



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Conflict Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

14 February 2017

Your Freedom Of Information Request: FOI 0722-16

Thank you for your request for information. In your request you asked for;

A list of projects funded out of the 'Regional/Country Strategies' portion of the CSSF in FY15/16 and FY16/17, in each of the following countries:

- *Bahrain*
- *Egypt*
- *Saudi Arabia*
- *United Arab Emirates*
- *Pakistan*
- *Indonesia*
- *The Maldives*
- *Iran*

The costs of each project;

Confirmation of whether a Government Minister approved an OSJA assessment for the project, and if so in which Department that Minister served.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does hold information falling within the terms of your request for Bahrain, Egypt and Pakistan. It does not hold information for Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, the Maldives and Iran as the CSSF does not have programmes in these countries.

The information that we can release to you is enclosed. However, some information has been withheld under section 27 (International Relations).

Bahrain: Please see attached list in the annex A. However, some of the information we are withholding under Section 27(1) (a) of the FOIA which recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if it was disclosed. In this case, the release of information relating to details of specific projects could harm our relations with Bahrain.

The application of s.27 (1) (a) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about our relations with Bahrain. However, the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. This relationship of trust allows for the free and frank exchange of information on the understanding that it will be treated in confidence. If the UK

does not respect such confidences, its ability to protect and promote UK interest through international relations will be prejudiced. Bahrain may be more reluctant to share sensitive information with the UK Government in future and may be less likely to respect the confidentiality of information supplied by the UK Government, to the detriment of UK interests. We acknowledge that disclosure could meet the public interest in transparency and accountability. Indeed, we are transparent about the UK government's support to Bahrain's reform programme – it is detailed in the FCO's human rights report, which is updated annually, and through public correspondence and parliamentary questions. For all these reasons, we consider that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information covered by section 27 (1)(a).

OSJA assessments were carried out before the launch of all of these projects and were cleared appropriately.

Egypt: Please see attached list in the annex B of projects and costs available at the time of your request. This covers 2015-16. Where appropriate, OSJA assessments were carried out before the launch of projects and cleared appropriately.

Pakistan: Please see attached list in the annex C.

The FCO can neither confirm nor deny whether the above information represents all the information held that would meet the terms of your request, as the duty to comply with section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of sections 23(5). Section 23 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. We do not therefore have to apply the public interest test.

Where appropriate, OSJA assessments were carried out before the launch of projects and cleared appropriately. We can confirm that for the project 'Training for Civilian Agencies to build capacity in countering Improvised Explosive Devices', an OSJA was cleared by a Ministry of Defence Minister.

Yours sincerely,

Conflict Department



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.