



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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11th August 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0605-15

Thank you for your email of 23rd June 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- 1. Attached is a table that was published in a document called "Adapting the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's global estate to the modern world" published by the National Audit Office. Could you provide me with a similar table but with more up to date information covering all the intervening years.*
- 2. Which 20 diplomatic missions cost the most to maintain during the 2013-14 financial year and how much was the sum paid on each?*
- 3. In relation to these 20 diplomatic missions (i) what was the make and model of vehicle provided for the use of HM ambassadors, (ii) how much was spent on hospitality at each mission.*
- 4. In relation to these 20 diplomatic missions please state across those various missions what were the five most expensive restoration, decoration or renovation projects undertaken that were completed in the 13-14 financial year. For each of these sites please give a description of the project, where it took place and a breakdown of costs at each one.*

Question 1. The information you are looking for is published in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's Annual Departmental Reports for each year. These reports are available online at Gov.UK at the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-report-and-accounts>. Under section 21 of the Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you.

Questions 2 and 3. I can confirm that the FCO does hold information relevant to your request. I have provided details as requested below:

	<u>POST</u>	<u>2013/14 Maintenance Costs</u>	<u>HMA Vehicle Provided</u>	<u>2013/14 Hospitality Costs</u>	<u>Top 5 Completed Project Costs 2013/14</u>
1	Amman	£317,489	Range Rover Vogue	£23,195	£173,692 for Fire Safety Work.
2	Baghdad	£688,958	Toyota Land Cruiser	£23,863	
3	Beijing	£131,556	Jaguar	£205,023	
4	Brasilia	£183,735	Range Rover HSE	£135,139	
5	Brussels	£205,593	Jaguar XF 3.0	£144,660 Total for Brussels, Brussels UKRep, Brussels UKDel.	
6	Buenos Aires	£395,190	Jaguar XJ Sovereign	£29,523	
7	Cairo	£160,459	Jaguar Xj 4.2	£71,995	£117,762 for Electrical works – lighting, including emergency lighting.
8	Dubai	£138,995	Jaguar XJ 5.0L LWB Premium Auto	£7,915	
9	Kabul	£338,064	Toyota Land Cruiser	£97,215	
10	Khartoum	£134,875	Range Rover	£21,991	
11	Kingston	£175,524	Land Rover Discovery	£30,444	
12	Lagos	£278,478	Range Rover	£11,924	
13	Moscow	£283,295	Jaguar XJ	£57,998	
14	Nairobi	£503,219	Toyota Land Cruiser	£89,802	
15	New Delhi	£254,943	Land Rover Discovery	£136,334	£157,578 for Asbestos Removal and Fire Alarms.

16	Paris	£1,302,050	Jaguar S Type Executive Sovereign	£225,112	£210,935 for Air Conditioning (57% of total costs of £210,935). Perimeter Gate Security Upgrade. General Maintenance.
17	Sana'a	£159,095	Toyota Land Cruiser	£23,632	
18	The Hague	£226,266	Jaguar XF 3.0	£37,258	£555,096.57 (part of total spend of £1,212,260.25 for 12/13 and 13/14) Windows replacement and removal of asbestos sills.
19	Vienna	£160,074	Jaguar XJ L	£74,207	
				Total for Vienna and Vienna UKMis.	
20	Washington	£439,875	Jaguar XJ Long wheelbase	£226,172	
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£6,477,733</u>		<u>£1,673,402</u>	

The FCO owns a considerable number of heritage buildings that require significant upkeep and maintenance. We also have to maintain secure premises in locations that have a variety of security threats.

Maintenance costs include repairs and refurbishments to our properties and can include air conditioning, repainting, engineering, electrical, mechanical installations and plant, building works, security works, health and safety works and maintenance, waste disposal, cleaning services, landscape gardening services and pest control.

Hospitality costs shown cover costs for a range of events that deliver FCO and HMG objectives, such as promoting British business and attracting foreign investment. All spending is rigorously scrutinised to ensure it represents good value for money for British taxpayers.

Maintenance and hospitality costs for the above Posts in 2009/10 were: £8,991,232 and £2,007,971 respectively. Thus we spent a total £2,848,068 less in 2013/14 than in 2009/10. A 25.89% reduction.

Question 4. I have provided in the chart above detail of the five most expensive restoration, renovation, or decoration projects completed at the 20 Diplomatic Missions listed for the 13-14 financial year showing the main cost headers for the works carried out. Your request for descriptions and breakdowns of costs for each of these projects falls under the exemption in section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act, which relates to commercial interests. In

applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure.

There is a public interest in the disclosure of commercial information to ensure effective, open and honest use of public money and the scrutiny of public licensing in accordance with published policy and to provide an environment where business can better respond to government opportunities.

However, we consider that this transparency also poses risks in that companies and individuals would, if this information were disclosed, be much less likely to provide the FCO with commercially sensitive information. This would limit the number of companies willing to provide their services to the FCO, reducing our ability to keep our costs down and provide value for the taxpayer. In this case after such consideration we believe that the public interest in withholding the redacted information outweighs the public interest in its release.

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 in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Estates Department



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