



Cabinet Office

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Tim Lennon

By email: [request-688671-6252f677@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-688671-6252f677@whatdotheyknow.com)

FOI Reference: FOI2020/12049  
25/09/2020

Dear Tim Lennon

I refer to your request where you asked:

*“Earlier this year, there was a procurement for this: Global Digital Marketplace - value-chain mapping of procurement functions (Link: <https://www.digitalmarketplace.service.gov.uk/digital-outcomes-and-specialists/opportunities/12171>)*

*I'd like to see the output documents from this exercise, please. (The analysis, recommendations, etc.)”*

I am writing to advise you that, following a search of our paper and electronic records, the information you have requested is exempt under section 27(1) (a), (c) and (d) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 27 exempts information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, the interests of the United Kingdom abroad, or the promotion or protection by the United Kingdom of its interests abroad.

Information you have requested is also exempt under section 27(2) which exempts confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom. Information obtained from a State is confidential at any time while the terms on which it

was obtained require it to be held in confidence or while the circumstances in which it was obtained make it reasonable for the State to expect that it will be so held.

Section 27 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours releasing or withholding this material. The Cabinet Office recognises there is a general public interest in openness in public affairs in order to ensure that the public are able to scrutinise the manner in which public authorities reach important decisions. This makes for greater accountability, increases public confidence in government decision-making and helps to encourage greater public engagement with political life. The Cabinet Office also recognises that there is a general public interest in being able to evaluate the foreign policy of the government.

I have weighed these public interests against a strong public interest in the United Kingdom being able to have open and honest conversations with partners about the strengths and weaknesses of government procurement systems, so that these can be improved. To best offer our expertise and learn from partners these conversations require confidentiality, to build and retain the trust of our international partners. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.

The information is also exempt from release under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act, which protects information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

Section 43 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours our release of this material. There is a public interest in the disclosure of information about how governments procure services to help tackle corruption, as there is a public interest in transparency and accountability around government undertakings. This interest extends to the matter of how government money and resources are expended in order to achieve these important aims. In this respect disclosure of the information requested would allow scrutiny of public procurement and in doing so inform the public debate as to whether public funds are being put to the best possible use.

Although there is a public interest in the efficient use of public resources, disclosure of information relating to this mapping exercise would be likely to affect adversely the commercial interests of those it assesses. Taking into account all the circumstances of the case, I have determined that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the FOI Team quoting the reference number above.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Eirian Walsh Atkins  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS  
email: [foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued. If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

*Yours sincerely*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eirian Walsh Atkins', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

*FOI Team*  
*Cabinet Office*