

Guidelines on the confidentiality and disclosure of statistical data prior to their release

Data are released to all users at the same time.

Statistical data may only be handled and are only available in advance at Statistics Finland to persons involved in the production of the statistics concerned or who need the data of the statistics concerned in their own work before the data are published.

Statistics Finland can outsource data processing in accordance with Section 22 of the Statistics Act. When making agreements based on which a service provider outside Statistics Finland processes statistical data referred to in points 1 and 2 of this document before the data are published, the agreement must include a mention of the obligation to secrecy based on legislation and on the punishability of breaching it.

1. Statistics that affect capital and financial markets

The Act on the Openness of Government Activities (Section 24, Paragraph 1, Sub-paragraph 13) prescribes that statistics describing the development of the national economy and other documents containing data that apparently could have an effect on the capital and financial markets are secret before the data are published. At Statistics Finland these statistics are:

- Trend Indicator of Output
- Quarterly National Accounts
- Consumer Survey
- Consumer Price Index
- Volume Index of Industrial Output
- New Orders in Manufacturing
- Producer Price Indices
- Labour Force Survey.

The Act also applies to the quarterly flash estimate on total output published at a delay of 45 days and the preliminary data produced as its part for Eurostat at a delay of 30 days. The quarterly flash estimate on total output is published as part of the Trend Indicator of Output in Finland.

By decision of the Director General, data concerning the above-mentioned statistics may be released to Eurostat or to other Departments (Directorate-Generals) within the Commission prior to their national publication if it is necessary with regard to the timetables of compiling aggregates at the European level or the production of statistical releases or publications. The precondition is that the release has been requested in writing. The data may be used only for the requested purpose, and the data receiver must commit to keeping the Finnish data confidential until their national release date.

According to the application instructions of the Statistics Act, all Departments must maintain statistics-specific lists on the persons that have the right to handle these data. The Communication and Information Services Department maintains similar

lists of their own personnel and for external service providers of printing and translation services.

2. Other statistics

If there is a need to release part of the data for a specific purpose before the actual release that contains all data of the reference period in question, these data must be released as preliminary data simultaneously to all users following the normal release procedures.

If EU regulation or agreement based data releases are sent to Eurostat, the European Central Bank, the European Commission or the Bank of Finland for the compilation of statistics before the data become public in Finland, they must be sent with an embargo until they are released in Finland.

Based on separate agreement, data can be released before the official release to other authorities producing statistics and other producers of official statistics for the compilation of a publication that is released after Statistics Finland's release, or for mandatory EU reporting. The obligation to keep the data secret must in this case be mentioned in the agreement, and the data can only be used for the compilation of the publication.

3. Special cases concerning release of data

a) By decision of the Director of the responsible Department, data from compilation publications and completed surveys on which no actual statistical release, press release or news item is produced can be released to the media in advance under embargo (the recipient may not publish the data before the agreed time). The Chief Communication Officer must be consulted in advance on matters concerning the release of data and the extent and delivery method of the data to be released.

b) As regards materials provided in press conferences, points 1 and 2 of these guidelines apply.

c) In joint data collections the parties can obtain the data in the form they were received from the data suppliers. This matter is set out in an agreement between the parties.

d) A customer or collaborator/funding partner may, on separate agreement, be given access to statistical data produced in jointly funded projects and assignments paid for by the customer (e.g. micro data material) as soon as the data material is ready. The publication practices applicable to the data to be produced are to be agreed between the parties to the project.

4. Entry into force

These guidelines supplement the application instructions of the Statistics Act and enter into force on 1 March 2016. These guidelines replace the guidelines on the confidentiality and disclosure of statistical data prior to their release (TK-00-582-14) issued on 10 July 2014.

Director General

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Distribution

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