

## Report of a breach of the Code of Practice for Statistics

### Core Information

Information needed	Response
Title and link to statistical output	<a href="#">Strategic export controls: licensing statistics 1 October to 31 December 2020</a>
Name of producer organisation	Department for International Trade
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	James Liley, <a href="mailto:james.liley@trade.gov.uk">james.liley@trade.gov.uk</a>
Name and contact details of Head of Profession for Statistics or Lead Official	Peter Antoniadou, <a href="mailto:peter.antoniadou@trade.gov.uk">peter.antoniadou@trade.gov.uk</a>
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	
Date of breach report	13 April 2021

### Circumstances of breach

Information needed	Response
Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	<b>Trustworthiness: T3.4</b> The circulation of statistics in their final form ahead of their publication should be restricted to eligible recipients, in line with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation for the UK and devolved administrations. The details of those granted access should be recorded, together with clear justifications for access. No indication of the statistics should be made public and the statistics should not be given to any other party without prior permission for access.
Date of occurrence of breach	12 April 2021

Please give an account of what happened including roles of persons involved, dates and times:

The latest Strategic Export Controls: licensing statistics were due to be published on 13 April 2021. On 12 April an email including press lines referencing the pre-release official statistics were circulated at 20:34 to some colleagues not on the pre-release access (PRA) list. This included:

- 1x Special Advisor to the Secretary of State (another SpAd was given PRA)
- 1x Press Officer (2x Press Officers were given PRA)
- A 'News Desk' email inbox accessible by 10 additional press staff and a statistician based in press office. It's unlikely that many, if any, read the email in the hours it was available before general publication.

This email was sent in relation to a request from a minister for additional press lines out of hours. This was not covered in the previously agreed press lines so one of the named Press Office PRA recipients looped in others who were working overnight, not on the agreed pre-release copy list. Press lines referencing licensing targets and the number of licences completed referenced official statistics figures. The press lines included these points:

- The Export Control Joint Unit (ECJU) is very mindful of the commercial pressures and of the need to process export licence applications with minimum delay. It strives hard to meet its licensing targets; to conclude 70 per cent of applications within 20 working days and 99 per cent within 60 working days.

- As set out in the accompanying commentary the number of Standard Individual Export Licence applications we completed rose from 2,778 in 2020 Q3 to 3,407 in 2020 Q4. The increase is largely attributable to clearing the backlog of Saudi related cases.”

The first bullet does not disclose figures, but an indication of the figures (for example, favourable/unfavourable) were shared during the formation of this line.

The number of licences completed, and the percentage of application processed may match management information (MI) that would be used for operational purposes ahead of their release as official statistics. However, press office would generally not be party to this information for operational purposes.

### Impact of the breach

Provide details of the impact of the breach both inside the producer body and externally:

Minimal impact. No-one outside of the PRA list had access to the full official statistics, just the statistics included in the press lines. No figures were quoted externally before general release at 9.30am the following day.

### Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence

Describe the short-term actions made to redress the situation and the longer-term changes to procedures:

All pre-release recipients were reminded of their responsibility to not share with those without pre-release access ahead of general release.

PRA recipients were also reminded that we email recipients one week in advance of publication to ensure the right people have pre-release access and that this is their opportunity to request access for others.

We discussed the breach with press officers to ensure we understand their needs, ensure they understand that we should be contacted if changes to the PRA list are needed, and our Head of Profession for statistics will consider whether there needs to be an additional Press Officer role named for out-of-hour queries in future.