



Information Policy & Compliance
bbc.co.uk/foi bbc.co.uk/privacy

A Clerk

By email: request-358211-3e137ec0@whatdotheyknow.com

10 October 2016

Dear A Clerk,

Freedom of Information request – RFI20161661

Thank you for your request to the BBC of 12th September 2016, seeking the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

“In the BBC Charter review there was reference to the opaqueness of BBC Worldwide accounts.

Having studied their recent accounts I can find no reference to their ownership of BBC Worldwide Holdings B. V which I'm led to believe is a dutch shell company.

Could you tell me if:

- a) This account exists*
- b) What is it used for.*
- c) Why doesn't it appear on BBC Worldwide list of companies.”*

The information you request is held by BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm, and a wholly owned subsidiary of the BBC. BBC Worldwide exists to build the reputation of the BBC brand around the world and maximise returns on its behalf for the benefit of the licence fee payer. All of BBC Worldwide's activities are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the BBC standard and values.

As a commercial subsidiary of the BBC, BBC Worldwide is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act by virtue of section 6(1)(b)(ii). However, outside of the Act, we can confirm that BBC Worldwide pays market rate for commercial rights in BBC programming. All such programme rights are owned and held in the UK and all revenues and profits are taxed in the UK. BBC Worldwide Holdings BV (“BV”) is a non-trading entity holding no rights, it is not a royalty

conduit company. BV provides no benefit whatsoever in respect of UK taxation.

Appeal Rights

The BBC does not offer an internal review when the information requested is not covered by the Act. If you disagree with our decision you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow SK9 5AF. Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 (national rate) or see <https://www.ico.org.uk/> .

Please note that should the Information Commissioner's Office decide that the Act does cover this information, exemptions under the Act might then apply.

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights

Freedom of Information

From January 2005 the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. The Act also sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. The term “public authority” is defined in the Act; it includes all public bodies and government departments in the UK. The BBC, Channel 4, S4C and MG Alba are the only broadcasting organisations covered by the Act.

Application to the BBC

The BBC has a long tradition of making information available and accessible. It seeks to be open and accountable and already provides the public with a great deal of information about its activities. BBC Audience Services operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week handling telephone and written comments and queries, and the BBC’s website bbc.co.uk provides an extensive online information resource.

It is important to bear this in mind when considering the Freedom of Information Act and how it applies to the BBC. The Act does not apply to the BBC in the way it does to most public authorities in one significant respect. It recognises the different position of the BBC (as well as Channel 4 and S4C) by saying that it covers information “held for purposes other than those of journalism, art or literature”. This means the Act does not apply to information held for the purposes of creating the BBC’s output (TV, radio, online etc), or information that supports and is closely associated with these creative activities.

A great deal of information within this category is currently available from the BBC and will continue to be so. If this is the type of information you are looking for, you can check whether it is available on the BBC’s website bbc.co.uk or contact BBC Audience Services.

The Act does apply to all of the other information we hold about the management and running of the BBC.

The BBC

The BBC’s aim is to enrich people’s lives with great programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain. It broadcasts radio and television programmes on analogue and digital services in the UK. It delivers interactive services across the web, television and mobile devices. The BBC’s online service is one of Europe’s most widely visited content sites. Around the world, international multimedia broadcaster BBC World Service delivers a wide range of language and regional services on radio, TV, online and via wireless handheld devices, together with BBC World News, the commercially-funded international news and information television channel.

The BBC’s remit as a public service broadcaster is defined in the BBC Charter and Agreement. It is the responsibility of the BBC Trust (the sovereign body within the BBC) to ensure that the organisation delivers against this remit by setting key objectives, approving strategy and policy, and monitoring and assessing performance. The Trustees also safeguard the BBC’s independence and ensure the Corporation is accountable to its audiences and to Parliament.

Day-to-day operations are run by the Director-General and his senior management team, the Executive Board. All BBC output in the UK is funded by an annual Licence Fee. This is determined and regularly reviewed by Parliament. Each year, the BBC publishes an Annual Report & Accounts, and reports to Parliament on how it has delivered against its public service remit.