

BIS Ref: FOI 11/1544

Your Ref:

Mr Milo Yiannopoulos

E mail address: request-93229-
58b33bf6@whatdotheyknow.com

12 December 2011

Dear Mr Yiannopoulos

FoI Request 11/1544 - Total cost and annual budget of the Tech City initiative

I am responding to your FOIA request as follows:

(1) *Please provide the total cost to date of the Tech City initiative.*

Response

The total cost to date of the Tech City Initiative is £1,094,346

(2) *Please provide a copy of the annual budget for Tech City, including any investment funds, administrative costs and a breakdown of the salaries of each of Tech City Investment Organisation's employees. These can of course be anonymised if necessary*

Response

The annual budget for the Tech City Initiative is £1,791,500 which includes the following:

- Business Specialists Support including expenses £1,171,000
- Marketing & Communication £150,000
- Events and other promotional Activities £250,000
- UK Based Civil Servants with responsibility for supporting delivery of the Tech City Initiative £220,500.00.

The budget and costs shown above do not include the costs of the portion of time spent by UKTI's people in its 96 markets, 161 locations, overseas as this information is not held centrally.

In addition, please note that the UKTI Tech City Investment Organisation's annual budget of £1,791,500 do not include any investment funds monies.

UKTI is unable to provide a breakdown of salaries for each Tech City Investment Organisation's employees (8 Business Specialists and 4.5 Civil Servants) because of the following reasons:

The Business Specialists are deployed under third party contracts between UKTI, PA Consulting and Grant Thornton LLP. The Specialists are contracted directly by PA Consulting and Grant Thornton LLP and are a mixture of employees and associates. In light of the contracting arrangements UKTI has consulted both PA Consulting and Grant Thornton LLP to establish what information both organisations are prepared to disclose.

Both PA Consulting and Grant Thornton LLP have advised UKTI that they would not wish any personal information relating to the Specialists to be made public, anonymised or otherwise, because it could impact on their commercial position. This includes divulging individual fees, day rates or the CVs of Specialists.

UKTI accepts PA Consulting and Grant Thornton's decision and therefore will withhold this information in line with section 43(2) of the FOIA – commercial interests. This states that information can be withheld if to disclose it would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (this including the interests of the government or any third party.)

The exemption in s.43(2) of the FOIA is one of those that is subject to the public interest balancing test, i.e. information can only be withheld where the public interest in withholding exceeds that in disclosing. UKTI accepts that there is a public interest in maximising transparency and that commercial information should be made public wherever possible. However, in this case we also appreciate that there is a public interest in our suppliers' commercial data being kept confidential where to disclose it might give an unfair advantage to their competitors.

How much PA Consulting and Grant Thornton pay to their employees and sub-contractors is an element of their overall pricing strategy when they come to bid for contracts, and we agree with them that for us to disclose the salaries they pay, even in an anonymised way, could be prejudicial to their competitive position.

In the case of the civil servants UKTI is unable to disclose the information, again, anonymised or otherwise, because due to the small number of civil servants involved in delivery of the Tech City Investment Organisation, any release of salary bands / or redacted salaries may have a detrimental effect on relationships between colleagues

because it would be possible to link this information with individuals within this team. This information has been excluded under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

Section 40(2) concerns personal information and there is a risk of unfairness because releasing this information in this way is likely to enable individuals to be identified from the information.

Section 40(2) (a) (iii) and section 40(3) (a) (i) apply to information whose disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles in the Data Protection Act 1998 (or certain other provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998). This exempts information constituting the personal data of living individuals, the release of which would be in breach of the Department's obligations in respect of the Data Protection Principles as set out in the Data Protection Act. The definition of personal information to which section 40 applies is wide.

In this case, the Department considers that the disclosure of this information falls within the ambit of the first Data Protection Principle, that the Personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, must not be processed unless at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 to the DPA is met. Our view is that release of this information would not be fair and that none of the conditions of Schedule 2 are met. The exemption from the duty to disclose personal data where to do so would breach a data protection principle is an absolute exemption; the public interest test in section 2 of the FOI Act does not apply.

In applying s40 we took into account that any release of information under FOIA is considered a disclosure to the public at large.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter and should be addressed to Martin Cook, Director, Business Group, UKTI, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision as to whether BIS has acted in accordance with the FOIA. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:
Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

BIS Information Rights Unit