



Ministry
of Defence

Our Ref: FOI2020/08434

Your Ref: 14/20

Ministry of Defence
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17 August 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email received on 4 July 2020 requesting the following information:

“A list of all projects managed by the Defence Nuclear Organisation, including the total budget and intended delivery date for each project.”

Thank you also for your email received on 18 July 2020, which “for the purposes of clarification”, redefined your request as one for the following information:

“A list of all ongoing projects for which an Outline Business Case has been prepared by the Defence Nuclear Organisation and subsequently approved.

A list of all projects for which a full Business Case has been prepared by the Defence Nuclear Organisation and subsequently approved, together with the total budget and intended delivery date for each project.

A list of all projects owned by Navy Command and for which a full Business Case has been approved and on which the Defence Nuclear Organisation is represented on the Project Board (or equivalent).

A list of all projects owned by the Submarine Delivery Agency and for which a full Business Case has been approved and on which the Defence Nuclear Organisation is represented on the Project Board (or equivalent).”

Your correspondence has been considered as a request for information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (‘the Act’).

We can confirm that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) holds information in scope of your request. However, we will not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate limit. This is because to locate, retrieve and extract the information in scope of your request would involve compiling lists of projects from other recorded information held in multiple locations, and approaching a large number of individual project teams to ascertain details of representation at project boards, estimated to require a total of some 6 days of effort from an official.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds information, locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Under Section 16(1) of the Act, whereby public authorities should provide advice and assistance, so far as it is reasonable to do so, you may wish to note the following information.

Your redefined request has indicated to us that you are asking for information on all projects which have an approved business case across the entirety of the Defence Nuclear Enterprise. As we explained in our previous communications, this enterprise is large and complex, and accordingly we cannot answer your request within the appropriate limit. The MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit.

You could reduce your request by splitting it into separate requests covering the four parts of your question. We would recommend that, if you choose to proceed in this way, the separated requests are submitted independently over a sufficient period of time, as public authorities are permitted to aggregate two or more requests where the requests:

- Are made by one person, or by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign;
- For the same or similar information;
- Are received within any period of 60 consecutive working days.

However, while we appreciate your attempt to rephrase, and so clarify, your original request by being more specific with your redefined set of requests, we consider that, as currently written, they may now be so specific that they may provide you with very limited information. For example, the Defence Nuclear Organisation was established fully in 2018, so some ongoing projects or programmes which have approved business cases would not be in scope as they were approved prior to the existence of the organisation. Further, Defence has only recently started to use 'outline' and 'full' business cases. Some ongoing projects or programmes may therefore not be in scope because they went through the 'initial gate' and 'main gate' process and some other ongoing projects or programmes may be out of scope because they are using a process of phased investments.

You could instead choose to reduce your request by focusing on the type of project you are most interested in. For example, you could choose to focus your request on projects which will deliver new equipment or capabilities into the Defence Nuclear Enterprise and exclude projects relating to supporting in-service systems; or you could focus your request on a specific part of the enterprise such as projects within the submarine build programme.

Please contact us if you would like to refine your request or require further advice to do so.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact us in the first instance at the address above. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for 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.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint 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. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on their website, <https://ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Nuclear Organisation Secretariat