



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/18079

25 April 2018

Dear Requester,

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:

A copy of the following consultancy reports:

Ernst & Young (EY) - External Quality Assessment of Internal Audit,

Amárach Research – Brexit Research: Understanding the likely demand for Irish passports from citizens in U.K.,

M Horizon (UK) Ltd - Continental Shelf NE Atlantic,

Mercer International – Study of Compensation Levels - Locally engaged staff in diplomatic missions (Irish Aid).

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 9 April 2018.

I have identified 1 record that falls within the scope of your request. The record is listed in the schedule below. I have made a decision to refuse access to the record at this time. Where access has been refused, the records are exempt from release under Section 29 Deliberative process of FoI bodies, Section 30 Functions and negotiations of FOI bodies and Section 33 Security, defence and international relations. With regard to the reports listed as Record 2 I have refused access on administrative grounds under section 15(1)(a) *the record concerned does not exist*. While the commissioning of the three reports, to which access has been requested, was undertaken in 2017 the reports have yet to be drafted.

SCHEDULE			
Record Description		Granted/Part-Granted/Refused	Section exempted under:
1.	M Horizon (UK) Ltd - Continental Shelf NE Atlantic	Refused	29 1(a) (b) 30 (1)(c) 33(1)(d)
2.	Ernst & Young (EY) - External Quality Assessment of Internal Audit	Refused	15 (1)(a)

	Amárach Research – Brexit Research: Understanding the likely demand for Irish passports from citizens in U.K Mercer International – Study of Compensation Levels - Locally engaged staff in diplomatic missions (Irish Aid).		
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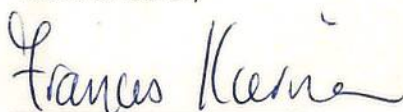
I have refused access to Record 1 *M Horizon (UK) Ltd - Continental Shelf NE Atlantic* under section 29 (1)(a)(b) and section 30(1)(c) as granting access to the report would likely impair Ireland's maritime boundary negotiations with other states. The public interest arguments I have considered favouring release include increased scrutiny of the workings of this Department, enhanced public understanding of the issues and reasons for positions taken. However, I have decided it would be contrary to the public interest to release this report to the world as it would jeopardise **Ireland's** success in those negotiations. I have also refused access under section 33(1) (d) as release could reasonably be expected to impair the international relations of the State. This report has been obtained to help prepare and inform the State's position its public disclosure could adversely affect the State's relations by introducing major doubts with regard to Ireland's ability to engage in international negotiations. On balance I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release.

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 2 or by email to 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, 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



Frances Kiernan