



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Human Resources Directorate**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

04 August 2014

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0166-14**

Thank you for your email of 11 February asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*I read in last week's Guardian that an executive search firm had been contracted to find a new Chair of the Food Standards Agency (FSA). I also understand that this is a widespread practice in the Civil Service. I am trying to understand the 'value for money' logic in this, given that various government departments have established HR teams.*

*I am therefore requesting a copy of the top three shortlisted tender/proposals for the recruitment of Chief Economist at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which I understand is currently in progress. I am keen to know how much this particular exercise has cost the taxpayer and would be content with a range, if specifying the exact cost of each of these three tenders would be commercially sensitive.*

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 information relevant to your request.

A competitive tendering process using a Cabinet Office procurement framework is run to select a provider for each external recruitment campaign. The spend on individual recruitment campaigns varies according to the job role and the type of advertising most appropriate to attract good applicants. This can vary from adverts in local and national newspapers to specialist publications and on-line advertising.

We received 4 tenders to manage the recruitment of the Chief Economist, which were submitted as *commercial in confidence*. We regularly use commercial contractors, and in

order to gain best value for money, we must maintain their confidence and refrain from releasing information that would be likely to prejudice their commercial interests. 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 the commercial contractors the space to conduct their business competitively and without fear of disclosure of sensitive commercial information. Disclosure of the tender information under the Act would prejudice the companies' legitimate commercial interests. We therefore believe that in this case the balance of public interest lies in withholding the information under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act.

The winning bid was submitted by VEREDUS, with a value of £22,000. We will publish the contract details on 'Contracts Finder' website to meet the government transparency commitments:

<https://online.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/?site=1000&lang=en>

For ease of reference I have listed the details below:

Awarded value: £22,000

Awarded on: 21/1/2014

Awarded supplier: VEREDUS, 2nd Floor, Ludgate House, 245 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 9UF

Estimate length of contract: 3 months

Name of the buying organisation: FCO

Description of the contract: Recruitment Services

Who to contact: [csc.recruitment@fco.gov.uk](mailto:csc.recruitment@fco.gov.uk)

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.

Yours sincerely,

Human Resources Directorate



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.