



**Irish Aid**

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Teach na hAbhainn  
23-27 Sráid Anraí  
Luimneach

Riverstone House  
23-27 Henry Street  
Limerick

Our Ref: FOI/Req/2017/149

15<sup>th</sup> of September 2017

Dear Mr. Moran,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

**Copies of applications for funding by the Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) during 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017, including any attachments or appendices, and also copies of the decisions and correspondence relating to those applications, copies of reports on activities submitted by IFPA, and copies of all correspondence, including monitoring, evaluation, and audit reports relating to funding to IFPA during the period in question.**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2017 and an email which issued on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2017.

I have identified 76 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant 46, part-grant 29 and refuse 1 of the records. Some records were redacted and the grounds for these decisions are noted in the schedule of records enclosed.

The decisions were made on the basis of the below sections of the 2014 Act:

- 29(1)(a) - Exemption for records containing matters relating to the deliberative process of a public body.
- 30 1(a)(b) - Prejudice the effectiveness of tests, examinations, investigations, inquiries or audits. Have a significant adverse effect on the performance of a public body of any of its functions relating to management.
- 33(1) - access could reasonably be expected to affect adversely: (c) the international relations of the State.
- 36(1)(b) - financial, commercial, scientific information when disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in financial loss or gain to the person to whom the info relates or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of his/her profession/business/occupation.
- 37 - Refusal of access to Personal Information.

In terms of the public interest test on the above the following was taken into consideration:

**Section 29(1)(a)**

In reviewing the release of the records I considered the need for effective mechanisms to maintain public confidence in Government bodies by access to information on their performance of functions; the right of the public to have access to information/obtain reasons for decisions; the accountability of administrators and scrutiny of decision making processes and the use of public funds. In considering non-disclosure I took into account the fact that release could prejudice the decision making process/impair future decisions by giving insight into the criteria by which the Civil Society Fund appraise the applications, and in doing so compromise the competitive nature of the Fund. I am satisfied that the public interest is best served by part-granting the relevant documents.

**30(1)(a)(b)**

I have considered Section 30 of the 2014 Act in making my decision not to release certain information. The release could prejudice the decision making process/impair future decisions, as above, this was considered in the context that the competitiveness of The Civil Society Fund. In weighing these adverse consequences against the public interest, I have again considered the right of the public to have access to information; the need for an open, transparent and accountable civil service and the need for decision-making processes to be adequately scrutinised. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release on this occasion.

**Section 33(1)(c)**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for managing relations between Ireland and 178 countries. In order to effectively carry out this role, the conduct of international relations depends upon the creation and maintenance of trust and confidence between governments. Not maintaining the mutuality of trust with regard to communications about States could reasonably be expected to adversely affect the international relations of the State. For these reasons, I consider that the public interest in not granting access to these records outweighs the public interest in releasing them.

**Section 36(1)(b)**

The following were taken into consideration for disclosure of the records: the accountability of administrators and scrutiny of decision making processes and the use of public funds; the need for the public to be better informed and more competent to comment on and assess public affairs and policies and practices; the need for effective mechanisms to maintain public confidence in Government bodies by access to information on their performance of functions; the right of the public to have access to information/obtain reasons for decisions; the accountability of administrators and scrutiny of decision making processes and the use of public funds; the need for the public to be better informed and more competent to comment on and assess public affairs and policies and practices. On the other hand, I have taken into consideration the fact that the Irish Family Planning Association seeks funding from other



donors; the Irish Family Planning Association could reasonably expect to be at a financial loss as a direct result; the Irish Family Planning Association could reasonably expect its competitive position to be jeopardised. On balance, I am satisfied that the public interest is best served by not releasing the records.

### **Section 37(1)**

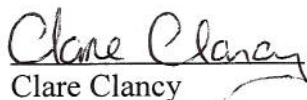
I have considered the public interest in the context of the public's right to access personal information. However, I am satisfied that on balance the broader community interest is best served by protecting the personal information that would otherwise not be available and have refused access to the relevant records. Also included in this document are redactions based on 36(1), again, the public's right to access personal information was assessed, but I am satisfied that the public's interest is best served by not granting this information, as including their name may prohibit the consultant from obtaining work in the future.

### **Right of Appeal**

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 02 DX45 or by email to [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie). A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie), or 01-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely,

  
Clare Clancy

