



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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19 December 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0814-16

Thank you for your email of 26 August asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

In relation to the list of projects contained in FOI request [0580-16](#), I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- *A list of all projects to Bahrain in the year 2015/16 administered by the FCO.*
- *The allocated budget for each project for the financial year 2015/16.*
- *The actual spend on these projects for the financial year 2015/16.*
- *The funding stream for each of these projects (e.g. CSSF, Magna Carta fund)*
- *The names of the UK bodies who implemented the projects.*

Previously, requested information regarding "UK bodies or individuals" was exempted under section 27 (1) (a) and (c) and section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act. However, as information on the UK bodies providing training has already been partially provided in previous requests, such as FOI request [0702-15](#), I would like to request this information again.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested. I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

The UK has been providing a range of technical, practical assistance to the Government of Bahrain since 2012. The range of assistance supports the Government of Bahrain's implementation of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and UN Universal Periodic Review recommendations.

We believe that UK support to Bahrain's reform programme is the most constructive way to assist in achieving long-lasting and sustainable reform in Bahrain. While it will take time to

see the full results, we believe UK support is having a direct, positive impact on areas of concern.

In particular we welcome the progress made by Bahrain in the areas of youth justice, the establishment and increasing effectiveness of the Ombudsman's office, the Prisoner and Detainees' Rights Commission and the reformed National Institute of Human Rights. We will continue to work with the Government of Bahrain to ensure momentum and progress continues on its reforms, for the benefit of all Bahrainis.

The information that we can release to you is enclosed as a digest. However, some information has been withheld under section 27 (International Relations).

After careful consideration we have decided not to release the allocated and actual spend budget figures for each project. We have also decided not to release some details on the specific projects. The effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. This relationship of trust allows for the free and frank exchange of information on the understanding that it will be treated in confidence. If the UK does not respect such confidences, its ability to protect and promote UK interest through international relations will be prejudiced. Bahrain may be more reluctant to share sensitive information with the UK Government in future and may be less likely to respect the confidentiality of information supplied by the UK Government, to the detriment of UK interests. We acknowledge that disclosure could meet the public interest in transparency and accountability. Indeed, we are transparent about the UK government's support to Bahrain's reform programme – it is detailed in the FCO's human rights report, which is updated annually, and through public correspondence and parliamentary questions. For all these reasons, we consider that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information covered by section 27 (1)(d).

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Yours sincerely,

Head of Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department



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