer working environments for all. OHSA members also interacted with the public, providing information on OHS and distributing educational and promotional material.

4.7.3 THE MALTA HOSPITALITY FORUM

The Malta Hospitality Forum, organised by the Malta Hotels & Restaurants Association, saw active participation from OHSA. A representative from the OHSA contributed to a panel discussion, providing valuable insights into the crucial role of occupational health and safety within the hotels and catering industry. The discussion highlighted the specific challenges and best practices relevant to this sector.

At its exhibition stand, the OHSA showcased OiRA, a free online risk assessment tool designed specifically for the catering industry in Malta. OiRA provides businesses with a comprehensive framework for conducting risk assessments, empowering them to create safer working environments for all stakeholders.

4.7.4 THE STARTUP FESTIVAL

The Startup Festival Malta, coordinated by Malta Enterprise, serves as a prominent showcase for emerging businesses, attracting hundreds of local and international startups across diverse sectors, including FinTech, Digital Gaming, VR/AR, Metaverse, Medicinal Cannabis, BioTech, MedTech, and the Blue Economy. This dynamic event has become a key platform for fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, bringing together some of the brightest entrepreneurial minds in Malta. Recognising the importance of embedding a strong safety culture from the outset, the OHSA actively participated in the festival with a dedicated exhibition stand.

The OHSA's presence highlighted its commitment to embedding a strong safety culture from the beginning. The stand featured informative videos, branded merchandise, and experienced staff who engaged directly with startups. The focus was on educating attendees about key OHS principles, particularly the new Health and Safety at Work Act, ensuring startups understood their legal obligations and the resources available to them. This proactive engagement aims to cultivate a culture of safety management within Malta's entrepreneurial landscape.

4.7.5 THE MALTA PROPERTY FAIR

The OHSA participated as a sponsor in the Malta Property Show, an event organised by the Malta Development Association and Check Your Traders. The show focuses on enhancing Malta's property landscape by connecting developers, contractors, estate agents, and service providers, fostering networking, collaboration, and innovation within the industry and bridging the gap between the industry and the public. The OHSA's involvement highlighted the importance of integrating health and safety considerations into all aspects of the property sector.

The OHSA's presence included participation in the inauguration ceremony and a dedicated information stand. The stand provided visitors with informative and promotional materials related to occupational health and safety, raising awareness of best practices and legal obligations within the construction and property development industries.

4.7.6 'I CHOOSE FAIR'

The OHSA participated in the well-attended 'I Choose Fair', organised by the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR). This event, aimed at Year 11 students as they explore career and educational options after compulsory education, provided a valuable opportunity for the OHSA to engage with young people. The fair offered students a chance to discover various pathways and make informed decisions about their future.

The OHSA stand provided information and promotional materials related to occupational health and safety, raising awareness among students about the importance of workplace safety from the outset of their careers. The OHSA also held a competition for participants, further engaging the students and making the learning experience more interactive and memorable.

4.8 Information to Foreign Workers

The OHSA has initiated outreach efforts specifically targeting foreign and migrant workers in Malta. Recognising the importance of ensuring all workers, regardless of their background, are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding workplace safety, the Authority is developing a dedicated information campaign. This initiative underscores the OHSA's commitment to inclusivity and aims to bridge any communication or cultural gaps that may hinder access to vital health and safety information.

As part of this campaign, an information guide is currently under review, with plans for translation into several languages to maximise accessibility. The OHSA is also actively engaging with key stakeholders who work with or represent foreign and migrant workers to ensure the campaign's reach is as broad and effective as possible. This collaborative approach will help disseminate crucial information about health and safety at work, empowering these workers to protect themselves and contribute to a safer working environment for everyone.

4.9 Media Outreach

In today's fast-paced world, effective communication is crucial for any organisation, and OHSA is no exception. Media outreach plays a pivotal role in disseminating vital information, raising awareness about workplace safety, and fostering a culture of prevention. By strategically leveraging both traditional and social media platforms, OHSA can effectively reach its target audiences, engage in meaningful conversations, and ultimately create safer working environments for all. During 2024 OHSA participated in a number of media programmes and placed a number of adverts on both traditional and social media to showcase its commitment to proactive communication and its dedication to promoting a healthy and safe workforce.

4.9.1 ADVERTISEMENTS

OHSA has produced a range of informative video clips showcasing its operations and ongoing activities. These clips, shared across social media platforms and broadcast on television, aim to raise public awareness of the Authority's work and promote key health and safety messages. This proactive approach to communication ensures transparency and keeps the public informed about the OHSA's various initiatives.

Included within these video productions are three advertisements specifically designed to highlight job vacancies within the OHSA and encourage applications from qualified individuals. These recruitment advertisements, along with radio adverts, are regularly refreshed and updated to maintain audience engagement and attract talented young professionals. This ongoing effort is crucial to enhancing and modernising the OHSA's operations, ensuring it has the skilled personnel necessary to effectively serve the community.

4.9.2 RADIO AND TELEVISION INITIATIVES

During 2024, OHSA actively engaged with broadcast media to disseminate crucial occupational health and safety information to the widest possible audience. Recognising the diverse nature of workplaces across Malta, apart from interventions on news bulletins, the

Authority participated in 42 television programmes across prominent local stations, including TVM, ONE, NetTV, and FLiving. These appearances provided a valuable platform to address a broad spectrum of topics, ensuring relevance to various sectors. Discussions encompassed OHS best practices in diverse settings, from offices and construction sites to schools and the catering sector. Furthermore, OHSA representatives provided expert insights on legal obligations, the importance of risk assessment, the safe handling of chemicals, and explanations of new legislation impacting workplace safety.

In addition to television appearances, OHSA also leveraged the reach of radio, participating in four programmes. These radio engagements complemented the television outreach, further amplifying the Authority's message and ensuring accessibility for audiences who may primarily consume information through this medium.

Collectively, these 46 media appearances across television and radio have been instrumental in positioning OHSA as a trusted and authoritative source of information and expertise on all matters relating to occupational health and safety in Malta. This proactive engagement with broadcast media has significantly contributed to raising public awareness and promoting a culture of safety across the nation.

4.9.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

The Authority recognises the increasing importance of social media as a vital communication channel for reaching diverse audiences. During 2024, significant progress was made in leveraging platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to disseminate key messages regarding occupational health and safety. These channels, managed by the Communications and PR Unit, have proven effective in engaging with workers, employers, and the general public, fostering dialogue and promoting a proactive approach to workplace safety. Furthermore, recognising the specific needs of professionals and businesses, OHSA launched a dedicated LinkedIn page in October 2024.

This strategic expansion onto a targeted platform has allowed the Authority to connect directly with employers and employees, facilitating the sharing of industry-specific information and best practices.

While considerable strides have been made in establishing a robust social media presence, OHSA is committed to further enhancing its digital communication strategy. Looking ahead to 2025, the Authority plans to build upon the current momentum and significantly increase its engagement across all social media platforms. This will involve developing more targeted content, exploring innovative formats, and actively participating in online conversations. In addition to social media engagement, the Communications & PR Unit is responsible for maintaining the OHSA website, ensuring it remains a valuable resource for up-to-date information and guidance. Discussions are currently underway to upgrade the website, giving it a more modern and accessible design to further improve user experience and ensure seamless access to essential resources.

4.10 Agreements with Educational Institutions

4.10.1 UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

OHSA recognises the critical role of education and training in fostering a skilled and competent workforce dedicated to occupational health and safety. During the reporting period, OHSA solidified its commitment to this principle by forging a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Malta. This landmark agreement aimed to enhance skills within the sector and address evolving challenges by integrating relevant OHSA expertise into the University's Bachelor of Health and Occupational Safety (with Honours) programme. The collaboration will facilitate student involvement in practical OHSA activities, identify research project opportunities, and provide students with invaluable access to OHSA facilities and personnel, bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world application. This partnership underscores OHSA's dedication to nurturing the next generation of OHS professionals and strengthening the foundation of occupational safety in Malta.

To further support the development of qualified OHS specialists, OHSA sponsored a promotional campaign in collaboration with the Centre for Labour Studies. This campaign included the production and dissemination of promotional clips and materials designed to raise awareness of the Diploma and Degree courses in OHS offered at the University of Malta. By investing in this initiative, OHSA aims to encourage greater participation in these programmes, ultimately

increasing the number of highly trained professionals dedicated to improving workplace safety standards across the nation. The Authority believes that this investment in education and training is essential for achieving its long-term goals of reducing workplace incidents and promoting a culture of prevention.

4.10.2 MALTA COLLEGE OF ARTS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

During the same period, the Authority maintained a strong partnership with the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). In addition to delivering educational presentations to students, OHSA worked alongside MCAST to develop a targeted promotional campaign showcasing the college's health and safety curriculum. This joint endeavour, similar to initiatives with the University of Malta, sought to bolster enrolment in these vital programmes and ultimately expand the pool of qualified OHS professionals in Malta. This strategic investment in vocational training is essential for ensuring a robust and capable workforce dedicated to workplace safety.

4.10.3 MCAST TEENS CAMP

OHSA also believes that cultivating a safety-conscious mindset should begin early. To this end, the Authority actively participated in the MCAST Teens Camp programme, engaging with young people, and promoting safe work practices before they embark on their careers. This involvement included not only on-site presence during the camp activities but also

the contribution of an informative article on the health and safety of young workers for publication in the camp's official booklet. By reaching out to teenagers, OHSA aims to instil a deep understanding of workplace risks and preventative measures, laying the groundwork for a future generation of workers who prioritise safety and well-being in all their professional endeavours. This proactive approach is vital for creating a lasting culture of prevention.

4.11 Servizz.gov Onboarding

During 2024, the Communications & PR Unit coordinated the onboarding exercise with servizz.gov for the creation of the national 138 Helpline, with assistance from OHSA's technical unit. This exercise included a detailed compilation of the service's modus operandi and establishing smooth and operational communication channels between the two entities. This entailed various meetings and consultations between OHSA, BCA, servizz.gov, and CIO-MJR to facilitate the Helpline's implementation. Servizz.gov provided templates for OHSA and BCA to define their requirements and timelines. Centrecom was tasked with recruiting and training bilingual call centre agents. A process was established for handling queries and complaints, with servizz.gov acting as the bridge between the authorities and Centrecom, ensuring a closed-loop system. OHSA also undertook the compilation of information, reference, and training manuals, alongside developing and delivering comprehensive training for the call centre operators, including on-site.

4.12 National Awareness Campaigns

4.12.1 'WORKING IN THE SUN AND HEAT' CAMPAIGN

During 2024, OHSA recognised the particular challenges posed by Malta's hot climate and the increased risks to workers exposed to high temperatures. In response, the Authority launched the 'Working in the Sun and Heat' Campaign, a comprehensive initiative designed to raise awareness and provide practical guidance on managing heat-related hazards in the workplace. A key element of this campaign was the creation and distribution of an informative leaflet, delivered to every household in Malta and Gozo, ensuring that crucial information reached both workers and their families. Complementing this widespread distribution, posters were also provided to workplaces across the islands, reinforcing key messages and serving as a constant reminder of the importance of heat safety.

The 'Working in the Sun and Heat' Campaign extended beyond printed materials, leveraging a variety of media to maximise its impact. Information was disseminated through targeted social media

posts, ensuring engagement with a diverse online audience.

Furthermore, the campaign included informative advertisements broadcast on radio, reaching a wide cross-section of the population. OHSA representatives also participated in television interviews, providing expert insights and further amplifying the campaign's message.

In collaboration with the Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HPDP), a dedicated webinar was organised, offering a valuable opportunity for in-depth discussion and expert advice on managing the risks associated with working in hot environments, such as those faced by outdoor workers and individuals in industries like catering.

4.12.2 'HELPLINE 138' CAMPAIGN

During 2024, the Ministry for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector, in collaboration with OHSA and the Building Construction Agency (BCA), launched the 'Helpline 138' campaign. This public outreach initiative aimed to educate the general population

about the availability and utility of the 138 Helpline as a vital resource for reporting occupational health and safety concerns, as well as any concerns related to the construction sector. The campaign employed a multi-faceted approach to maximise its reach and impact. Strategically placed billboards were used to raise awareness, while radio and television advertisements and information spots further amplified the message. To engage directly with the public, staffed information stands were set up in key locations across Malta, including Valletta, Sliema, Bugibba, and Paola.

OHSA staff present at these stands played a crucial role in interacting with the public, explaining the purpose of the 138 Helpline and emphasising its broad applicability. They highlighted that the helpline could be used to report any type of occupational health and safety issue, encompassing both physical hazards and concerns related to psychosocial well-being. This direct engagement with the public proved invaluable in clarifying the scope of the helpline and encouraging individuals to utilise this resource whenever they encountered or witnessed potential workplace safety risks. Further information regarding the 138 Helpline, including its operational procedures and specific services, is detailed in the Customer Care section of this report.

4.12.3 'EVERY WORKER COUNTS' CAMPAIGN

In 2024, OHSA launched a comprehensive campaign aligned with the introduction of new legislation, designed to cultivate a culture of safety, health, and well-being in all workplaces. This campaign centred around a holistic and comprehensive approach to health and safety at work, promoting a proactive and preventative culture, emphasising the importance of training and supervision, advocating the safe use of work equipment, and highlighting individual worker responsibility. A photo shoot and video shoot were undertaken to create a range of promotional materials including billboards, leaflets, bus shelter and bus wrap advertisements, radio and television adverts, and engaging social media content. Moreover, leaflets were distributed to every household across Malta and Gozo, ensuring widespread access to key information.

The campaign's visibility was further enhanced through strategic placement of outdoor advertising. During November, three prominent billboards were erected to maximise public awareness. Throughout November and December, advertisements were also displayed on 82 bus shelters across Malta and Gozo, extending the campaign's reach. In December, 16 buses, featuring campaign artwork, circulated on various routes, providing further visual reinforcement. Daily radio adverts were broadcast during peak listening hours (07:00–09:00 and 16:00–18:00) on 89.7 Bay Radio, Magic Malta, One Radio, and Net FM, with six spots aired per day. Digital advertising also played a key role, with two-week placements secured on the Times of Malta and Malta Today online portals during November. The leaflet distribution, managed by Malta Post in December, reached all households in Malta and Gozo. This campaign will continue into 2025, building on the momentum achieved during 2024.

Conclusion

The past year has marked a period of significant growth, innovation, and heightened public engagement for the OHSA. Our strategic reforms, rebranding initiative, and proactive public outreach efforts have demonstrably strengthened our capacity to serve the public and promote safer working environments nationwide. Building on these successes, we look forward to the coming year with a continued commitment to meeting the evolving needs of both workers and employers, ensuring that occupational health and safety remains a paramount priority for all stakeholders.



5

Customer Care

In today's dynamic environment, the importance of exceptional customer care cannot be overstated. For entities like OHSA, which plays a crucial role in safeguarding workers' well-being, effective customer care is not merely a desirable attribute, but a fundamental necessity. It serves as the cornerstone of building trust, fostering positive relationships, and ultimately, ensuring the successful implementation and impact of OHSA's vital mission.

A positive customer experience translates directly into improved compliance, enhanced safety standards, and a more secure working environment for all. Therefore, prioritising and continually improving customer care is not just good practice, it is an essential element in achieving OHSA's overarching objectives. This commitment to service excellence reinforces the Authority's dedication to protecting the health and safety of workers across all sectors. In essence, how OHSA interacts with its stakeholders is as important as the regulations it enforces.

5.1 OHSA's Commitment to Enhanced Customer Care

5.1.1 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR CUSTOMER CARE FOR COMPLAINTS

The OHSA recognises the critical link between effective customer care and the successful delivery of its mandate. To this end, the Communications and PR Unit within OHSA, assisted by the technical unit, took significant strides in enhancing OHSA's customer service provision during 2024. A comprehensive review of existing practices has led to the development and implementation of a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) specifically designed to improve responsiveness, efficiency, and consistency in all customer interactions.

The purpose of this SOP was to establish guidelines and procedures on how complaints received by OHSA are handled to provide an excellent customer care service, ensuring consistent and efficient interaction with clients. The SOP applies to all complaints received by OHSA and to all employees involved in addressing such complaints to ensure that OHSA maintains a healthy relationship with its clients and that the services offered are delivered professionally and in conformity with Directive 4.1 "Standards for Service of Excellence offered by the Public Administration to the Public and to Public Employees" (issued on the 6th of April 2017 by the Principal Permanent Secretary in terms of the Public Administration Act).

The key objectives of this SOP include providing clear and comprehensive guidelines for handling the diverse range of complaints received, streamlining

communication and collaboration between OHSA departments to facilitate swift action, and ensure prompt and effective resolution of issues by improving client access to OHSA services. It also caters for complaints of a grievous or high-profile nature as well as complaints which do not fall within OHSA's remit. Ultimately, the SOP aims to guarantee the consistent, impartial, and high-standard resolution of all complaints, reinforcing OHSA's commitment to service excellence and stakeholder satisfaction.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding and consistent application of the new procedures, all staff members were provided with a copy of the SOP, and two dedicated training sessions were conducted to familiarise them with the processes to be adopted.

5.1.2 THE 138 HELPLINE

The OHSA's 138 Helpline, launched in August 2024, has rapidly become an indispensable resource for reporting workplace hazards and seeking expert advice on occupational health and safety (OHS) matters. This 24/7 service, a key recommendation arising from the Inquiry into the tragic death of Jean Paul Sofia, is a testament to OHSA's commitment to proactive safety measures. The symbolic significance of the helpline number, mirroring Jean Paul Sofia's date of birth, serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of workplace safety.

Operating bilingually (Maltese and English), the helpline provides expert guidance and support on all occupational health and safety matters falling within

OHSA’s remit, encompassing all employment sectors. Agents staffing the helpline have undergone rigorous specialised training delivered by OHSA officials, with ongoing professional development to ensure the continuous improvement of public service delivery.

This collaborative approach ensures that individuals contacting the helpline receive accurate and timely information, with calls concerning matters under the BCA’s purview being seamlessly directed to the appropriate agents. Furthermore, callers with queries relating to third-party organisations are directed to those entities, in accordance with the OHSA’s manual of operations for agents. This ensures all helpline contacts receive appropriate assistance, reducing bureaucracy and improving customer service. This initiative underscores OHSA’s commitment to providing a comprehensive and accessible service for all stakeholders.

Apart from serving as a central point for OHS information, the 138 Helpline facilitates the reporting and investigation of OHS concerns, ensuring that potential deficiencies are thoroughly examined and that responsible parties uphold safety standards. The 138 service also expedites the reporting and investigation of workplace accidents, enabling OHSA to arrive quickly on scene. Indeed, crucially, the helpline prioritises immediate response to reports of imminent danger to workers, ensuring rapid intervention by OHS Officers to mitigate risks and protect lives.

The 138 Helpline represents a significant advancement in communication between the public and OHSA, fostering a culture of proactive safety and enabling prompt responses to concerns.

The service has witnessed a 30% increase in call volume over the past year, demonstrating growing public trust in its efficacy. Concurrently, the average response time has decreased by 25% compared to previous systems, reflecting enhanced internal processes and improved staffing levels. This increased efficiency ensures that potential hazards are addressed swiftly and effectively, contributing to demonstrably safer working environments across all sectors.

From January till August, calls and cases were received through OHSA reception and email. The tables below show overall data of customer care interactions.

TABLE 4. REQUESTS RECEIVED DIRECTLY AT OHSA

Phone calls at OHSA’s reception (Jan – July)	272
Emails	261
OHSA’s social media and others	18

TABLE 5. REQUESTS RECEIVED THROUGH HELPLINE 138 (AUG – DEC)

Total number of calls	3,163
Request for information	384
Request for service / technical cases	680

During its first 21 weeks of operation, the 138 Helpline received 3,163 calls. Of these, 1,064 (33.6%) concerned OHSA-related matters. Within this category, 384 calls were requests for information that agents were able to address directly, while 680 were service requests requiring further action by OHSA. The remaining 2,099 calls (66.4%) were outside OHSA’s remit and were therefore referred to either the BCA (through the same helpline) or to other relevant entities.

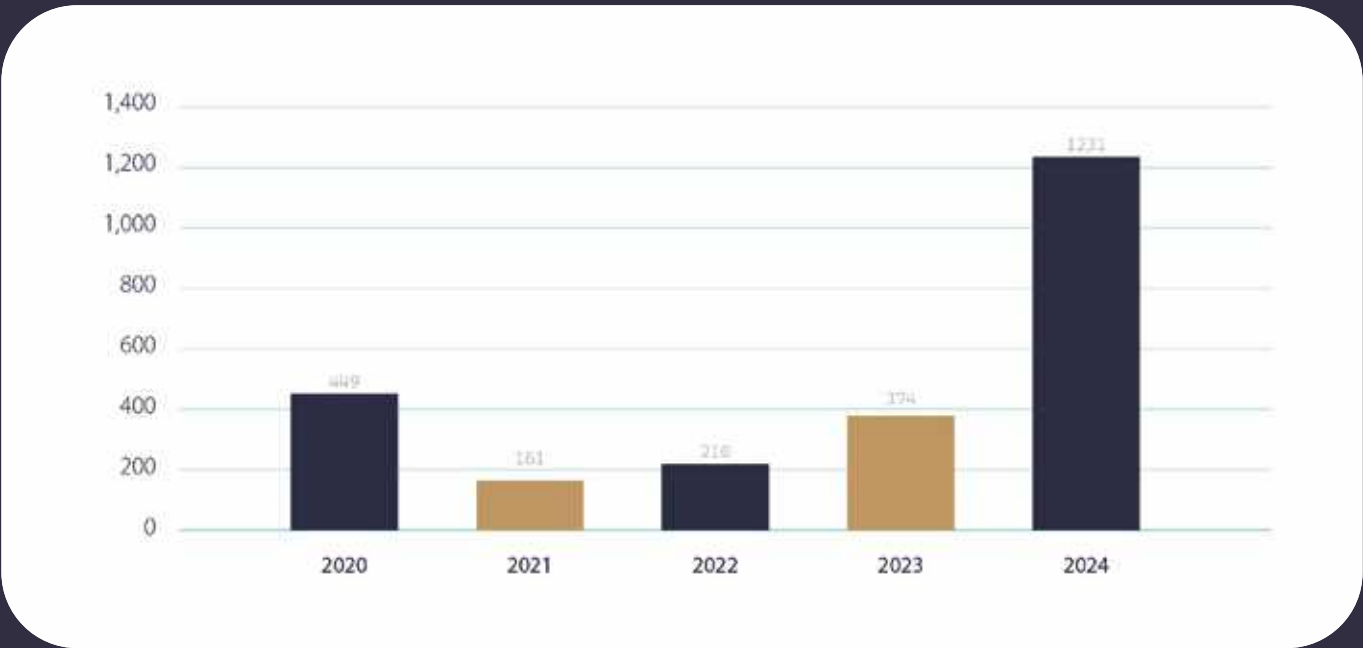
TABLE 6: REQUESTS FOR SERVICE (RFS) BY CATEGORY

Accident Reporting	40
Generic Information	304
Personised Communication	120
Technical Complaints	201
Queries pertaining to issues beyond OHSA's jurisdictions	15

During the reporting period, the number of complaints lodged by the public experienced a significant increase, exceeding 300% compared to the previous period. This substantial rise suggests a greater awareness of OHSA's services and a growing willingness among the public to engage with the Authority regarding workplace safety concerns.

Further analysis will be undertaken to understand the factors contributing to this increase and to ensure that OHSA's resources and processes are effectively scaled to manage this heightened demand.

FIGURE 11: TECHNICAL CASES REPORTED BY THE PUBLIC



Recognising the strategic importance of customer care and the increasing volume of interactions, OHSA will be recruiting a dedicated customer care manager in 2025. This appointment will further enhance the management and delivery of this vital aspect of OHSA's operations.



6

**Human Resources,
Administration &
Corporate Services**

In 2024, the Human Resources, Administration & Corporate Services Unit delivered significant achievements across Human Resources, ICT, and Project Management, encompassing the upkeep of OHSA's offices. The department played a crucial role in the successful delivery of the Authority's strategic objectives.

6.1 Human Resources (HR)

The Human Resources Section implemented several key initiatives throughout 2024, designed to strengthen the Authority's workforce and enhance organisational effectiveness. Key areas of focus included organisational restructuring and recruitment. Employee wellbeing remained a priority, with initiatives designed to foster a supportive and healthy workplace environment.

The development and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures continued, ensuring the efficient and effective management of the Authority's operations. Training and development programmes were delivered to enhance employee motivation, skill sets, and overall productivity. These initiatives demonstrate the HR Unit's commitment to a dynamic and efficient workforce, aligned with the Authority's strategic objectives. A detailed report of all Human Resources activities is provided in Part 6.2.

6.1.1 ICT INFRASTRUCTURE

Information Technology plays a vital role in today's organisational growth, driving process effectiveness and efficiency. OHSA recognises the fact that a more robust and modern IT infrastructure is essential to streamline workflows and enhance the Authority's performance. In 2024, OHSA invested in a Management Information System (MIS) to facilitate faster and more effective enforcement actions. Data from the MIS will also support research and the development of new policies. OHS officers were equipped with tablets, replacing traditional paper-based processes.

Modern workstations (laptops, monitors, and printers) were provided to all employees, along with upgraded connectivity and new telephone lines. Additional PABXs were installed, while an upgrade to the intruder alarm system is in process.

The IT division ensures that all systems comply with Government data security policies. The OHSA is also in the final stages of procuring equipment to enable wireless connectivity across its premises.

The implementation of the Dakar Software Payroll and HR module will streamline processes for Finance and HR, particularly regarding absences, payroll, and personnel management.

6.1.2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT, FACILITIES AND THE UPKEEP OF THE OFFICES

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE – FLEET MANAGEMENT

A new Standard and Operating Procedure for fleet management was introduced and implemented in the first quarter of 2024.

NEW AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM

Collaboration between engineers and architects was initiated for the preparation and installation of a new air-conditioning system at OHSA.

LIFT INSTALLATION

The lift installation project for 2024 involved:

- ▶ Detailed planning and issuing of tenders.
- ▶ Execution of installation works
- ▶ Minor adjustments, with the final certification expected by the first quarter of 2025.

OHSA GOZO OFFICE

Planning and design for the OHSA Gozo office were completed in 2024. In the fourth quarter of 2024, furniture installation and ICT network setup were successfully implemented.

HEAD OFFICE REFURBISHMENT

Refurbishment works were completed across several sections and departments, as detailed below:

- ▶ **Technical (Legal & Surveillance) Unit (including the Construction Division):** Refurbishment included plastering and painting of walls, and the removal of partitions. Four network points, each with two ports for network, PC, and telephone connectivity, were installed. Five additional desks were added, increasing the total within the unit to 17.
- ▶ **Engineering Division:** This division underwent plastering and painting. Four new desks were installed, and new electrical points were added, along with two additional points for telephone and internet connectivity.
- ▶ **Chemicals Division:** Refurbishment included plastering and painting. New network connections were established for five new desks.
- ▶ **Administration Section:** Refurbishment included plastering and painting. Two new desks were installed, and new internet, PC, and telephone connections were set up.
- ▶ **HR Section:** The section was refurbished with plastering and painting. Three new desks were added, and new internet connectivity, telephones, and electrical points were installed.
- ▶ **Procurement Section:** Refurbishment included plastering and painting. Two new desks were installed, and one network point with two ports for network, PC, and telephone connectivity was added.
- ▶ **Communications and PR Unit:** This section was plastered and painted to accommodate three desks. One network point with two ports for network, PC, and telephone connectivity was installed.
- ▶ **CEO's Area:** Refurbishment work was carried out and completed.
- ▶ **Training Room (Level 1):** Refurbishment included plastering and painting. The room accommodates an average of 50 people and is used for both internal and external training sessions.
- ▶ **Foyers:** Plastering and painting were completed.
- ▶ **Level -1:** A clearing and sorting of documents was undertaken. Storerooms were organised and sorted, with the installation of shelves and units.
- ▶ **Level 0:** The Registry on Level 0 was organised and set up.

GARAGE MODIFICATIONS FOR ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING

In 2024, engineers, architects, and the Civil Protection Department collaborated to plan and document garage modifications, focusing on installing charging pillars for electric vehicles.

OVER AND UNDER PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Preparations are underway for the installation of over and under protection systems and earthing works at OHSA.

6.2 Human Resources & Administration

During 2024 a robust restructuring process took place at the OHSA. This restructuring was spearheaded by the drafting of the new legislation (Cap. 646 – Health and Safety Work Act), which came into force on the 26th of November 2024.

In light of this, OHSA sought to increase its efficiency and effectiveness to meet the new legislation requirements, which brought an inevitable and unprecedented increase in the Authority's workforce during 2024. The increase in human resources within the HR Section facilitated a 48% increase in the Authority's workforce by the end of the year, which reflected the OHSA's commitment to safeguarding all workplaces in Malta and Gozo through the engagement of qualified and skilled employees, especially in the Technical (Legal & Surveillance) Unit.

6.2.1 OHSA WORKFORCE RESTRUCTURING

The Authority is committed to employing skilled and qualified individuals throughout its organisational structure. This strategy complements the expertise of existing long-serving OHSA employees, adding value to the Authority's daily operations while fostering the introduction of new ideas and concepts.

FIGURE 12: A HIGH-LEVEL ORGANISATION CHART AS AT DECEMBER 2024



The focus remains the engagement of OHS Officers that are qualified in the field. A new role was also created so that all prospective candidates that are seeking a career in OHS are given the opportunity to work, practise and obtain the necessary academic qualifications in this field. In this light, a training programme was designed by OHSa to help them acquire hand-on experience within the Technical (Surveillance) Section. A sharp increase in this section may be evidenced below on graph titled Figure 13 with another graph titled Figure 14 depicting a corresponding increase in the overall headcount at the Authority.

FIGURE 13: OHSa TECHNICAL STAFF (10 YEAR PERIOD)



FIGURE 14: OHSa OVERALL HEADCOUNT (10 YEAR PERIOD)



6.2.2 NEW RECRUITS

In anticipation of new technical team members joining in 2024, and further growth projected for 2025, supporting teams required increased resourcing, particularly at managerial levels. To accommodate this operational expansion, management personnel numbers were increased within Corporate Services, Finance, People Development, Programme Implementation, and Communications and PR. The table below details the staff increases within each role during 2024.

TABLE 2. STAFF INCREASES (2024)

Manager HR & Support Admin	2
Manager Communications & PR	2
Manager Procurement	1
Manager EU Affairs, Policies Development & Programme Implementation	1
OHS Officer I	9
OHS Officer (Trainees)	4
Support Staff/ Clerks	7
Driver/General Hand/Cleaners	2

6.2.3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

In line with the Authority’s strategy for continuous professional development, in addition to off-the-job training sessions delivered during 2024, OHSA provides an annual fund for eligible employees to cover fees related to courses, seminars and other approved, work-related professional development activities.

OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING FUND

OHSA is committed to fostering a culture of continuous development, which serves to increase employee motivation and enhance the skills of all staff. During 2024, OHSA organised two training programmes:

► Resilience Programme (Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate)

The training tackled a wide range of topics aimed at building meaningful connections with others, improve confidence, motivation, productivity, and mental wellbeing in general. In addition, during the course our employees were guided on how to recover from setbacks when facing uncertainties with confidence and build abilities that empower them to feel competent and in control of difficult

situations. This 9-hour programme which was offered to all OHSA employees was split in two separate sessions and was organised in collaboration with the Heath Promotion and Disease Directorate.

► Communications, Public Speaking & Customer Care Skills

In November, OHSA organised another external course in collaboration with MISCO covering the various facets of customer care excellence, including various insights into improving verbal and non-verbal communication, and developing active listening skills. Knowledge on freedom of information and GDPR awareness, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) were also included in this course.

There were 32 employees, who were eventually split into two groups, who attended for this 18-hour course, most of them OHSA officials within the technical team. In addition, due to the voluminous material that needed to be covered, four separate sessions were scheduled. This helped in enhancing the interaction and engagement witnessed throughout all the sessions.

6.2.4 STAFF WELFARE

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY EVENTS

As an Authority, OHSA values Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and supports the notion of contributing to society across its core pillars: the environment, community social responsibility, and human rights. In this spirit, OHSA's welfare committee organised an activity in August, providing employees with the opportunity to volunteer at the soup kitchen in Valletta. This experience helped employees appreciate the importance of supporting those in need of basic necessities and appreciate more the value of life.

TEAM-BUILDING

The main team-building activity for 2024 took place in Valletta in December, again organised by OHSA's welfare committee. OHSA staff had the opportunity to visit MUZA art museum and St. John's Co-Cathedral, providing an opportunity to appreciate Malta's rich artistic history and the contributions of those who shaped Maltese identity and culture. The activity concluded with a light lunch, enabling new OHSA employees to meet and interact informally with colleagues.

6.2.5 INDUCTION COURSES

New employees are offered an induction course, where each department briefly provides an overview of its functions and responsibilities in the section. As for the HR unit, the induction course covers key information on existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and other HR-related matters, including absence management and workforce training and development. The training also provides valuable insights into current occupational health and safety policies and how OHSA is relentlessly working to enforce, and most importantly, educate the public on the holistic importance of OHS. This helps new entrants familiarise themselves and get equipped with relevant information crucial for effective performance in their roles.

6.2.6 COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT FOR MANAGERS/SENIOR MANAGERS

In June 2024, a new collective agreement for managers and senior managers was signed, covering the period 2023-2027. This agreement enhances OHSA's competitiveness in the labour market and provides for a significant increase in basic salaries and allowances for all managerial grades at the OHSA, thus ensuring the Authority can attract and retain top talent. This collective agreement has enabled the engagement of experienced and talented managers across diverse areas of competence, aligned with the exigencies of the Authority, and has enabled the establishment of a solid organisational structure.

6.2.7 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) play a vital role in enhancing operational efficiency, ensuring compliance, and maintaining quality across the various units within OHSA. During 2024 the following SOPs were drafted by the relevant section managers and endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer prior to being issued to all OHSA staff.

TABLE 3. LIST OF SOPS PUBLISHED IN 2024:

	Ref.	Title	Objective
1.	SOP 001 2024	Issue of Memos	To establish a comprehensive framework to govern the drafting, review, approval, registration, and archiving of internal communication regarding procedures or official business within OHSA.
2.	SOP 002 2024	Fleet Management & Driver Facility Service	To establish a comprehensive framework to govern the operation, maintenance, and management of vehicles within OHSA. This is designed to ensure the safety of drivers and enhance operational efficiency.
3.	SOP 003 2024	Continuous Professional Development	In consonance with the strategic vision of the Occupational Health & Safety Authority to have a more skilled, competent, and qualified workforce, the OHSA endeavours to continue to provide opportunities for the professional development of OHSA staff. This policy is precisely aimed at supporting the continued professional development of all staff.
4.	SOP 004 2024	Private Work & Conflict of Interest	A commitment to maintaining a transparent and ethical work environment.
5.	SOP 005 2024	Remote Working and Extended Remote Working	To establish clear guidelines for remote work and extended remote work where and when applicable to ensure organisational productivity, effective communication, and the security of company assets.
6.	SOP 006 2024	Customer Care for Complaints	To establish guidelines and procedures on how complaints received by the OHSA are handled to provide an excellent customer care service, ensuring consistent and efficient interaction with clients.
7.	SOP 007 2024	Enforcement – Administrative Fine	Following the introduction of pecuniary penalties in 2012 by virtue of LN 36 of 2012, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) is further refining the system to ensure that the original aims of the administrative penalties remain relevant, i.e., by offering a speedy and effective deterrent against contraventions of the law. Also, within a wider enforcement mode, OHSA is further broadening the applicability of administrative fines whilst keeping within the legal enforcement framework.
8.	SOP 008 2024	Procurement Policy	Applies to all procurement requests raised within the OHSA and to all employees involved in addressing such requests to ensure that OHSA acquires goods and services in a manner that is fair, competitive, and aligned with OHSA objectives and legal obligations and in conformity with Public Procurement Regulations - Subsidiary Legislation 601.03.

	Ref.	Title	Objective
9.	SOP 009 2024	Accident Investigation Process and Reporting	Envisages a standard approach for OHS officers to follow when conducting an accident investigation. This policy aims to gain a more efficient and effective way of doing things when it comes to compiling all the necessary information from the OHS officer investigating on-site, increasing collaboration with the OHS officer and facilitating communication when it comes to sending information to the Head Technical Officer (HTO) and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) within the OHSA.
10.	SOP 010 2024	Fire Evacuation Plan	To establish a clear guideline in case of a fire evacuation. In the case of this SOP, the Human Resources unit gave a demonstration in the form of a fire evacuation drill so that this procedure would be practised and tested by all the staff.

All SOPs are circulated and signed by OHSA employees, ensuring awareness of new procedures implemented periodically. The Human Resources Section maintains and coordinates all SOPs.



7

Finance



The Finance Unit within OHSA was officially established, marking a significant step towards enhancing financial efficiency and accountability. This new office centralised all financial processes within the Authority, which were previously dispersed across different departments. Alongside this development, a dedicated Procurement Section was set up, appointing OHSA's first-ever procurement manager to lead procurement operations. Additionally, a management support executive was transferred from another Unit to strengthen administrative support. By streamlining operations, consolidating resources, and introducing specialised roles, these changes ensured transparent, consistent, and effective financial and procurement management, reinforcing OHSA's mission to uphold the highest standards in occupational health and safety.

The Finance Unit commenced as early as April 2024 the budgetary process for the upcoming fiscal year, collaborating with the CEO and Senior Management to develop comprehensive business and financial plans for 2025. This rigorous process included a detailed evaluation of projected capital expenditures and human resource needs, particularly in light of the Authority's planned expansion programmes and initiatives. Additionally, the unit prepared cash flow projections for 2025 to ensure the financial viability of all planned activities, especially those supporting business seminars, public awareness, communication, and marketing campaign initiatives all arising from the mission of the OHSA and the new legislative framework.

The Finance Unit within the OHSA is also responsible for preparing comprehensive management accounts on a monthly basis. These reports include detailed financial analysis and are presented to the senior management team for review and strategic decision-making. This process ensures that financial performance is continuously monitored and evaluated, facilitating informed, data-driven decisions. A new procurement policy was drafted, developed, and implemented to streamline operations within OHSA, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, guaranteeing respective managerial responsibility and enhancing overall efficiency. This policy established

clear guidelines and best practices, promoting transparency, accountability, and consistency in all procurement activities. Suppliers of goods and services selected through this rigorous procurement process are assured timely financial compensation, with payments processed strictly by month-end.

The Finance Unit regularly compiles cash flow projections to assess OHSA's financial health and ensure sustainable operations. These detailed reports provide valuable insights into the organisation's liquidity and funding needs. Additionally, the projections are submitted to the Ministry of Finance as part of the process for requesting tranches from the budget allocation as approved by Parliament.

The Finance Unit oversees the payroll function, ensuring that all employee compensation is managed accurately and efficiently. Payroll is processed on a four-weekly basis, reflecting OHSA's commitment to timely and consistent remuneration for its workforce. This function involves calculating salaries, wages, and deductions, as well as administering benefits and ensuring compliance with tax regulations and labour laws. It maintains meticulous records and conducts regular audits to safeguard the integrity of the payroll system.

This Unit also oversees the financial management of OHSA's awareness-raising courses. This responsibility includes coordinating marketing and promotional efforts, organizing logistics, and recruiting qualified trainers. Additionally, the office handles all financial aspects, such as invoicing, fee collection, and issuing of certificates to participants. These efforts have contributed significantly to the programme's success. In 2024, revenues from these courses amounted to €18,416.

7.1 The Procurement Section

The newly set up procurement section embarked on a road map of major projects for the OHSA as recommended by the business plan 2024 and as outlined in Chapter 6. These include the motor vehicle fleet, the air-conditioning system, the new lift at OHSA, OHSA's presence in Gozo, OHSA's head office, the wireless network infrastructure, modification of the garage to accommodate charging pillars for vehicles, over and under protection, technological upgrades, points of contact and disposal of old material. The absence module was also introduced midway through the year, significantly streamlining the process for applying for leave and reporting sick leave.

7.2 The OHSA Auditor

Article 41(2) of Act XXXIII of 2024, the Health and Safety at Work Act, states that:

'The accounts of the Authority shall be audited by an auditor to be appointed by it and approved by the Minister'.

Since its inception, the Authority has worked with the same auditor for its financial audits. However, recognising the importance of periodic change to ensure transparency and maintain high standards of accountability, the Board determined that a change in auditor was necessary. In response to this, the Procurement Section issued a public call for quotes, inviting potential auditors to submit their proposals. Following a competitive selection process, four bids were received, each offering a comprehensive and competitive service. After careful evaluation, the Board selected a new auditing firm to oversee the financial report for 2024. This transition ensures that the Authority continues to benefit from fresh perspectives and rigorous audit processes, reinforcing its commitment to financial integrity and transparency. The new auditor will now conduct a thorough examination of the 2024 financial statements, providing an independent review and ensuring compliance with all applicable standards.

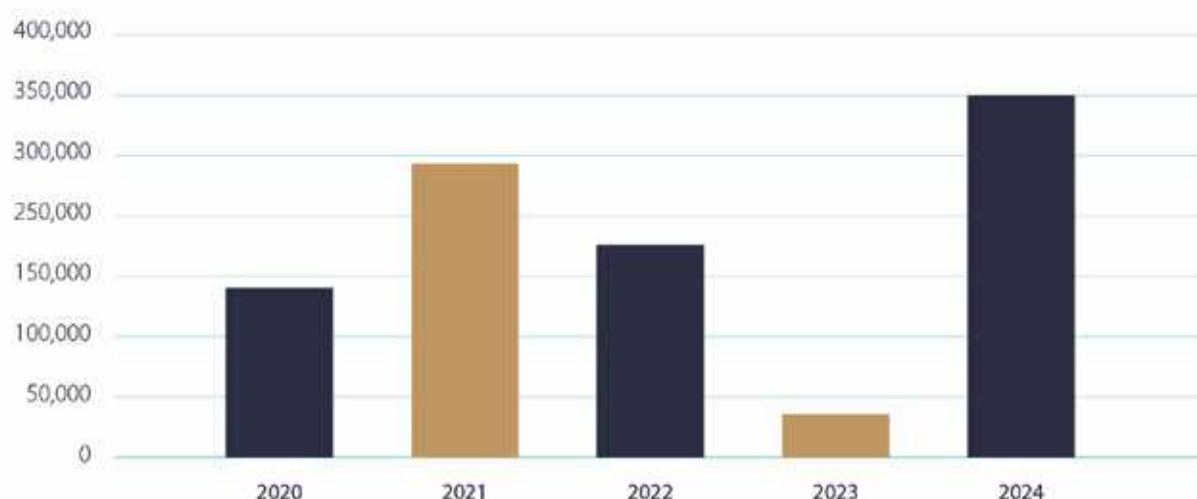
7.3 Financial Results for 2024

This report presents the financial performance of OHSA for 2024, comparing actual results against the audited figures for the same period of 2023. The key financial indicators reviewed include income, personnel emoluments, operating expenses, and deficit versus surplus.

7.3.1 INCOME ANALYSIS

The Authority experienced significant growth in income as this has increased substantially by €757,693 (48.3%). This arises from an increased government subvention of €2,000,000 in 2024, while in 2023 this was €1,500,000. The major income generated by the Authority arises from the issue of administrative fines, which totalled €350,100 in 2024, as compared to €32,750 in 2023.

FIGURE 15: COMPARATIVE INCOME FROM ADMIN. FINES (2020-2024)



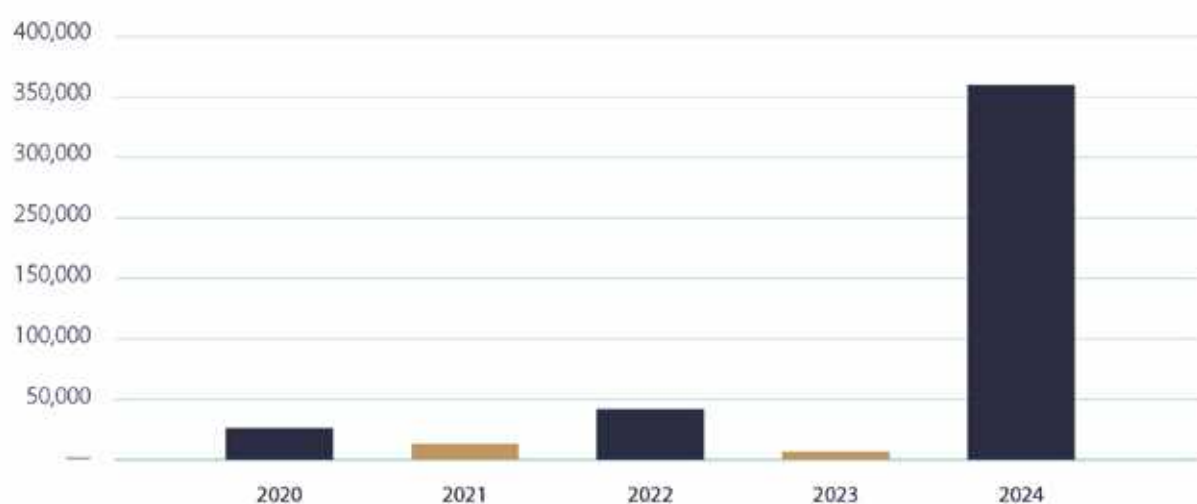
7.3.2 PERSONNEL EMOLUMENTS ANALYSIS

Employee Compensation: Basic salaries, bonuses, allowances, performance bonus which also include arrear payments for signed collective agreements rose by 45%, from €1,112,849 in 2023 to €1,614,798 in 2024 reflecting an expansion in the workforce during 2024.

7.3.3 OPERATING EXPENSES ANALYSIS

Advertising & Awareness Campaigns: The expenditure of €286,178 reflects the colossal shift in the way the Authority managed the communication with the public at large while abiding by the legal regime with the introduction of the new legislation. The rebranding process as well as all the other initiatives undertaken by the Communications and PR Unit, contributed to this investment in communications, as explained in chapter 4 of this report.

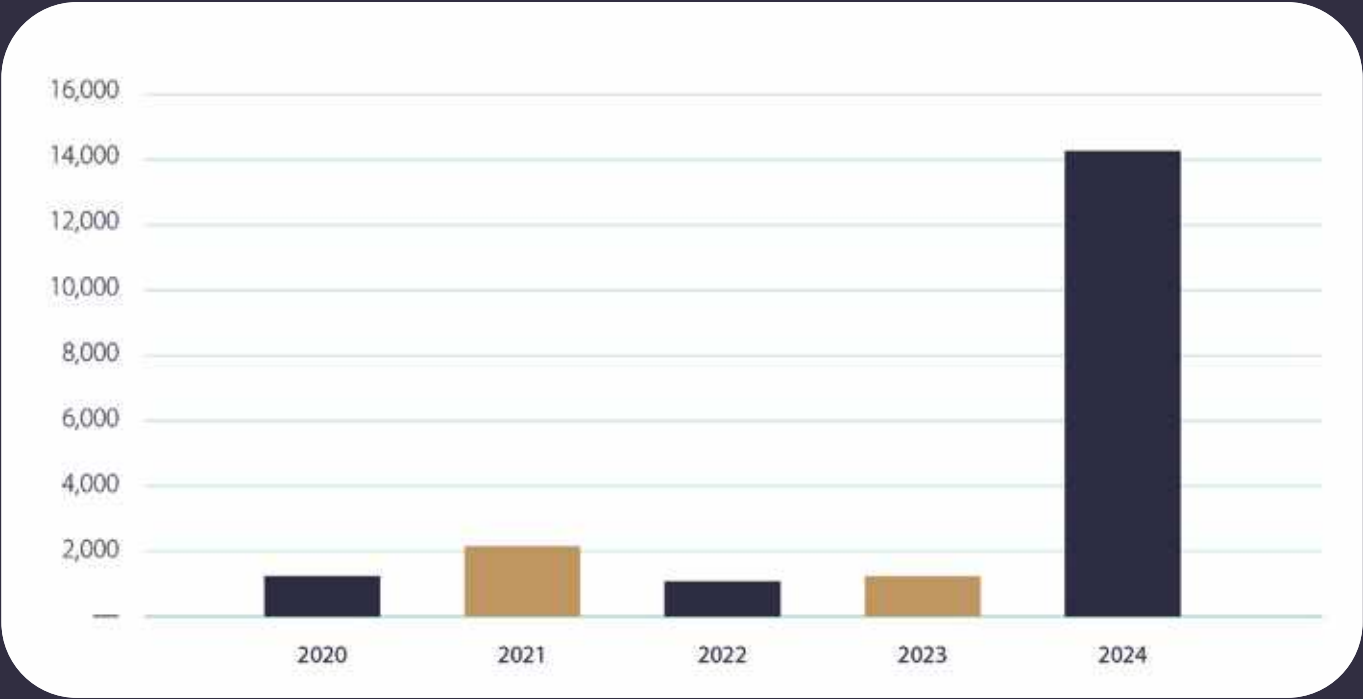
FIGURE 16: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENT IN OHS AWARENESS (2020-2024)



Legal and Professional Services amounting to €340,323 (€114,837 in 2023) result in significant increases for outsourcing of specialised tasks and seeking expert consultation to enhance efficiency.

Staff Training: New investment of €14,881 in training to the employees of the Authority reflects the commitment to upskilling across the board.

FIGURE 17: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENT IN CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2020-2024



Total Operating Expenditure is the higher spending for growth and this increased by €763,094, from €296,603 in 2023 to €1,055,697, which is significant but aligned with the income growth. This reflects a strategy of reinvestment to scale operations and the obligations towards the worker at the place of work.

The Authority moved from a surplus of €164,136 in 2023 to a deficit of €234,068 in 2024. While this shift might appear concerning, it can be viewed positively as a strategic reinvestment year, leveraging income growth to build capabilities and infrastructure for sustained future impact.

OHSA has demonstrated substantial income growth and strategic reinvestment in 2024. While there is a deficit, it reflects a deliberate focus on scaling operations, improving workforce support, and enhancing operational capacity.



8

Budgeted Income and Expenditure Account

1ST JANUARY 2025 - 31ST DECEMBER 2025

	€	€
Income		2,955,000
Personal Emoluments		
Staff Salaries	1,618,136	
Honoraria to OHSA members	42,000	
NI Contributions	138,164	
Overtime/Allowances/Statutory Bonuses	455,076	
		2,253,376
Operational Expenses		
Utilities	33,000	
Material & Supplies	58,000	
Repair & Upkeep	46,000	
Rent	60,000	
Subscriptions	-	
Office Services	42,000	
Transport	70,000	
Travel	18,000	
Information Services	300,000	
Contractual Services	171,000	
Professional Services	25,000	
Other expenditure	11,000	
Training and CPD	50,000	
Hospitality	30,000	
Incidental Expenses		
Depreciation	40,000	
Transfers from government capital grants	(40,000)	
Other expenditure 20th Anniversary	-	
Total Operational Expenses		914,000
Contributions and Initiatives		
Appeals Board	2,000	
Social Partners Fund	5,000	
		7,000
Total Budget Cost		3,174,376
Budgeted deficit		(219,376)



9

Financial Statements

31 DECEMBER 2024

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Statement of cash flows	10
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Authority Board's report

The members of the Authority Board present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Principal activities

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that the physical, psychological and social well-being of all workers in all workplaces are promoted and safeguarded by whoever is obliged to do so. Its functions include:

- a) establishing strategies by which the general national policy relating to occupational health and safety may be implemented;
- b) advising the Minister and preparing regulations or codes of practice to promote, maintain and protect a high level of occupational health and safety;
- c) monitoring compliance with relevant occupational health and safety legislation, taking enforcement action and carrying out investigations where necessary;
- d) promoting the dissemination of information, education and training on occupational health and safety and first aid response at work places;
- e) collating, analysing data and statistics and maintaining registers on matters relating to occupational health and safety;
- f) promoting and carrying out scientific research aimed at better methods of preventing occupational ill health, injury or death.

Review of the business development and financial position

The financial position of the Authority as at 31 December 2024 is disclosed on page 7, while the results for the year under review are disclosed on page 8.

Results and dividends

The Authority registered a deficit of €234,068 (2023 surplus: €164,136) for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Board Members

The board members of the Authority who held office during the year were:

Mr. Pierre Fava - Chairperson (appointed on 26th November 2024)
Mr. David Xuereb - Chairperson (resigned on 28th February 2024)
Mr. Adrian Cauchi - Deputy Chairperson (appointed on 26th November 2024)
Mr. Stephen Montefort - Member (resigned on 25th November 2024)
Ms. Abigail Agius Mamo - Member (resigned on 16th September 2024)
Ms. Dianne Vella Muscat - Member
Dr. Zaid Teebi - Member
Mr. Dolan Debattista - Member
Mr. Victor Carachi - Member
Ms. Isabelle Farrugia - Member
Mr. Joseph Delia - Member
Mr. Andrew Aquilina - Member (appointed on 26th November 2024)
Dr. Marouska Debono - Secretary

Authority Board's report - continued

Statement of Authority Board's responsibilities for the financial statements

The Authority is governed by a Board consisting of a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, secretary and seven members. They are required to prepare financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Authority as at the end of each reporting period and of the surplus or deficit for that period.

In preparing the financial statements, the Authority Board is responsible for:

- ensuring that the financial statements have been drawn up in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards ('IFRS') as adopted by the European Union ('EU');
- selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies;
- making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances;
- ensuring that the financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Authority will continue in business as a going concern.

The Authority Board is also responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining internal control as the Authority Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and that comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act (Cap. 646). It is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Authority and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The financial statements of the Authority for the year ended 31 December 2024 are included in the Annual Report 2024, which is made available on the Authority's website. The Authority Board is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the Annual Report on the website in view of its responsibility for the controls over, and the security of, the website. Access to information published on the Authority's website is available in other countries and jurisdictions, where legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from requirements or practice in Malta.

Auditors

GCS Assurance Malta Limited have indicated their willingness to continue in office and a resolution for their re-appointment will be proposed at the Authority's board meeting of the month of March 2025.

On behalf of the Authority Board:



Dr. Josiange Cutajar
Chief Executive Officer



Mr. Pierre Fava
Chairperson

Registered office of the Authority:
17, Triq Edgar Ferro
Pieta PTA 1533
Malta

4 March 2025

Independent auditors' report

To the Board Members of Occupational Health & Safety Authority

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Our opinion

In our opinion:

- Occupational Health and Safety Authority's financial statements give a true and fair view of the Authority's financial position as at 31 December 2024, and of the Authority's financial performance in accordance with the IFRSs as adopted by the EU; and
- the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act (Cap. 646).

What we have audited

Occupational Health and Safety Authority's financial statements, set out on pages 7 to 24, comprise:

- the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2024;
- the statement of comprehensive income for the year then ended;
- the statement of changes in equity for the year then ended;
- the statement of cash flows for the year then ended;
- the notes to the financial statements, which include a summary of significant accounting policies.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other matter

The financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 were audited by a different auditor, who expressed a clean opinion on 26 January 2024.

Independence

We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements of the Accountancy Profession (Code of Ethics for Warrant Holders) Directive issued in terms of the Accountancy Profession Act (Cap. 281) that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Malta. We have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the IESBA Code

Independent auditors' report - continued
To the Board Members of Occupational Health & Safety Authority

Other information

The Authority Board is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Authority Board's report on pages 1 and 2 (but does not include the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon).

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information identified above and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

We also consider whether the Authority Board's Report includes the disclosures required by the Health and Safety at Work Act (Cap. 646). Based on the work we have performed, in our opinion:

- The information given in the Authority Board's Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- The Authority Board's Report has been prepared in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (Cap. 646).

If, based on the work we have performed and in light of the knowledge and understanding of the Authority and its environment obtained during the course of the audit, we conclude that there is a material misstatement in the Authority Board's Report, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Authority Board for the financial statements

The Authority Board is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with IFRS, and for such internal control as the Authority Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Authority Board is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Authority Board either intends to liquidate the Authority or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Independent auditors' report – continued
To the Board Members of Occupational Health & Safety Authority

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the board members.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Authority Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Authority to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Authority Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Independent auditors' report - continued

To the Board Members of Occupational Health & Safety Authority

Report on any other legal and regulatory requirements

Other matters on which we are required to report by exception

We also have responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act (Cap. 646) to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or that returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by ourselves.
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.
- Certain disclosures of the Authority Board's remuneration specified by law are not made in the financial statements, giving the required particulars in our report.

We have nothing to report to you in respect of these responsibilities.



Christian Gravina
Director
For and on behalf of
GCS Assurance Malta Limited
Registered auditor

Agora Business Centre, Level 2
Valley Road
Msida MSD 9020
Malta

4 March 2025

Statement of financial position

		As at 31 December	
	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	8,334,357	891,645
Intangible assets	6	47,142	6,757
Total non-current assets		8,381,499	898,402
Current assets			
Receivables	7	21,608	850
Cash and cash equivalents	8	1,150,574	1,427,277
Total current assets		1,172,182	1,428,127
Total assets		9,553,681	2,326,529
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Capital and reserves			
Accumulated reserve	9	1,283,619	1,517,687
Revaluation reserve		7,377,387	-
Total equity		8,661,006	1,517,687
Non-current liabilities			
Deferred government grants	10	697,839	640,240
Total non-current liabilities		697,839	640,240
Current liabilities			
Payables	11	194,836	168,602
Total current liabilities		194,836	168,602
Total liabilities		892,675	808,842
Total equity and liabilities		9,553,681	2,326,529

The notes on pages 11 to 24 are an integral part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 7 to 24 were authorised for issue by the board members on 4 March 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

Dr. Josianne Cutajar
Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Pierre Fava
Chairperson

Statement of comprehensive income

	Notes	Year ended 31 December	
		2024 €	2023 €
Revenue	12	2,436,427	1,569,588
Other operating expenses	13	(1,055,697)	(292,603)
Staff costs	14	(1,614,798)	(1,112,849)
Total comprehensive (deficit) / surplus for the year		(234,068)	164,136

The notes on pages 11 to 24 are an integral part of these financial statements.

Statement of changes in equity

	Accumulated reserve €	Revaluation reserve €	Total €
Balance at 1 January 2023	1,353,551	-	1,353,551
Surplus for the year – total comprehensive income	164,136	-	164,136
Balance at 31 December 2023	1,517,687	-	1,517,687
Balance at 1 January 2024	1,517,687	-	1,517,687
Revaluation of land and buildings	-	7,377,387	7,377,387
Surplus for the year – total comprehensive income	(234,068)	-	(234,068)
Balance at 31 December 2024	1,283,619	7,377,387	8,661,006

The notes on pages 11 to 24 are an integral part of these financial statements.

Statement of cash flows

	Notes	Year ended 31 December	
		2024 €	2023 €
Cash flows (used in)/from operating activities			
Cash (used in)/from operations	15	(228,592)	278,387
Net cash (used in)/from operating activities		(228,592)	278,387
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(20,731)	(45,676)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	(57,230)	-
Net cash used in investing activities		(148,111)	(40,588)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Grants received	9	100,000	20,000
Net cash generated from financing activities		100,000	20,000
Net movement in cash and cash equivalents		(276,703)	257,799
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,427,277	1,169,478
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	8	1,150,574	1,427,277

The notes on pages 11 to 24 are an integral part of these financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements

1. Summary of significant accounting policies

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

1.1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with IFRSs as adopted by the EU and the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act (Cap. 646). The Authority's financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFRSs as adopted by the EU requires the use of certain accounting estimates. It also requires the Authority board to exercise their judgement in the process of applying the Authority's accounting policies (see Note 3 - Critical accounting estimates and judgements).

Appropriateness of the going concern assumption

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Authority will continue in existence in the foreseeable future.

1.2 Foreign currency translation

1.2.1 Functional and presentation currency

Items included in the financial statements are measured using the currency of the primary economic environment in which the Authority operates ('the functional currency'). The financial statements are presented in Euro (€), which is the Authority's functional and presentation currency.

1.2.2 Transactions and balances

Foreign currency transactions are translated into the functional currency using the exchange rates prevailing at the dates of the transactions. Foreign exchange gains and losses resulting from the settlement of such transactions and from the translation at year-end exchange rates of monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are recognised in surplus or deficit.

1.3 Intangible assets

An acquired intangible asset is recognised only if it is probable that the expected future economic benefits that are attributable to the asset will flow to the entity and the cost of the asset can be measured reliably. An intangible asset is initially measured at cost, comprising its purchase price and any directly attributable cost of preparing the asset for its intended use.

Intangible assets are subsequently carried at cost less any accumulated amortisation and any accumulated impairment losses. Amortisation is calculated to write down the carrying amount of the intangible asset using the straight-line method over its expected useful life. Amortisation of an asset begins when it is available for use and ceases at the earlier of the date that the asset is classified as held for sale or the date that the asset is derecognised.

Software and the Authority's website are being written off over the useful life of the assets which is estimated to be 4 years.

1. Summary of significant accounting policies - continued

1.4 Property, plant and equipment

The cost of an item of property, plant and equipment is recognised as an asset when it is probable that the future economic benefits that are associated with the asset will flow to the entity and the cost can be measured reliably.

All property, plant and equipment initially recorded at cost and subsequently stated at historical cost less depreciation and impairment losses. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the Authority and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure on repairs and maintenance of property, plant and equipment is recognised as an expense when incurred.

Depreciation is calculated using the straight-line method to allocate their cost or revalued amounts to their residual values over their estimated useful lives, as follows:

	%
Computer equipment	25
Office equipment	25
AC system	16.67
Furniture and fixtures	10

The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at the end of each reporting period.

An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount (Note 1.5).

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing the proceeds with carrying amount and are recognised in profit or loss.

Change in accounting policy

During the year under review, the Authority reassessed its accounting policy for land and buildings and determined that measuring these assets using the revaluation model, rather than the cost model, would provide a fairer representation of their value at the balance sheet date.

This change in accounting policy has been applied prospectively, as it was not practicable to estimate the effects of applying the policy either retrospectively or from any earlier date. As a result, the adoption of the revaluation model has no effect on prior periods.

This change in the current financial year, lead to increasing the carrying amount of property at the end of the year to €8,215,000 and the creation of a revaluation reserve amounting to €7,377,387.

The Authority will continue to apply the revaluation model consistently in accordance with IAS 16 – Property, plant and equipment.

1. Summary of significant accounting policies - continued

1.5 Impairment of non-financial assets

An entity shall assess at each reporting date whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. If any such indication exists, the entity shall estimate the recoverable amount of the asset. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount.

The recoverable amount of an asset (or a group of assets) is the higher of its fair value less costs to sell and its value in use. Fair value less costs to sell is the amount obtainable from the sale of an asset in an arm's length transaction between knowledgeable, willing parties, less the costs of disposal. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from an asset.

1.6 Financial assets

1.6.1 Classification

All recognised financial assets that are within the scope of IFRS 9 are required to be measured subsequently at amortised cost or fair value on the basis of the entity's business model for managing the financial assets and the contractual cash flow characteristics of the financial assets.

The Authority classifies its financial assets at amortised cost.

- debt instruments held within a business model whose objective is to hold to collect contractual cashflows are measured at amortised cost;
- debt instruments that are held within a business model whose objective is both to collect the contractual cash flows and to sell the debt instruments, and that have contractual cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding, are measured subsequently at fair value through other comprehensive income (FVTOCI);
- all other debt investments and equity investments are measured subsequently at fair value through profit or loss (FVTPL).

1.6.2 Recognition and measurement

The Authority recognises a financial asset in its statement of financial position when it becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Regular way purchases and sales of financial assets are recognised on settlement date, which is the date on which an asset is delivered to or by the Authority. Any change in fair value for the asset to be received is recognised between the trade date and settlement date in respect of assets which are carried at fair value in accordance with the measurement rules applicable to the respective financial assets.

Financial assets are initially recognised at fair value plus transaction costs. Subsequently they are measured according to their classification as details in Note 1.6.1. Amortised cost is the initial measurement amount adjusted for the amortisation of any difference between the initial and maturity amounts using the effective interest method.

Financial assets are derecognised when the rights to receive cash flows from the financial assets have expired or have been transferred and the Authority has transferred substantially all risks and rewards of ownership or has not retained control of the asset.

1. Summary of significant accounting policies – continued

1.6 Financial assets - continued

1.6.3 Impairment

In relation to the impairment of financial assets, IFRS 9 requires an Expected Credit Loss ('ECL') model. The ECL model requires the Authority to account for ECL and changes in those ECL at each reporting date to reflect changes in credit risk since initial recognition of the financial assets. In other words, it is no longer necessary for a credit event to have occurred before credit losses are recognised.

Specifically, IFRS 9 requires the Authority to recognise a loss allowance for ECL on:

- Debt investments measured subsequently at amortised cost or at FVTOCI;
- Trade receivables and contract assets; and
- Financial guarantee contracts to which the impairment requirements of IFRS 9 apply.

In particular, IFRS 9 requires the Authority to measure the loss allowance for a financial instrument at an amount equal to the lifetime ECL if the credit risk on that financial instrument has increased significantly since initial recognition, or if the financial instrument is a purchased or originated credit-impaired financial asset. However, if the credit risk on a financial instrument has not increased significantly since initial recognition (except for a purchased or originated credit-impaired financial asset), the Authority is required to measure the loss allowance for that financial instrument at an amount equal to 12-months ECL. IFRS 9 also requires a simplified approach for measuring the loss allowance at an amount equal to lifetime ECL for trade receivables, contract assets and lease receivables in certain circumstances.

When determining whether the credit risk of a financial asset has increased significantly since initial recognition and when estimating ECLs, the Authority considers reasonable and supportable information that is relevant and available without undue cost or effort. At each reporting date, the Authority assesses whether financial assets carried at amortised cost are credit impaired. A financial asset is 'credit-impaired' when one or more events that have a detrimental impact on the estimated future cash flows of the financial asset have occurred. Evidence that a financial asset is credit-impaired includes observable data such as significant financial difficulty of the borrower or issuer, or a breach of contract. Loss allowances for financial assets measured at amortised cost are deducted from the gross carrying amount of the assets.

1.7 Receivables

Receivables are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment (Note 1.6.3). The carrying amount of the asset is reduced through the use of an allowance account, and the amount of the loss is recognised in profit or loss. When a receivable is uncollectible, it is written off against the allowance account for receivables. Subsequent recoveries of amounts previously written off are credited against profit or loss.

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents are carried in the statement of financial position at face value. In the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents includes deposits held at call with banks.

1. Summary of significant accounting policies - continued

1.9 Financial liabilities

The Authority recognises a financial liability in its statement of financial position when it becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. The Authority's financial liabilities are classified as financial liabilities which are not at fair value through profit or loss (classified as 'Other liabilities') under IFRS 9. Financial liabilities not at fair value through profit or loss are recognised initially at fair value, being the fair value of consideration received, net of transaction costs that are directly attributable to the acquisition or the issue of the financial liability. These liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost. The Authority derecognises a financial liability from its statement of financial position when the obligation specified in the contract or arrangement is discharged, is cancelled or expires.

1.10 Payables

Payables comprise obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Payables are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less (or in the normal operating cycle of the business if longer). If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Payables are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1.11 Revenue recognition

Revenue comprises the fair value of the consideration received. The Authority recognises revenue when the amount of revenue can be reliably measured, it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity and when specific criteria have been met for each of the Authority's activities as described below.

- Authority has transferred to the buyer the significant risks and rewards of ownership of the services provided;
- The amount of revenue can be measured reliably;
- It is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the Authority; and
- The costs incurred or to be incurred in respect of the transaction can be measured reliably

Income from government subvention is recognised on an accrual basis.

- Government grants related to assets are presented in the statement of financial position by setting up the grant as deferred income and is recognised in the statement of comprehensive income on a systematic basis over the useful life of the asset.
- Government grants that are receivable as compensation for expenses or losses already incurred or for the purposes of giving immediate financial support to the Authority with no future related costs are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income in the year in which they become receivable.

1.12 Employee benefit expense

The Authority contributes towards the state pension in accordance with local legislation. The only obligation of the Authority is to make the required contributions. Costs are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

2. Financial risk management

2.1 Financial risk factors

The Authority's activities potentially expose it to a variety of financial risks: market risk (including cash flow and fair value interest rate risk), credit risk and liquidity risk. The Authority's overall risk management focuses on the unpredictability of financial markets and seeks to minimise potential adverse effects on the Authority's financial performance. The Authority did not make use of derivative financial instruments to hedge certain risk exposures during the current and preceding financial years.

(a) Market risk

Cash flow and fair value interest rate risk

The Authority has no significant interest-bearing assets and liabilities, and its income and operating cash flows are substantially independent of changes in market interest rates.

(b) Credit risk

Credit risk arises from cash and cash equivalents and credit exposures, including outstanding receivables and committed transactions. The Authority's exposures to credit risk as at the end of the reporting periods are analysed as follows:

	2024 €	2023 €
Classes of financial assets - carrying amounts		
Receivables (Note 7)	21,608	850
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 8)	1,150,574	1,427,277
	<u>1,172,182</u>	<u>1,428,127</u>

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the end of the reporting period in respect of the financial assets mentioned above is equivalent to their carrying amount as disclosed in the respective notes to the financial statements. The Authority does not hold any collateral as security in this respect.

The Authority banks only with local financial institutions with high quality standing or rating.

The Authority assesses the credit quality of its receivables taking into account financial position, past experience and other factors. The Authority monitors the performance of its receivables on a regular basis to identify incurred collection losses, which are inherent in the Authority's receivables, taking into account historical experience in collection of accounts receivable.

The Authority manages credit limits and exposures actively in a practicable manner such that there are no material past due amounts receivable as at the end of the reporting period. The Authority's receivables, which are not impaired financial assets, are principally in respect of transactions with receivables for whom there is no recent history of default. Management does not expect any losses from non-performance by these receivables.

2. Financial risk management - continued

2.1 Financial risk factors - continued

(c) Liquidity risk

The Authority is exposed to liquidity risk in relation to meeting future obligations associated with its financial liabilities, which comprise payables (Note 11). Prudent liquidity risk management includes maintaining sufficient cash and committed credit lines to ensure the availability of an adequate amount of funding to meet the Authority's obligations.

The Authority monitors liquidity risk by reviewing expected cash flows, and ensures that no additional financing facilities are expected to be required over the coming year. The Authority's liquidity risk is not deemed material in view of the matching of cash inflows and outflows arising from expected maturities of financial instruments, coupled with the Authority's committed bank borrowing facilities and other intra-group financing that it can access to meet liquidity needs.

2.2 Capital risk management

The Authority's equity, which constitutes its capital base, is disclosed the statement of financial position. The Authority's objectives when managing capital are to safeguard its ability to continue as a going concern. The primary objective of the Authority's capital management is to ensure that it maintains a strong credit rating and healthy capital ratios in order to support its operations.

In accordance with section 14(3) of the provisions of the Malta Resources Authority Act, the Authority shall be paid by the Government of Malta out of the Consolidated Fund such sums as Parliament may from time to time authorise to be appropriated to meet any of its expenditure that cannot be met out of its revenue and the costs of specified works to be continued or otherwise carried out by the Authority, being works of infrastructure or a similar capital nature.

2.3 Fair values of financial instruments

At 31 December 2024 and 2023, the carrying amounts of cash at bank, receivables, payables and accrued expenses reflected in the financial statements are reasonable estimates of fair value in view of the nature of these instruments or the relatively short period of time between the origination of the instruments and their expected realisation.

3. Critical accounting estimates and judgements

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and based on historical experience and other factors including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

In the opinion of the Authority Board, the accounting estimates and judgements made in the course of preparing these financial statements are not difficult, subjective or complex to a degree which would warrant their description as critical in terms of the requirements of IAS 1.

4. Changes in accounting policies

4.1 New and amended IFRS Standards that are effective for the current year

In the current year, the Authority has applied new and amended IFRS Standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) and adopted by the EU that are mandatorily effective in EU for an accounting period that begins on or after 1 January 2024.

- Amendments to IAS 7 *Statement of Cash Flows* and IFRS 7 *Financial Instruments: Disclosures: Supplier Finance Arrangements* (effective for financial years beginning on or after 1 January 2024)
- Amendments to IAS 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements* (effective for financial years beginning on or after 1 January 2024):
 - Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current
 - Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current - Deferral of Effective Date; and
 - Non-current Liabilities with Covenants

The adoption of new and amended standards did not have a material impact on the Authority's financial statements.

4.2 Standards, amendments and interpretations to existing standards that are not yet effective and have not been adopted early by the Authority

At the date of the authorisation of these financial statements, certain new standards, amendments and interpretations to existing standards have been published by the IASB but are not yet effective and have not been adopted early by the Authority.

- Amendments to IAS 21 *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates: Lack of Exchangeability* (effective for financial years beginning on or after 1 January 2025)

Management anticipates that all the relevant pronouncements will be adopted in the Authority's accounting policies for the first period beginning after the effective date of the pronouncement.

Certain new standards and interpretations have been issued but are not expected to have a material impact on the Authority's financial statements.

4.3 Standards, amendments and interpretations to published standards that are not yet endorsed by the EU

- IFRS 18 *Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements* (issued on 9 April 2024)
- Amendments to the Classification and Measurement of Financial Instruments - Amendments to IFRS 9 and IFRS 7 (issued on 30 May 2024)
- Annual Improvements Volume 11 (issued on 18 July 2024)

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5. Property, plant and equipment

	Assets under Construction €	Land and buildings €	Computer equipment €	Office equipment €	Furniture and fixtures €	AC System €	Total €
At 1 January 2023							
At 01.01.2023	-	837,613	264,895	5,820	44,149	9,662	1,162,139
Additions	28,612	-	11,132	844	-	-	40,588
At 01.01.2024	28,612	837,613	276,027	6,664	44,149	9,662	1,202,727
Additions	51,315	-	52,948	5,526	9,704	-	119,493
Revaluation	-	7,377,387	-	-	-	-	7,377,387
Reclassification	(28,612)	-	-	-	-	-	(28,612)
At 31.12.2024	51,315	8,215,000	328,975	12,190	53,853	9,662	8,670,995
Depreciation							
At 01.01.2023	-	-	(252,430)	(5,257)	(35,949)	(5,545)	(299,181)
For the year	-	-	(8,562)	(492)	(2,023)	(824)	(11,901)
At 01.01.2024	-	-	(260,992)	(5,749)	(37,972)	(6,369)	(311,082)
For the year	-	-	(20,320)	(1,875)	(2,537)	(824)	(25,556)
At 31.12.2024	-	-	(281,312)	(7,624)	(40,509)	(7,193)	(336,638)
Net book value							
At 31.12.2023	28,612	837,613	15,035	915	6,177	3,293	891,645
At 31.12.2024	51,315	8,215,000	47,663	4,566	13,344	2,469	8,334,357

Assets under construction represent plant and equipment, which as at the end of the financial year, had not been commissioned for use within the Authority and these relate to a lift pending certification and furniture for an office not yet operational.

Land and buildings were revalued by an independent valuer on 19 February 2025, on an open market existing use basis that reflects recent transactions for similar properties.

6. Intangible assets

	Software €	Website €	Total €
At 1 January 2023			
Cost	6,726	10,148	16,874
Accumulated depreciation	(3,363)	(2,537)	(5,900)
	<u>3,363</u>	<u>7,611</u>	<u>10,974</u>
Year ended 31 December 2023			
Opening net book amount	3,363	7,611	10,974
Additions	-	-	-
Amortisation charge	(1,680)	(2,537)	(4,217)
Closing net book amount	<u>1,683</u>	<u>5,074</u>	<u>6,757</u>
At 31 December 2023			
Cost	6,726	10,148	16,874
Accumulated depreciation	(5,043)	(5,074)	(10,117)
Net book amount	<u>1,683</u>	<u>5,074</u>	<u>6,757</u>
Year ended 31 December 2024			
Opening net book amount	1,683	5,074	6,757
Additions	57,230	-	57,230
Depreciation charge	(14,308)	(2,537)	(16,845)
Closing net book amount	<u>44,605</u>	<u>2,537</u>	<u>47,142</u>
At 31 December 2024			
Cost	63,956	10,148	74,104
Accumulated depreciation	(19,351)	(7,611)	(26,962)
Net book amount	<u>44,605</u>	<u>2,537</u>	<u>47,142</u>

7. Receivables

	2024 €	2023 €
Current		
Trade receivables – gross	142,038	19,650
Less: ECL allowance on trade receivables	(122,150)	(19,650)
Trade receivables - net	<u>19,888</u>	-
Prepayments	1,720	850
	<u>21,608</u>	850

8. Cash and cash equivalents

For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents comprise the following:

	2024 €	2023 €
Petty cash	613	442
Cash at bank	1,149,961	1,426,835
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>1,150,574</u>	1,427,277

9. Revaluation reserve

	2024 €	2023 €
Surplus arising on fair valuation of land and buildings	<u>7,377,387</u>	-
	<u>7,377,387</u>	-
	2024 €	2023 €
At 1 January	-	-
Movement in fair value of land and buildings	<u>7,377,387</u>	-
	<u>7,377,387</u>	-

The revaluation reserve is non-distributable.

10. Deferred government grants

Government capital grants relate to transfers from Government for the purchase of capital assets. These comprise the following:

	2024	2023
	€	€
Historic cost		
Balance at 1 January	1,146,537	1,126,537
Amounts granted during the year	100,000	20,000
Balance at 31 December	1,246,537	1,146,537
Released to the income statement		
Balance at 1 January	506,297	490,177
Amounts released during the year	42,401	16,120
Balance at 31 December	548,698	506,297
Carrying amounts at 31 December	697,839	640,240

11. Payables

	2024	2023
	€	€
Current		
Trade payables	172,744	160,811
Accruals	19,202	6,313
Other payables	2,890	1,478
Total payables	194,836	168,602

12. Revenue

The Authority's revenue primarily comprises funds received from the Government of Malta and administrative penalties imposed as a result of acts or omissions in violation of the Health and Safety at Work Act (Cap. 646).

	2024	2023
	€	€
Government recurrent grants	2,000,000	1,500,000
Administrative fines	350,100	32,750
Recharges and miscellaneous income	43,926	20,718
Government capital grants (Note 8)	42,401	16,120
	2,436,427	1,569,588

13. Other operating expenses

	2024	2023
	€	€
Advertising and awareness campaigns	286,178	23,892
Car hire	20,871	25,698
Travelling expenses	12,166	13,127
Rent	1,806	30
Legal and professional fees	340,323	114,837
Stationery, printing and postage	49,913	13,360
Telecommunications	65,086	25,224
Water & electricity	14,521	10,377
Repairs & maintenance	53,576	27,218
Motor vehicles running expenses	16,764	14,604
Transport expenses	1,815	2,047
Audit fee	3,835	1,098
Events and conferences	5,796	2,478
Amortisation	16,845	4,219
Depreciation	25,556	11,901
Bank charges	1,095	993
Sponsorships	3,000	1,500
Provision for pending administrative fees	102,500	-
Other expenses	34,051	-
Total other operating expenses	1,055,697	292,603

14. Staff costs

During the year staff costs were incurred as follows:	2024	2023
	€	€
Board members' remuneration	33,976	40,657
Staff salaries	1,565,941	1,068,342
Staff uniforms	5,607	1,294
Staff training	3,303	1,060
Staff welfare	5,802	428
Continued professional development	169	1,068
Staff costs	1,614,798	1,112,849

The number of persons employed by the Authority during the year was made up as follows:

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Board members	10	9
Management	11	8
Operations	36	20
	57	37

15. Cash generated (used in)/from operations

Reconciliation of operating profit to cash generated from/(used in) operations:

	2024 €	2023 €
Operating profit	(234,068)	164,136
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment (Note 5)	25,556	11,901
Amortisation of intangible assets (Note 6)	16,845	4,217
Movement in provisions for impairment of receivables (Note 7)	102,500	-
Government grant transferred to the statement of comprehensive income (Note 10)	(42,401)	(16,120)
Changes in working capital:		
Receivables	(123,258)	9,066
Payables	26,234	105,187
Cash flows (used in)/from operating activities	(228,592)	278,387

16. Related party transactions

During the years ended 31 December 2024 and 2023, there were no transactions with key management personnel except for emolument payments as disclosed in Note 14.

17. Statutory information

The Occupational Health and Safety Authority was established under the Health and Safety at Work Act (Cap. 646). The registered office is 17, Triq Edgar Ferro, Pieta', PTA 1533, Malta.

18. Comparative information

Comparative figures disclosed in the main components of these financial statements have been reclassified to conform with the current year's disclosure format for the purpose of compliance with the IFRSs as adopted by the EU and the requirements of the Companies Act (Cap. 386).

NOTES

Lined area for notes, featuring horizontal blue lines and a light gray diagonal design element.





17, Triq Edgar Ferro, Pietà – PTA 1533 Malta



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ohsa@ohsa.mt



www.ohsa.mt



[@ohsa.mt](https://www.instagram.com/ohsa.mt)



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Occupational Health & Safety Authority Malta