



HM TREASURY

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FOI.responses@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk

Ref: 10/160

Re: Freedom of Information Act 2000: COINS database

Thank you for your FOI request dated 19 February, which we received the following Monday.

You asked for information covering –

- the absolute size of the COINS database were it to be backed up and released in the form of portable media such as hard disks or DVDs
- a copy of the COINS database in an appropriate electronic format.

The data in the COINS database occupies some 11GB of storage.

The data in COINS engages a number of exemptions that require us to balance the public interest as between disclosure and maintaining the exemption. We always seek to provide a final answer within the statutory time limit of twenty working days, including for cases where such a public interest balancing test is required. However section 10(3) of the Act does allow us to take reasonable additional time, as necessary for that activity and I am afraid that in this case we need to do so. We will aim to let you know the outcome by the end of the week.

Chief among the relevant exemptions that require additional consideration time are -

- the exemption for policy formulation and development, where the data is subject to revision by ministerial agreement and/or by Parliament - section 35(1)(a), and
- the exemption for prejudice to the conduct of public affairs, because disclosure of 23 million lines of complex data stands to give rise to misinterpretation and a high volume of follow-up requests disruptive to the work of the Treasury –section 36(2)(c).

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. It will be helpful to us if you remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Paul Morran
Information Rights Unit



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

If you are not happy with this reply, you may request a review by writing to HM Treasury, Information Rights Unit, 2/S2, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ.

Email FOI.responses@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk

Any review request must be made within 2 months of the date of this letter.

It would assist our review if you set out which aspects of the reply concern you and why you are dissatisfied.

If you are not content with the outcome your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Treasury. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

