



Our Ref: Fol/Req/16/151

Mr Ken Foxe

27 October 2016

Dear Mr. Foxe,

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

*“- a table of costs for all entertainment events held at the ambassadorial residence in Tokyo for the period 2015-2016
- copies of all invoices related to such functions held at the ambassadorial residence in Tokyo for two sample months: May and June 2016.”*

I note that an acknowledgement of your request was sent to you on 7 October 2016 and that you revised the scope of your request following consultation with Frances Kiernan.

I have identified 9 records which fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant 4 of these records in full and to part-grant/redact 5 records.

As will be seen from the schedule, the records fall into two categories:

- Tables of functions in Embassy Residence
- Receipts for functions

Tables of functions in Embassy Residence

A table of functions held in the Embassy Residence is provided for the full year 2015 and a separate table is provided for January-September 2016. The occasion, type and date of each function is listed as well as the number of guests in attendance.

Costs for events held in September 2016 are still being finalised and so have not been included. The final cost borne by the Embassy of each function held between January 2015 and August 2016 is listed under 'Embassy Cost'; in some cases this cost is zero as the full cost was covered by a partner. Under 'Costs Recouped' details are provided for each function specifying whether full, partial or no costs were recouped from a partner. The amount of costs recouped is provided in cases involving Irish public bodies (e.g. State Agencies or third-level institutions) under 'Recouped Cost Amount'.

Costs are listed in Japanese yen in all cases as the exchange rate fluctuates regularly; the particular rate used to calculate costs in euro is updated on a monthly basis.

Receipts for functions

Receipts for official functions are provided for 7 functions held in the sample months of May and June 2016. In each of these cases the Embassy or another Irish public body bore the cost of the function; four events which did not incur costs for the Irish Exchequer are not included.

These documents group together the relevant receipts for each function covering costs including food, drink and staff hire. Hand-written notes may be found on many of the records.

Five of the Receipts for function documents have been part-granted with redactions of names and titles. In the case of R3 and R5 information has been redacted under section 33 (1) of the Act. Information has been redacted from R6 under section 36 (1) of the Act and section 37 (1) of the Act. Information has been redacted from R7 and R8 under section 37 (1) of the Act.

Purpose of functions held at the Embassy of Ireland Residence in Tokyo

The core objective of the Embassy is to strengthen bilateral relations with Japan in all of their dimensions and to promote Ireland's interests in Japan. Representational activity plays a vital role in this regard and is important in affording opportunities to put across effectively Ireland's position on a range of issues, in particular on trade and tourism. Embassy events may also be used to showcase Irish music and culture, which is an important tool for promoting brand Ireland generally. Representational activity also plays a significant role in harnessing the good will of the Irish community in Japan and of Japanese friends of Ireland.

The Embassy Residence functions as the primary location for representational activities of the Embassy of Ireland in Japan. These activities include seminars, cultural events, working breakfasts, lunches and dinners. The Embassy incorporates to the fullest extent possible a range of representational activities targeting business, political and media audiences. Invitations to events in an Embassy Residence are generally valued in Japan above invitations to functions in restaurants or hotels. There were 42 functions hosted at the Embassy Residence in 2015 and 34 in 2016 to the end of September.

These functions were often held in partnership with the State Agencies to promote Ireland as an investment location, a tourism destination and an exporter of excellence. The Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce also regularly partners with the Embassy to promote Ireland. Events in the Embassy Residence may also be held in collaboration with other third parties such as cultural organisations. In many cases, some or all of the costs associated with events held in the Embassy Residence are recouped from partners.

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 the FOI Unit at foi@dfat.ie or on 01 408 2857.

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,



Jonathan Patchell
Deputy Head of Mission
Embassy of Ireland, Tokyo