



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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Mr C Taylor

Our Reference: 02-08-2010-101005-003

request-43198-C7edff82@whatdotheyknow.com

Date: 8 September 2010

Dear Mr Taylor

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: RELEASE OF INFORMATION UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Thank you for your email of 31 July 2010, about the use of Open Source Software (OSS) in the Ministry of Defence (MOD). This has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I would like to apologise for the delay in replying, but it would appear that an administrative oversight made it difficult to identify the appropriate area within the Ministry of Defence to deal with your request. However, it has now been allocated to me to deal with.

The MOD follows the cross Government guidance on the use of OSS. Software applications used by the MOD are selected on their ability to meet our business requirements, taking full account of value for money, long-term viability, security and interoperability. The majority of MOD IT systems, services and applications are procured commercially. MOD does not control the software that is used in the construct of such products and services, and any OSS used will be the choice of the commercial supplier, providing it meets our requirements. The supplier will assess the appropriateness and benefits of OSS against a range of criteria, on a case by case basis. However, all software, whether proprietary or open source has to be evaluated and accredited by the MOD before it can be used. This includes an analysis of the security risk to IT systems, and is designed to ensure that all technical countermeasures have been applied.

You asked for a list of each IT project potentially costing over £1M, indicating its purpose and where the cross Government guidance on OSS has/has not been applied. This information is not held in the format requested, and to gather and collate it would involve canvassing individual business areas across the Department. It has been assessed, therefore, that the effort required to obtain this information and then determine whether, or not, it could be released or whether it would fall, in full or in part, within the remit of any exemptions under the FOI Act, would exceed the appropriate limit. This limit is specified in FOI regulations and for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending three and a half working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. Under the terms of the FOI Act, this means that we are not obliged to comply with this aspect of your request.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Head of Corporate Information, 6th Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Karen Webb