

CSO Policy on Pre-Release Access

Introduction

The CSO remains committed to the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#). Principle 6 of the Code refers to Objectivity and Impartiality and includes the following indicator:

6.7 All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.

This policy gives effect to the principle of Objectivity and Impartiality as set out above. It specifies the CSO's standard practice that statistics are released to all users at the same time, with no pre-release access. However the CSO recognises that in very limited circumstances a business need for pre-release access may be substantiated. Any form of pre-release access is a privilege.

Three forms of limited pre-release access are permitted under this policy and the detailed rules for each are set out below:

1. Advance Notification of Results to Named Officials
2. Official or Ministerial Briefings
3. Press Briefings.

Advance Notification of Results to Named Officials

Where advance notification has been granted, this will normally be provided one hour before the official release time as specified on the CSO's weekly release calendar. At the discretion of the Director General, and in exceptional cases, advance notification may be provided at 14:30 pm on the day before a release. In these exceptional cases, the CSO website will record that advance briefing of the named officials has taken place at 14:30 pm on the day prior to the release.

This category of access will only be granted through the formal application process and by means of the application form set out in Annex 1. The request for access must be approved at Assistant Secretary level in the applying Institution/Department.

The application for access will be subject to approval by the Director General of the CSO or an Assistant Director General / Director in the absence of the Director General. Access privileges will be reviewed and verified annually.

Only named individuals will be given advance notification of results and information provided will be restricted to those who have been approved for this access. The access is personal and non-transferable.

No details of any data provided by CSO may be distributed or discussed in any way with persons who are not approved to receive pre-release access, prior to the release being officially published at 11:00.

A full list of named individuals with this privilege will be published on the CSO website.

Officials & Ministerial Briefings

Officials Briefings may take place on the day of the release. Where an Officials Briefing is organised, it will take place not earlier than 08:30 on the day of the release.

Officials' pre-release access will only be granted through the formal application process and by means of the application form set out in Annex 1. The request for access must be approved at Assistant Secretary level in the applying Institution/Department.

The application for access will be subject to approval by the Director General of the CSO or an Assistant Director General / Director in the absence of the Director General. Access privileges will be reviewed and verified annually.

Only individuals pre-approved for this access will be invited to the briefing. Access to the Officials Briefing will be strictly limited to invitees. Information provided during the briefing will be restricted to those who have been approved for this access and will be under embargo until the official release time. This access is personal and non-transferable.

The venue and invitation to Officials Briefings will be determined by the CSO.

No details of any data provided by CSO may be distributed or discussed in any way with persons who are not approved for pre-release privileges, prior to the release being officially published at 11:00.

In the event that individuals cannot attend the Officials Briefing, the provision of results at 10:00 as described under Advance Notification of Results to Named Officials may be implemented.

A full list of named individuals attending the Officials Briefing will be published on the CSO website.

Press Briefings

Press briefings in advance of publication may take place. The standard time for press briefings will be 10.30 on the day of the release.

An official sign-in process is required for all press briefings. A full list of individuals attending press briefings in advance of the publication time will be published on the CSO website.

A formal application process for attending Press Briefings is not required at this time. The CSO reserves the right to introduce such a process.

Terms and Conditions

Applications for pre-release access (i.e. for Advance Notification of Results to Named Officials or for attendance at Official or Ministerial Briefings) shall be made at least 10 working days in advance of the named release date.

Non-adherence to the terms and conditions on which pre-release access privilege is granted will result in access being revoked for individuals/organisations. Any apparent breach of the conditions will be investigated and, where appropriate, reported on the CSO website.

All advance results transmitted electronically under these arrangements will in general only be transmitted in encrypted form.

Pre-release access in general will be limited to three named persons in a single organisation.

This policy and the associated application forms will be published on the CSO website.

The administration of pre-release access will be carried out by the Data Office of the CSO.

The principal points of this policy are summarised in the table below.

This policy will take effect from 1 March 2016.

Padraig Dalton
Director General

<u>CSO Policy on Pre-Release Access: Principal Points</u>			
	Form of Pre-Release Access		
	Advance Notification of Results to Named Officials	Officials or Ministerial Briefing	Press Conferences
Apply for access?	Yes	Yes	No
Attendance sheets?	No	Yes	Yes
Access on the day of release?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Access before day of release?	No	No	No
Details of access published on CSO website?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Access Transferable?	No	No	No

Annex 1:

Application for pre-release access privileges to CSO data

Official release time is 11.00 am on the day of publication

Please provide complete details of release, nominated person and reason for request below. The decision on the granting of pre-release access will be made the by Director General of the CSO. **Incomplete and/or unsigned forms will be returned to the applicant.**

Name of release:
Name of person nominated to receive pre-release access privileges:
Role/Title of nominated person:
Area/Section address:
Department:
Contact details for nominated person:
Email address: (Note: Encrypted data only will be transmitted by the CSO. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the necessary encryption software package specified by the CSO is installed to facilitate the decryption of data supplied)
Telephone contact number:
Brief summary of why pre-release access is required:
Name and job title of person sponsoring this nomination: (At Assistant Secretary level or above in the applying Institution / Department)
<i>The sponsor and applicant should read and sign the Conditions of Access (following page).</i>

Conditions of Access under CSO Policy on Pre-Release Access

For those in receipt of Advance Notification of Results to Named Officials, it is important to note that pre-release access will normally be provided by the CSO to approved nominated persons in an **encrypted format**. It is the responsibility of approved recipients of pre-release data to ensure that they have access to the facility to decrypt data received from the CSO. Generally it will not be possible for CSO staff to provide pre-release data to any individual over the phone or by sending unencrypted data. In case the approved nominated person is not available on the day of release, it is advisable to have a second pre-approved nominated person available to receive the data. A separate form should be completed by the second nominated person in relation to their application for pre-release access to CSO data. The CSO should be advised of any change in delivery arrangements prior to the day of release.

The following conditions apply to all persons in receipt of pre-release access privileges, i.e. either Advance Notification of Results to Named Officials or attendance at Officials Briefings:

Details of pre-release access arrangements for Departments/Organisations along with persons in receipt of pre-release access to CSO data are published on the CSO website.

<http://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/dissemination/pre-releasepracticeforcertaincsostatistics/>

Pre-release access is granted on condition that the person to whom this access is granted will not disclose the contents of the release, indicate trends, or use the information for personal, commercial or political gain before its official release time.

The person is permitted to prepare briefing material based on the data in the release in advance of the official release time. However, the briefing material may not be communicated to any person or body in advance of the official release time.

In particular it must be noted that no details of any data provided by CSO may be distributed or discussed in any way with persons who are not approved to receive pre-release access, prior to the release being officially published at 11:00.

Continuation of the pre-release arrangement will be dependent on full adherence to the conditions set out herein and will be granted for a maximum of 12 months. Applicants are obliged to submit a new application upon expiry of an existing pre-release access privilege.

The CSO reserves the right to immediately withdraw the privilege of pre-release access should these conditions not be adhered to. Applicants should also note that in the event of a breach of the conditions, notification of the breach may be published on the CSO website. The Director-General of the CSO is the final arbitrator with regard to a decision to grant or not grant, or withdraw pre-release access.

I hereby confirm that these conditions of access, and all other conditions set out in the CSO Policy on Pre-Release Access, have been noted and accepted by me.

Signed (nominated person):

Date:

I hereby request access for pre-release access for the above-named person.

Signed (at Assistant Secretary level or above):

Date:

Please note that any reference to signature and date in this document can be read as meaning the typed name and date where such an application is forwarded electronically.

For Internal CSO Use Only

Recommended by:

Senior Statistician		
Are you in favour	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Justification of Decision		
Director/ADG		
Are you in favour	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Justification of Decision		
Director General		
Are you in favour	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Justification of Decision		

Please sign and date.

Annex 2

**CSO - Press Briefing -
Name of Release and Date**

Template for Attendance List and Declaration by Attendees

I the under-signed agree that any data provided by CSO is strictly embargoed and cannot be distributed or discussed in any way outside the Press Briefing prior to the release being officially published at 11:00. I am being given pre-release access on condition that I will not disclose the contents of the release, or indicate trends, or use the information for personal, commercial or political gain before its official release time.

I accept that I may prepare material based on the data in the release in advance of the official release time. However, the briefing material may not be communicated to any person or body in advance of the official release time. **Note: The names and organisations of those attending the Press Briefing will be published on the CSO website.**

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