



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

Our Ref: FOI/Req/16037

Mr. Ken Foxe

25th April 2016

Dear Mr Foxe,

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:

- 1. A list of all reports commissioned, in progress, or finalised by your Department in 2015. The cost of all such reports where available.*
- 2. A list of all consultancy commissioned or in progress for the calendar year 2015. The cost of such consultancy where available.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on April 11th 2016.

I have identified one record which falls within the scope of your request and I have made a decision to grant it.

	Record Description	Granted, Part-Granted or Refused
1.	<i>A list of all 2015 reports/consultancies. The cost of all such reports/consultancies where available.</i>	Granted

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for two Votes – Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) and Vote 27 (International Cooperation). The enclosed record has been prepared by reference to directly contracted engagements in respect of which professional fees were paid and Professional Services Withholding Tax (PSWT) was deducted, where appropriate. The Department is very conscious of the need to achieve value for money and is in full compliance with national and EU procurement regulations concerning tendering requirements.

The Department commissions external expertise only where specialised knowledge is not available within the Department and, particularly in the case of Irish Aid (Ireland's official overseas development programme). In-depth analysis of issues by external experts continues to inform the Department's policies and affords more targeted use of resources. During the course of their engagements these consultants/experts may prepare reports and other documentation which are, in general, internal management tools.

Irish Aid

Irish Aid works on behalf of the Irish people to address poverty and hunger in some of the world's poorest countries. Ireland has a strong voice on the international stage, which is used effectively to achieve its aims. The programme works closely with a range of development partners to ensure that our aid makes a difference in the lives of poor people and communities overseas. With this, our contribution is not just financial. The focus is also to think and act beyond aid by fostering lasting sustainable solutions by assisting in underpinning developing countries' own leadership, their ability to raise revenue and boost foreign direct investment, to integrate into world markets and to address inequality.

Irish Aid commissions outside expertise where the effective management, independent evaluation and review of the programme necessitates the use of such skills. Decisions on the need to commission outside expertise are subject to the establishment of appropriate business cases and an approvals process carried out by the Irish Aid Senior Management Group. National and international regulations are fully complied with in subsequent tendering processes.

Passport Service Reform Programme

The Passport Service's current application system and associated business processes were designed in 2002 and implemented in 2004. However, the existing system does not have the flexibility required to respond to ever increasing application volumes nor to provide more modern, efficient services such as online applications. In addition, the evolving environment in which the Passport Service operates is one with increasingly sophisticated security and identity verification challenges. In that light a project team has been established within the Department to specify the requirements for and oversee the development of solutions for our Passport Service Reform Programme which include simplifying the application process and reduce the administrative burden for passport applicants. Given the complexity of the project, a competitive tender seeking a strategic partner to support and advise the internal project team on options and potential approaches to delivery on the Reform Programme was issued in 2015. Bearing Point won that tender to provide this service. In addition to the 2015 contract, a managed contract was put in place in 2004

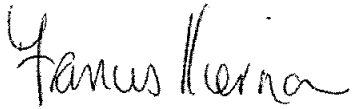
with Bearing Point to cover technical support for the Automated Passport System infrastructure for both hardware and software elements. Bearing Point as the successful tenders hold proprietary knowledge of the system with specialised capability, expertise, and equipment that no other source can immediately provide ensuring compatibility exists with existing equipment and the standardisation of parts.

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@dfat.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@dfat.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