



Department  
of Energy &  
Climate Change

Department of Energy & Climate Change  
3 Whitehall Place  
London  
SW1A 2AW

17 June 2014

[www.gov.uk/decc](http://www.gov.uk/decc)

Our ref: EIR 14-0772

Dear

Thank you for your e-mail of 17th May, where you requested answers to the following information:

***Please can you answer my following FOI requests;***

***1 - can you please provide me with an update on the number of dedicated full time staff that will be working for DECC on regards to there responsibilities associated with the unconventional gas industry***

***2 - can you please also confirm the total budget allocated to DECC for managing the fracking industry***

***3 - can you please confirm how the budget mentioned in question 2 will be allocated (i.e locations, specific element of works,),***

***4 - what is the process that the DECC will adopt to safeguard the current environmental concerns of fracking.***

***5 - i do not wish to know the names of the employees of the DECC who will be working to regulate fracking, but can you please provide me with details of their relevant experience and qualifications in regards to regulating onshore gas extraction.***

***6 - can you please confirm if any of the DECC team working in the 'fracking regulation' team have worked previously for the fossil fuel industry?***

***7 - can you please provide me with an update of any meetings or correspondence that the You have held with EA, HSE, UKCOOG, Third energy, Dart, Viking gas, rathlin, cuadrilla, lgas, centrica, egdon and the global warming policy foundation - Please provide me with a copy if any written correspondence, emails, meeting minutes and agendas, phone***

***conversations and the like. Question 7 is specially in relation to unconventional gas extraction (fracking, shale gas, CBM, UCG).***

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have the right to

- know whether we hold the information you require
- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).

The answers to each of the above questions are as follows.

**A1.** The number of staff whose work for DECC relates to their responsibilities associated with the unconventional gas industry are 14.2 full time equivalents (FTEs). This is the staff complement of the Office of Unconventional Gas and Oil (OUGO).

**A2.** DECC does not hold a budget for managing the fracking industry. However, OUGO leads on the policy area and co-ordinates the work of other government departments and regulators, each of whom have their own costs and budgets. OUGO's admin budget for 2014-15 is £794K and programme budget for activities is £987k.

**A3.** Please see the answer to point 2 above

**A4.** The relevant environmental regulator has responsibility for assessing risks posed by any operations, and decides whether they can be permitted. More information on environmental issues can be accessed via these links – [Facts about Fracking](#) and [Regulatory Road Map](#).

**A5.** OUGO staff are a mixture of civil servants from various backgrounds with prior public and private sector experience. They draw on expertise from specialists in the Department's Licensing and Exploration Division, other parts of DECC, relevant regulators and other Government Departments as and when needed.

**A6.** The Head of the Office, Mr Duarte Figueira, was seconded by DECC to Technip Offshore Wind Limited (TOWL) for one-year from April 2012. TOWL is part of Technip, which is active in oil and gas as a major contractor. Another member of OUGO staff had a 4 month secondment at BP in the 1990s.

**A7.** From our preliminary assessment, it is clear that we will not be able to answer this part of your request without exceeding the cost limit of £600 provided under s.12 of the Freedom of Information Act. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information. The Act provides that we are not obliged to comply with requests where the estimated cost of complying would exceed this limit.

In order to provide you with the information on the scale that you have requested would require undertaking a thorough search of all forms of written communication across all ministers and their staff, as well as any member of staff in the Department with any responsibility potentially impacting on unconventional gas, in order to locate and provide this information.

We estimate that it will take us in excess of 3.5 days working days to undertake this task. Therefore your request under question 7 will not be processed further.

You may wish to refine your request on this point by narrowing its scope and being more specific about what material in particular you wish to obtain. You can also further refine your request by narrowing any dates or periods of time relevant to the information you are seeking, so that we are better able to retrieve any information. You may also wish to look at the Department's website pages where we have already published some of the information relating your request. For ease of reference I have attached below links to published information which you may find helpful.

**FOI Ref 13/1036** – Correspondence and meetings between OUGO and Cuadrilla from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 13<sup>th</sup> August 2013, published on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/correspondence-and-meetings-between-cuadrilla-and-the-office-of-unconventional-gas-and-oil>.

**FOI Ref 13/1627** – Correspondence and meetings between OUGO and UKOOG, IGAS and Centrica from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013, published on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/correspondence-and-meetings-between-the-office-of-unconventional-gas-and-oil-ukoog-centrica-and-igas>.

### **Appeals procedure**

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information, you may request an internal review within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter. If you wish to request an internal review, please contact: The Information Rights Unit, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET. Email [foi.requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foi.requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Office of Unconventional Gas and Oil (OUGO)