



## CBS embargo policy

11 April 2022

*Statistics Netherlands (CBS) may give government organisations and news organisations pre-release access to new messages under embargo before the official publication date and time stated in the schedule. In doing so, CBS is responding to a request from stakeholders for more time to process the figures. CBS will announce the publications and parties concerned on its website.*

CBS reserves the right to allow pre-release access under embargo if this is requested. This is a discretionary power of the Director General of CBS. No party has the right to be provided with a message under embargo. It is decided on a case-by-case basis whether and to whom information will be provided under embargo. Reasons for providing access, which are detailed below, include whether the requesting party is the party that commissioned the additional statistical services of which the message in question is a result or whether issuing an embargo may result in a better quality of dissemination and reporting by media on the CBS message.

### Reasons for providing access

#### 1. Regular provision of access to government organisations

In a number of cases, regular pre-release access is provided to ministries, the CPB (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis) and Dutch central bank DNB. CBS may give these organisations pre-release access to enable government members and official spokespeople to prepare themselves for questions. This is stated on the CBS website. The period of pre-release access is, in principle, a maximum of 24 hours. Pre-release access is intended for internal use only; the receiving institution is not permitted to share the content with external parties or to distribute it further prior to publication.

The regular provision of pre-release access concerns the following messages and parties<sup>1</sup>:

#### *Statistic*

- Labour force (monthly)
- Economic growth (quarterly)

#### *Party*

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), Ministry of General Affairs (AZ)  
Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (EZK), Ministry of

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1 At the time of publication of this memorandum. The current list is available separately on the [CBS website](#).

- International trade (monthly)
  - General Affairs (AZ), Ministry of Finance (FIN), CPB, DNB
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BuZa)

## 2. Special provision of pre-release access

In addition to this regular provision, pre-release access to a message may be provided on an occasional basis. This is done in two cases:

a) The publication is the result of research based on additional statistical services and collaborative projects carried out by CBS for/with government organisations or institutions.

Pre-release access may be granted to requesting parties of these additional statistical services, in order for them to assess whether their request has been met. Agreements on this are made in advance in the contract. In the case of collaboration with other institutes, for example for joint publications, information is generally exchanged at various stages of the process. This is also arranged in advance.

b) Government organisations or institutions with a social role may submit a request for pre-release access based on the CBS publication calendar. When deciding on such requests, CBS considers whether the publication contains data and facts that directly relate to the policy area and core task of the government organisation or institution concerned and to what extent a preview is necessary for the preparation of statements by spokespersons immediately after publication.

## 3. Provision of access to media under embargo

CBS marks some of its messages to be provided to news media under embargo before the official publication date. These messages are made available to journalists of news media that have indicated an interest in the publications and that have complied with a number of conditions.

Media are defined as official news media that are part of private publishing organisations affiliated with the sector organisation NDP Nieuwsmedia and public broadcasters that fall under the umbrella organisations NPO, RPO and NLPO. This gives news organisations the opportunity to prepare their own coverage of CBS messages. The release to the media under embargo thus makes an important contribution to the dissemination role of CBS. In addition, the provision of an embargo with a publication date at a carefully chosen moment guarantees that virtually all news media are treated equally and are not disadvantaged compared to each other with regard to their publication dates. This also increases the effectiveness of the dissemination of CBS statistics.

Messages that may be provided to the media under embargo are marked (E) in the publication calendar. Messages that contain information that may affect stock market prices are never released to the media under embargo.

There is never any question of granting exclusivity to the media or other parties when

issuing embargoes.

Journalists who have been given access to embargoed publications are not permitted to share the contents with third parties prior to publication by CBS, for example with other organisations whose tasks and policy areas are affected by the publication. If they consider it necessary to consult external experts for their work, they may only do so after consulting CBS and obtaining its explicit consent.

#### **Conditions and deadline for making messages available**

Under no circumstances may pre-release access or access to a message under embargo result in a recipient influencing or attempting to influence CBS regarding the content of the publication and/or the time of publication.

If the embargo rules and deadline are violated, the possibility of obtaining a message ahead of publication will lapse for a period to be determined.

In principle, pre-release access is provided at most 24 hours before publication. If there are good reasons to do so, the period may be extended.

It may also happen that messages are not yet available 24 hours before publication. In that case, the decision may be taken to share the content of the message under embargo. The decision will be made by the head of directorate responsible (for distribution to government organisations) and the head of directorate of Communication and News (for distribution to the media).

#### **Procedure for requesting pre-release access under embargo**

Government organisations and other institutions may address their requests for pre-release access to their relationship manager at CBS. The CBS head of directorate responsible will decide on a case-by-case basis, where necessary in consultation with the Director General. Recipients of non-regular pre-release distribution will be included in a list made public through the website.

Journalists employed or hired by official news media may submit requests for access under embargo in a personal capacity to [persdienst@cbs.nl](mailto:persdienst@cbs.nl). They may submit a request for a specific publication announced in the CBS publication calendar and marked "E", or for all future publications marked "E". In the latter case, they will be placed on the specific, fixed embargo mailing list for distribution to authorised journalists. The head of directorate of CBS Communication and News will make a decision on this. After the application has been approved, the journalist will sign an "embargo agreement" confirming the conditions and agreements surrounding the embargo provision. The embargo provisions and the fixed embargo list are updated annually. The authorised journalists on the updated list are asked to reconfirm the embargo agreement each year.

If the situation so requires, it is possible to depart from the policy in individual cases. This is at the discretion of the Director General. The "comply or explain" principle applies in this respect. This means that in the case of a departure from the general

policy, an explanation will be given as to why it is considered important to depart from the general policy rule in that specific and individual case.

**Evaluation and revision**

CBS will evaluate the embargo policy annually in the current PDCA quality cycle and audit cycle. The results of the evaluation will be made available to the Advisory Council. Based on its own evaluations, questions and feedback from stakeholders, CBS may decide to change the formulated policy as part of its general quality policy.