



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

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Mr Matthew Kennard  
[request-691871-e230f067@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-691871-e230f067@whatdotheyknow.com)

3 December 2020

Dear Mr Kennard,

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI2020/18942**

Thank you for your email of 17th September asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

***According to the DFID website, the FCO has 5 projects active in Bolivia. See here:***  
***<https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/countries...>***

1. ***[Chevening Scholarships in Bolivia](#)***
2. ***[Frontline Diplomatic Enabling Activity in Bolivia](#)***
3. ***[Frontline Diplomatic Enabling Activity in Bolivia](#)***
4. ***[Frontline Diplomatic Enabling Activity \(Economic Security and Opportunity\) in Bolivia](#)***
5. ***[Supporting Human Rights, Democracy and the Rules based International System in Bolivia](#)***

***Please disclose the following information for the years 2015-2019:***

- 1) Are these the only projects run by the FCO in Bolivia?***
- 2) Please provide a list of years these (and other projects) have been run in Bolivia.***
- 3) Please provide an annual budget for each of these projects.***
- 4) Provide FCO evaluations of these projects.***
- 5) Please provide the name of any local organisation which received funding through these projects.***
- 6) Please provide an outline of aims of these projects.***

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested, which we interpreted to be the 5 projects referred to. I can confirm that the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Please find attached some information that can be released to you for Projects 1-3 only. However, a very small amount of information for Projects 1-3 is being withheld under the following FOIA exemptions;

## **Section 27**

The disclosure of some of the information you have sought would be likely to prejudice the interests of the UK abroad. (Section 27(1)(c)).

Section 27(1)(c) is a qualified exemption and as such we have considered where the greater public interest lies. Disclosure could meet the public interest in transparency and accountability. However, the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the UK does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information setting out the thoughts of an official on our projects with Bolivia could potentially damage the relationship between the UK and Bolivia and other states. The relationships are on going and comments - even dating back some time - could be taken into account by Bolivia and other states. This could reduce the UK Government's ability to protect and promote UK interests, which would not be in the public interest. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure

## **Section 43**

Some of the information is exempt under Section 43 (2) of the Act, which relates to commercial interests. The use of this exemption was carefully considered. The factors in favour of disclosure of this information, including the general public interest and greater transparency and accountability, were carefully weighed against the need to allow business-people and commercial organisations the space to conduct their lawful business competitively and without fear of disclosure of sensitive commercial information. We consider that this transparency also poses risks to the protection of commercially confidential information. Failure to protect such commercially sensitive information would limit the sources of information and interlocutors available to the FCDO and limit the FCDO's ability to promote the British economy and lobby for the interests of British businesses overseas. In this case, after such consideration we believe that the public interest in withholding the redacted information outweighs the public interest in its release.

We hold no information on Projects 4 and 5. This is because the "Frontline Enabling Activity" is the modern version of the Bilateral Programme Budget – the small pot of money that posts receive and have authority over to spend on projects supporting post activity. In the past, we understand that this was split up into "Economic Security and Opportunity" and "Supporting Human Rights etc". Not all posts received allocations under these headings. We are aware that funding referred to in this FOI response came only from under the general "Frontline Enabling Activity" not from either of the other two. We are not aware of any funding that our post in La Paz has been allocated under these two headings, so we hold no information.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may then apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCDO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, or online at: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Yours sincerely,

**Information Rights Unit**

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