



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Baile Átha Cliath 2

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
Dublin 2

7 October 2016

Mark O'Regan  
Irish Independent  
Independent House,  
27 – 32 Talbot Street,  
Dublin 1.

Our Ref: Fol/Req/2016/135

Dear Mr O'Regan,

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:

1. *The number of times the Department's smartphone travel app TravelWise has been downloaded in each year since it was launched.*
2. *An itemised breakdown of all costs associated with developing and launching the app.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016

You are granted access to the requested information as set out below.

| SCHEDULE |  |                              |                         |
|----------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|
|          | Record Description   | Granted/Part-Granted/Refused | Section exempted under: |
| 1.       | Current Download Figures for the Travelwise app                    | Granted                      |                         |
| 2.       | Costs associated with developing and launching the Travelwise app. | Granted                      |                         |

The development of the TravelWise app puts Ireland, internationally, at the top of the class: both in having the most advanced and sophisticated travel app of any Foreign Ministry, and in our ability to interact and communicate instantaneously with our citizens around the globe in the event of a terrorist incident or other crisis, as demonstrated during recent attacks in Munich and in Thailand.

TravelWise is the most popular government travel app (per capita), with **8820 downloads** in less than four months (as at 6 October) and over 270,000 screen views since its launch on 10 June 2016. And it is the highest rated app of its kind, with an average rating of 4.6 on Android and a similar reception on iOS (the German app is next, on 4.3). From next week, all new passport books will include information on the app when being delivered to our citizens.

Increasing numbers of Irish people travel abroad - more than 7 million trips in 2016 – and increasing numbers travel to higher risk locations, driving sharp increases in the demand for security, health and other information, and a 54% increase this year in the number of serious consular cases (deaths abroad, hospitalisations, detentions, etc). The changing global security context also means that the demand for information and support is also higher in countries that would not traditionally have been considered to be of particular risk.

For citizens who have downloaded it, TravelWise is the most sophisticated crisis tool we have to communicate in real time with Irish people abroad caught up in a crisis, and was developed to help Irish people to stay safe and informed while travelling or living abroad. TravelWise is a free smartphone app that provides comprehensive and trusted travel advice for 200 countries in a user-friendly and appealing way. All content is available offline, meaning that emergency contacts for our global Embassy network are always in your pocket, with no need for roaming charges.

As a communications tool, the app allows users to customise alerts, to get security and other updates about their destination direct to their smartphone. Two-way communication and feedback to the Department is encouraged. A new alert feature allows targeted messaging to be pushed directly to the user's phone. The offline Embassy and emergency contact details puts this information into the hands of citizens when needed most. The app project has facilitated an upgrading of the work procedures and systems to provide assistance to citizens abroad - while offering a new, free, user-friendly product.

The app was Irish led and Irish developed, drawing on the expertise of domestic companies to support the Department's work. The result of this cooperation has been very positive with the app's strong design values recognised in its shortlisting for "Best Mobile App" by the Irish Internet Association (winner to be announced 7 Oct).

The pre-development phase also included the use of focus groups to ensure responsiveness to citizen expectations and demands, and the overhaul of some associated services: - travel advice and citizen registration platforms.

The total figures for the development and launch of the app are provided below:

| TRAVELWISE APP DEVELOPMENT AND LAUNCH COSTS ITEMISED |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Software Development, Programming, Design            | €74,722           |
| Qualitative Analysis (focus groups)                  | €7,872            |
| Middleware development                               | €4,305            |
| Licence  | €3,075            |
| Visual media (Video clip)                            | €5,843            |
| Website compatibility and testing                    | €2,323,56         |
|  |                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>€98,140.56</b> |

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. McCrohan', is written over a horizontal line.

Brian McCrohan  
Consular Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs