



CBS pre-release access policy

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Statistics Netherlands (CBS) may grant government organisations and news organisations pre-release access to new statistical products under embargo before the official publication date and time stated in the schedule. CBS may also share statistical products with parties for technical reasons for the purpose of statistics production.

In doing so, CBS is responding to a request from specific 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 if this is requested. This is a discretionary power of the Director General of CBS. No party has the right to be granted pre-release access. It is decided on a case-by-case basis whether and to whom information will be provided under embargo. Reasons for granting access will be explained below.

Forms of pre-release access and reasons for granting access

1. Granting access to media under embargo

CBS marks some of its news releases to be provided to news media under embargo before the official publication date. These releases 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. The maximum embargo period is 24 hours before publication.

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 news releases. 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 makes the dissemination of CBS statistics more effective.

News releases that may be provided to the media under embargo are marked (E) in the publication calendar. Releases containing information that may affect stock market prices are never provided 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 distribute the content further prior to publication by CBS, for example to 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.

2. Granting pre-release access under embargo to government organisations and other institutions

Government organisations or institutions with a social role may submit a request for pre-release access. Applicants must submit a substantiated request through their relationship manager at CBS. It is decided on a case-by-case basis whether and to whom information will be provided under embargo. In its decision-making, 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 pre-release access is necessary for the preparation of statements by spokespersons immediately after publication. CBS may grant these organisations pre-release access to enable government members and official spokespersons to prepare for questions.

Cases of pre-release access under embargo concern all kinds of publishable statistical products (figures), for example in the form of a news release, report or table.

The time set for pre-release access is no later than 12:00 noon on the working day before publication, regardless of the publication time and provided the news release or product is available in a timely manner.

CBS periodically publishes all embargo provisions on its website, with reference to the receiving party and the news release concerned.

In exceptional cases, the Director General of CBS may decide that a longer embargo period is required. CBS recognises two exceptions for which a longer period is set:

- Pre-release access for the preparation of Letters to Parliament has a maximum embargo period of 7 working days.
- Pre-release access concerning statistics with direct financial consequences, i.e., allocation and reallocation models, has a maximum embargo period of 4 calendar weeks.

Pre-release access is routinely granted for a number of news releases and an application for access and an assessment on granting such access already exist. The news releases granted routine pre-release access are listed on the CBS website.¹

¹ The current list is available separately on the [CBS website](#).

3. Granting technical pre-release access

In many cases, the embargo policy is sufficient as a means to regulate pre-release access. However, there are some exceptional situations in which non-publishable statistical products may be shared with parties outside CBS. For this purpose, CBS assigns the category of technical pre-release access to the following:

- a. Subproducts.
CBS provides a statistical product as input for another party, with the other party providing the final product/publication. CBS and/or the other party ensures posting on the website and disclosure of the figures at the time of publication.
- b. Partnerships and co-authorship.
Pre-release access is necessary to arrive at a final statistical product, test a model, assess quality or validate figures. It is also possible that another organisation collaborates in the publication of the research or article.
- c. Pre-release access for an expert group or supervisory committee in the case of CBS studies.
Pre-release access may be considered necessary to help ensure that an expert group or supervisory committee can function properly. Such bodies have specific knowledge in a particular field and support the study with regard to quality. Sharing figures in the course of research is then necessary, so that the group can provide sound advice.
- d. Practical considerations of a technical nature in which the applicant needs time to prepare and then publish the statistical products through its own medium, whether or not synchronised with the CBS publication.

Requests for technical pre-release access are discussed with the applicant and assessed by CBS as early as possible, preferably at the start of a project. CBS exercises restraint in determining the pre-release access period, basing its decision on the minimum period necessary. All arrangements are to be laid down in writing in the agreement and CBS may ask the applicant to sign an additional confidentiality agreement. Publication and disclosure of the statistical products always follows as soon as possible after completion of a project.

General conditions and pre-release access periods

Under no circumstances may the granting of pre-release access or access 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/or deadline are violated, the possibility of obtaining a news release ahead of publication will lapse for a period to be determined.

In principle, the pre-release access periods described in this memorandum will be applied. If there are good reasons to do so, the period may be extended by the Director General of CBS.

It may also happen that news releases are not yet available before publication. In that case, the decision may be taken to share the content of the news release 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).

News releases that CBS classifies as stock market-sensitive will not be offered for preview.

Procedure for requesting pre-release access

Government organisations and other institutions may address their requests for pre-release access to their relationship manager at CBS. CBS decides on a case-by-case basis whether pre-release access may be granted.

Journalists employed or hired by official news media may submit requests for access under embargo in a personal capacity to 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 every two years 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.