



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Middle East and North Africa Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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22 April 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0352-16

Thank you for your email of 30 March asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to inquire as to the funds spent on the GCC countries for projects, from the Arab Partnership Fund and Conflict, Security and Stability Fund, for the financial year 2015/16.

Please provide a breakdown:

- *Arab Partnership Fund spending on projects in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Oman.*
- *Conflict, Security and Stability Fund spending on projects in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Oman.*

Please include the breakdown of the individual projects for each country also.

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

We funded one project in the Gulf through the Arab Partnership fund in financial year 2015/16. This was in Oman and the project was allocated £5,980.

We funded thirteen projects in the Gulf through the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund: ten in Bahrain and three in Oman. Bahrain was allocated a total of £2m for these projects, and spent £1.74m. Oman was allocated £500,000 and spent £450,000. This was a total CSSF spend of £2.19m for the financial year 2015/16.

The FCO does not publically list the full details and financial breakdown of our projects due to commercial sensitivities. These details have therefore been withheld under Section 43 (2) of the FOIA. The use of this exemption was carefully considered. 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 commercial

organisations the space to conduct their lawful business competitively and without fear of disclosure of sensitive commercial information. Failure to protect such commercially sensitive information would limit the sources of information and interlocutors available to the FCO. It could impact the FCO's ability to deliver its assistance programme in the Gulf if project implementers felt that commercially sensitive information regarding their work could be released into the public domain. For these reasons we concluded that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in its release.

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Yours sincerely,

Gulf Team



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