



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Our Ref: FOI/Req/17/003

Mr. Gordon Deegan,

3 February, 2017

Dear Mr. Deegan,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

The total amount spent by the Department of Foreign Affairs on capital/refurbishment works on the country's network of embassies in 2016.

A breakdown in the costs of the refurbishment works at the five embassies where the capital/refurbishment costs were highest in 2016.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on the 20th January.

I have identified two records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule below. I have made a decision to partially grant both records. The records being released to you are an extract from the accounts of this Department, referencing maintenance works carried out at the Department's Missions.

The records which have not been granted at this time are exempt under S36 – Commercially Sensitive Information. The records relate to commercial information where disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in financial loss or gain to the person to whom the information related or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of her/his profession/business/occupation. The records which are not being released relate to ongoing capital and refurbishment works.

Total expenditure on refurbishment, renovation and construction work on our missions abroad in 2016 amounted to € 1,522,534.08 throughout our 147 premises.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade currently manages and maintains 34 State-owned properties abroad. The Department also leases 113 properties abroad. These properties are utilised by the Department in pursuit of its goals on behalf of the State. They consist of offices and official accommodation which provide platforms for our Missions to promote Ireland's political, economic and cultural interests and values, provide services to our citizens, develop strategic stakeholder relationships and represent Ireland in international organisations. The network of missions abroad

now stands at 80 which is smaller than many similar-sized countries such as Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

As part of the Department's duty of care to staff, their families and visitors to our buildings for meetings and functions, the Department must ensure that security and health and safety standards are met, as well as universal access facilities. The Department maintains appropriate health, safety and security standards in its properties overseas while also implementing any additional international standards in the location in question, as necessary.

Given the varied global locations, currency fluctuations, possible higher local costs, and the need for expert advice and specialist contractors, the expenditures associated with construction services will differ from location to location.

All refurbishment and maintenance at missions are conducted in line with the Department's procurement obligations under Government public tendering and contracting rules, including both National and EU Public Procurement thresholds.

In Riyadh, the costs relate to works on air conditioning units in State owned properties. In Oslo, the costs relate to necessary works to repair internal plumbing and refurbish a shower unit in line with local building codes in a State owned property. In Luxembourg, the costs were to improve security at the Embassy. In New York, the costs relate to re-cabling the official accommodation from copper wires to fibre optic cabling as the service provider could no longer guarantee service through the older copper wiring.

In Berne, the costs related to the removal of asbestos from a restroom and the subsequent refurbishment of the restroom in a State owned property. In Beijing, a programme of renovations and modifications to its office and living spaces was implemented in 2016. This was necessary in the light of the number of staff assigned to and engaged by the Embassy which increased in 2016, directly reflecting the growing strength and importance of the Ireland-China bilateral relationship. The air purification units are required for the health and safety of staff. In London, the maintenance comes under the terms of the lease.

Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfat.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfat.ie, or 01-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely,



Katie Morrisroe
Property Management Unit,
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade