



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Caribbean Territories and Strategy
Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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07 October 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0907-15

Thank you for your email of 2 September 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked a series of questions about financial services in the British Virgin Islands.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested and I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold some information relevant to your request.

Please find below the information that the FCO can release to you.

- *How many ministerial-level meetings have taken place between UK ministers and members of the government of the British Virgin Islands since 2013 and how many of these have included discussion of legislation concerning beneficial ownership?*

Since the beginning of 2013 there have been three ministerial-level meetings where beneficial ownership has been on the agenda. These occurred in June 2013, November 2013 and December 2014. In addition bilateral meetings/telephone calls where beneficial ownership has been discussed took place in May 2013, June 2013, April 2014, June 2014, October 2014, and March 2015.

- *Have any representations been received by the UK government from the People's Republic of China regarding the British Virgin Islands, especially in relation to potential changes to the BVI system of recording corporate ownership? If so, when were the representations received and what has been their argument?*

The FCO has not received any such representations and is not aware of any representations having been made to other parts of HMG.

- *How much money is managed in the British Virgin Islands and what is the breakdown of the countries of origin of that money?*

This information is not held by the FCO.

- *Does the UK Government have an assessment(s) of the risk of corruption and tax evasion being facilitated through the British Virgin Islands? If so, please supply a copy.*

The FCO does not hold this information. It may be of more relevance to the work of Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), who you may wish to ask to assist. The NCA produces a [National Strategic Assessment](#) which does cover the OTs.

- *How many requests have been made to the British Virgin Islands over the last five years and from which countries, for information which could assist in tax or anti-corruption investigations? We request details of the number of requests that were complied with and the reasons for rejection of any rejected requests.*

This information is not held by the FCO. This is a devolved matter to the Government of the British Virgin Islands. The BVI has signed 27 bilateral Tax Information Exchange Agreements, have had the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance on Tax Matters extended to it, and is also an early adopter of the Common Reporting Standard, which will allow for automatic exchange of tax information from 2017. BVI has also implemented the EU Savings Tax Directive which allows for exchange of tax information.

- *How many requests has the government of the UK received from foreign governments for assistance in relation to the requests described in the question above?*

The UK Government is not the competent authority and we do not hold this information.

- *How many requests has the UK government received from foreign governments for help in tracing and/or freezing assets thought to be held in the British Virgin Islands, over the last five years?*

The UK Government is not the competent authority and therefore we do not hold this information.

- *How many representations has the UK government received over the last five years from other governments about the offshore financial services provided by the British Virgin Islands, broken down by the governments making the representations?*

The FCO has received no such requests from other governments.

- *On how many occasions over the last five years have the Serious Fraud Office and Metropolitan Police sought information about the identities of individuals linked to companies registered or incorporated in the British Virgin Islands?*

This information is not held by the FCO.

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Yours sincerely,

Caribbean Territories and Strategy Department
FCO



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