



Ministry  
of Defence

Secretariat  
Defence Infrastructure Organisation  
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01 March 2018

[REDACTED]  
Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence of 31 January 2018 requesting the following information:

*The IFA2 France-UK Grid Interconnector project started in 2010. The latest IFA2 Consultation Report, lists 81 stakeholder Groups and 29 Individuals, as interested parties. MOD does not appear on that list. The Marine Management Organisation, has advised me that on May 26th 2016, MOD was invited to submit a response to the IFA2 project. Despite reminders, and an invitation to extend the 42 day statutory consultation period - MOD failed to submit a response.*

*MOD(Navy) is a prime stakeholder in this project. The IFA2 Interconnector will carry 400,000 Volts DC, beneath the Channel. The cable route will cross Portsmouth Harbour, travel up the Solent, and make landfall at Lee-on-Solent. Every RN warship entering or leaving Portsmouth will have to pass over, or run parallel to those subsea cables. This could cause EMI issues which degrade the operational capability of onboard defence electronic equipment.*

*Associated British Ports statistics, indicate that annually, there are 70,000 marine movements around the Port of Southampton. The Queens Harbour Master calculates the figure for Portsmouth Harbour to be 80,000 marine movements annually. The life of a subsea cable is around 40 years. Over that period, there will be a minimum of 6,000,000 movements across, or parallel to those cables. Statistically, at least 1 of those 6,000,000 movements will damage the cable(s). It takes 3 to 4 months to repair a damaged cable. The disruption caused to the Ports of Southampton, and Portsmouth would be considerable.*

*Can you please provide answers to the following:-*

- 1. As a major stakeholder in this project - why did MOD (Navy) fail to respond to the Marine Management Organisation's consultation request of 26th May 2016?*
- 2. If MOD is still unaware of the IFA2 project - upon receipt of this FOI request, can you confirm that MOD will investigate the defence implications of routing those subsea cables so close to the UK's most important defence installation?*
- 3. Subsea cable damage anywhere in the approach to Portsmouth - could seriously disrupt the operational capability of our two new aircraft carriers. Having spent £6.2 Billion on those warships - has MOD carried out a risk assessment to assess the threat, and formulate corrective action?*
- 4. Do you feel confident to state that the proposed route of the IFA2 subsea cables will not disrupt present, or future naval operations?*

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

In response to your questions, I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) received the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) consultation but did not complete a response owing to issues relating to workload and availability of relevant staff resources at the time. MOD still value the engagement opportunity presented by MMO.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) MOD can confirm they investigated the implications of the cable route on MOD activities and does not consider that the IFA2 cable installation scheme will affect defence interests.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact us in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

DIO Secretariat

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Yours sincerely,

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