



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Corporate Service Centre
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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15 August 2014

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0541-14

Thank you for your email of 16 December 2013 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- Who is your GPC provider (does this vary by internal/sub department)?
- How many active cards do you currently have?
- What is the length of contract (start and finish)?
- Does the contract have a break clause?
- What was the total spend for FY 2012-2013?
- What is the forecasted spend for FY 2013-2014?
- What types of cards do you hold as part of your GPC programme (Corporate, Lodge/BTA, Purchasing, Prepaid)?
- Do you have cards from different providers or are your cards all from the same provider?
- What was the total department spend?
- What is the breakout of spend between travel/entertainment (purchases such as transportation, accommodation, restaurants and other travel related expenses) and all other spend?

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold the following information relevant to your request.

The credit card provider for all of the FCO is the Royal Bank of Scotland. We do not use another card provider.

The current contract term is 1st February 2014 – 31st Jan 2016 (optional further year up to 31st Jan 2017). There are no specific break clauses other than the standard 3 month notice that can be given at any time during the contract.

As of 22 May 2014 the FCO has 5,165 Corporate Credit Cards (CCCs) and 1,645 Government Procurement Cards (GPCs) including 12 Hosted/Lodge cards.

The total spend for FY 2012-2013 was £26.5m across all cards.

As of 22 May we have spent £9.5m in FY 2013/14 and we forecast that we will spend between £45-50m across all cards based on the spend to date this Financial Year. This reflects a policy to use cards for more low cost expenditure rather than other procurement methods so does not imply any increase in overall costs to the taxpayer.

Total Departmental spend information is published in our Departmental Report and is available freely at [Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13 - Publications - GOV.UK](#) and includes breakdown and analysis by spend type.

Corporate Credit Cards (CCCs) and Government Procurement Cards (GPCs) are an efficient way to buy goods and services because they avoid the need to raise and process requisitions, purchase orders and invoices in a back office system thereby reducing overhead costs for the taxpayer. The Procurement Card is used for the purchase of low value goods and services which are required to support FCO operations and support the Government's transparency agenda by allowing individuals' expenses to be open to public scrutiny. The corporate card is used for the expenses of individual FCO staff when carrying out official duties.

The FCO has some 270 locations around the world, we have a particularly large number of low value transactions which are otherwise very costly to process. We regularly review the operation of these card schemes along with other Government Departments to ensure that they are as efficient and cost effective as possible.

The FCO has stringent guidance for use of CCC and GPC and both our Internal Audit Department and Corporate Services Centre carries out spot checks on card use to ensure that correct procedures are being followed.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

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Yours sincerely,

Corporate Service Centre



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