



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

5 June 2020

Our Ref: FOI/Req/2020/093

Mr Ken Foxe

Dear Mr Foxe,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for copies of invoices associated with cars purchased in 2019 by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 11 May 2020.

The transactions in question relate to payments made by our Missions abroad. The attached schedule details each transaction and lists each Mission along with the make and model of each vehicle purchased. Due to the COVID19 crisis and the fact that our offices in Ireland and in most countries around the world are not open or are operating reduced hours due to local government restrictions, it has not been possible to extract a copy of the invoices associated with the payment as requested.

The Department purchases cars for missions abroad which facilitate the functioning and operations of the missions. These cars are owned by the Department. It is the Department's policy that official cars are only purchased or replaced if necessary, e.g. where there are security or safety considerations, or the cost of maintenance/operating costs are no longer economical, etc. When sanctioning the purchase of vehicles cars for missions abroad, consideration is given to the climate, terrain, safety and security issues which prevail in the country as well as environmental concerns.

Mission staff are required to undertake a significant volume of travel in the performance of their official functions. This ranges from city journeys during the working day and in the evening to long journeys of up to several hundred miles by road. As well as demanding schedules, in many cases there are also issues related to limited availability of public transport and security considerations.. Official vehicles also provide an important logistical support to Missions.

The purchase of official vehicles is carried out locally in accordance with sanction from Headquarters and is based on a competitive process to ensure that the market is tested and the most cost-effective option is selected. It should be noted that different pricing models and conditions prevail across these international markets, e.g. import regimes, taxation, etc. making direct comparison between mission locations and/or Ireland very difficult.

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@dfa.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@dfa.ie, or 01-4082857.

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

Yours sincerely,

Brian Hanniffy
Finance Division

Tel: (01) 478 0822, 408 2244 (direct)
E-mail: Brian.Hanniffy@dfa.ie