



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Room G/8, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.gov.uk/acoba>

21 April 2016

BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: SUSANNA MASON

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Susanna Mason, the former Director General, Commercial, in Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) within the Ministry of Defence (MOD). She proposes to take up an appointment with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

The appointment is a full-time, salaried position. Ms Mason held her position as DG Commercial, between July 2014 and February 2016. Between November 2012 and July 2014 Ms Mason was DG Exports in the MOD, responsible for the MOD's contribution to the effort to sell military equipment to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and for MOD's contribution to exports more generally. Although Ms Mason had not been involved in specific export deals with the UAE since December 2013, as DG Commercial she was inevitably part of the exports landscape. As DG Commercial she played a leadership role in MOD's engagement with the UK defence industry and overseas partners.

Ms Mason has been offered a position with PwC Middle East as Regional Senior Partner. Her role will be to advise governments and organisations throughout the Middle East on strategies for broadening non-oil revenue sources and achieving fiscal sustainability. The initial activities she will be undertaking will be focused on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, advising government bodies such as the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Labour on job creation, city development and growth areas outside oil including cyber, infrastructure and entertainment.

The Committee took into account that Ms Mason's appointment will not include any contact or dealings with her former department or government more generally. A substantial contract was awarded to PwC by DE&S at MOD while Ms Mason was DG Commercial but the Committee was assured that she had no involvement in granting or managing the contract. The Committee was also assured that she has had no other official dealings with the company, has not been involved in

any decisions that might affect the business of PwC with MOD and that she has not been involved in any policy decisions or regulatory work that have affected or could affect PwC or its competitors.

The Committee also took into account that Ms Mason had worked for PwC before she became a civil servant in 2008.

Ms Mason told the Committee that she has been chosen for this role because of her commercial and consulting skills, not because of her role as DG Commercial or her knowledge of UK or global defence procurement. Indeed, Ms Mason and PwC have expressly confirmed to the Committee that her new role is wholly outside the defence sector and as such she will not be working with Defence departments or the defence industry.

The Committee considered that given her previous roles in MOD, and also PwC's continuing relationship with DE&S, the appointment may give rise to some public concern (unofficial reports about Ms Mason's appointment to PwC had already appeared in the media). The Committee considered that it was appropriate for there to be a gap between Ms Mason leaving the MoD and taking up a position with PwC.

The Secretary of State for Defence accepted the Committee's advice that there was no reason why Ms Mason should not accept this position, subject to the following conditions:

- A waiting period of six months from her last day of Crown service;
- She may not contact defence departments of other governments, the defence industry or the UK Ministry of Defence for twenty-four months from her last day of Crown service in her capacity as an employee of PwC;
- For 12 months from her last day of service she should not provide advice to PwC or its clients on the terms of a bid or contract relating directly to the work of the Ministry of Defence;
- She should not draw on any privileged information available to her from her time in Crown service; and
- For two years from her last day in service, she should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of PwC, its subsidiaries or clients.

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister "should not engage in communication with Government - including Ministers, special advisers and officials - with a view to influencing a Government decision or policy [including applications for awards or grants] in relation to their own interests, or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted".

I should be grateful if you could ensure that we are informed as soon as Ms Mason takes up this position, or if it is announced that she will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether she had complied with the rules.

I should also be grateful if you would ask that Ms Mason informs us if she proposes to extend or otherwise change the nature of her role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for her to make a fresh application.

Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website and include the main details of the application, together with the Advisory Committee's advice, in the regularly updated consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Richardson
Committee Secretariat