



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Corporate Services Centre**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
450-500 Silbury Boulevard  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 2AD

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

06 June 2016

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0402-16**

Thank you for your email of 13 April 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information:*

- 1. How many procurement cards are issued in your department?*
- 2. Have you had an internal audit of procurement card spending in the last three years? If so can you provide the report(s)?*
- 3. If any procurement card holder has been reprimanded for its usage or had a transaction queried for validity could you please provide the redacted details?*
- 4. Could you provide the name of the bank(s) who provide your departmental procurement cards.*
- 5. Could you please provide the following spending details on all departmental Government Procurement Cards and any other credit cards or equivalent that are paid for out of public funds in .csv format:*
  - Posted date and occurred date if available*
  - Billing amount (please let state how you express returns e.g. as a negative number, as a number in brackets or other variations)*
  - Merchant name (as expressed in the bank statements if available)*
  - Category of spending type if available (plus details of the classification system and the banking classification system if also available e.g Merchant Category*
  - Code*
  - Justification (if given)*

*I request the above data for the last 3 fiscal years (2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16). If this is not deliverable in a single request could you provide details for the last two fiscal years and summary total for fiscal year 2013/14 (with category breakdown if available). If you cannot provide all of the above within the scope mentioned above, please provide what available information you have and an explanation for why you cannot provide the data broken down into that field.*

*If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to the information exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please provide advice and assistance, under your Section 16 obligations, as to how I can refine my request to be included in the scope of the Act.*

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 the following information relevant to your request.

The FCO has some 270 locations around the world and we have a particularly large number of low value transactions which are otherwise very costly to process. We regularly review the operation of these card schemes along with other Government Departments to ensure that they are as efficient and cost effective as possible.

1. As of 3 May the FCO has 7178 Corporate Credit Cards and 2817 Government Procurement Cards in circulation within the network.
2. We have two Internal Audit reports covering procurement card spend in the period stipulated. The 2013/14 report was an Internal Audit report in the form of a management letter and the 2014/15 report was produced by Internal Audit for the Cabinet Office on their instructions. These are attached.
3. The FCO has stringent guidance for use of CCC and GPC and both our Internal Audit Department and Corporate Services Centre carries out spot checks on card use to ensure that correct procedures are being followed.

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.

We confirm we hold information within scope of point 3 of your request but we estimate that we are unable to provide this data within your requested time period:

“For the last 3 fiscal years (2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16)”

Nor your narrowed request of:

“If this is not deliverable in a single request could you provide details for the last two fiscal years and summary total for fiscal year 2013/14 (with category breakdown if available)?”

Furthermore we estimate that we would be unable to provide this data for a single year, (in view of the volume of data that would likely need to be inspected by a wide number of internal stakeholders) but that we may be able to provide a single month, if you were to refine for a particular month of a particular year.

4. The credit card provider for all of the FCO is the Royal Bank of Scotland.
5. The FCO holds some information relevant to your request, some of which is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 (1) (Information accessible to the applicant by other means) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as it is already easily reasonably accessible to you. The FCO publishes all procurement card transactions over £500 [here](#) on the GOV.UK website.

We are unable to give you all the information you seek under Q5 as at present as this would exceed the cost limit under Section 12, as detailed above (q3).

Yours sincerely,

Corporate Services Centre



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.