



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

Corporate Services Centre  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

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

17 March 2015

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0183-15**

Thank you for your email of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- 1) *Whether we monitor our suppliers' compliance with contractual requirements to pay contractors within 30 days. Please answer yes or no.*
  - a. *If yes, what percentage of undisputed paper invoices do our suppliers pay to contractors in 5 days and 30 days?*
- 2) *What percentage of undisputed invoices did our department pay within 5 working days in the last financial year?*
- 3) *What percentage of paper invoices has our department paid in 5 working days in the last financial year? When measured from the invoice date.*

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

- 1) Authority to enter into contracts is devolved to FCO Directorates in London and the FCO's network of nearly 270 diplomatic overseas posts. Best commercial practice is supported by comprehensive guidance as well as a network of global hubs to provide expertise.

As there is no central record for the information you have requested, calculating this figure would exceed the cost threshold as set out in Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate

limit. The limit has been specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. For central government the appropriate limit is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 3 ½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. Your request as presently formulated is widely-framed and I estimate that it will take more than 3 ½ working days to locate, retrieve and extract this information. In these circumstances we are not obliged under the Act to comply with your request. You may therefore wish to refine your request to narrow its scope to bring it within the appropriate limit. You may wish to limit your request to a particular Directorate or country.

- 2) Last financial year (2013/2014), the FCO paid 85.0% of undisputed invoices within 5 working days. This is an improvement over financial year 2012/2013 when the FCO paid 83.7% of undisputed invoices within 5 working days.
- 3) Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide the figure for paper invoices paid within 5 working days against the invoice date as the FCO produces reports based on the “Terms Date” of the invoice which is the date we received the invoice for processing for payment. Against this “Terms Date”, the FCO paid 85.0% within 5 working days as stated in point 2.

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.

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Yours sincerely,

Corporate Services Centre



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