



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Arabian Peninsula Joint Unit
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

22 February 2018

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0083-18

Thank you for your email of 24 January asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act and relates to the Causeway Institute. <http://www.cipcr.org/>

1). Please provide details of any partnership or contact between the Causeway Institute and the FCO in relation to work between Bahrain and Northern Ireland carried out by Causeway between 2013 and 2015 (referred to here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hm-ambassadors-speech-to-the-causeway-institute-internationals-alumni-event>)

By 'details' I mean:

- did the Causeway Institute received funding from the FCO for this work between Bahrain and Northern Ireland? If yes, please provide details for each calendar year.*
- please provide any project proposals, monitoring or evaluation reports pertaining to Causeway's work between Bahrain and Northern Ireland held by the FCO*
- please provide any other relevant information held by the FCO about Causeway's work between Bahrain and Northern Ireland*

2.) Please provide any email correspondence between the British Embassy in London and Jeffrey Donaldson from 2013 to 2016.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does hold information falling within the terms of your request.

The UK has been providing a range of technical, practical assistance to the Government of Bahrain since 2012. The range of assistance supports the Government of Bahrain's implementation of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and UN Universal Periodic Review recommendations. While we have previously funded projects from the Causeway Institute for Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution (CIPCR), there are no projects being funded this financial year 2017/18 from either CIPCR or the Bahrain Institute of Political Development (BIPD).

Some of the material you requested falls under the exemption defined by section 21 (1), which relates to information which is reasonably accessible to the applicant. This is an absolute exemption and so the Public Interest Test does not apply.

Information around these projects is available in the public domain and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-release-causeway-institute-and-bahrain>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/bahrain-country-case-study-update>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-release-technical-assistance-to-bahrain>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-release-uk-technical-assistance-provided-to-bahrain>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-release-assistance-to-bahrain>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hm-ambassadors-speech-to-the-causeway-institute-internationals-alumni-event>

In respect of your remaining questions, information the Foreign and Commonwealth Office holds is being withheld under Section 27 (International Relations) of the FOIA. Section 43 (Commercial Interests) was also looked at but considered not to apply.

Section 27(1)(a), concerning International Relations, applies here because disclosure would be likely to prejudice the relationship between the United Kingdom and Bahrain. The application of section 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. But section 27(1)(a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between States. We assess that the disclosure of certain details about UK-funded projects in Bahrain could damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and Bahrain. This would reduce the UK Government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with Bahrain, counter to the public interest. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

Yours sincerely,

Head of Arabian Peninsula Joint Unit

