



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending watchdog

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Reference FOI-1526

Date 24 May 2022

FOI REQUEST: ICT PROJECTS AT RISK

Thank you for your request of 4 May 2022 regarding information about ICT projects at a risk, in which you asked for a spreadsheet of the latest three-month period data, including:

- the public sector organisation concerned;
- the project name;
- the RAG status; and
- the reason for the RAG status being applied.

Your request is being handled under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

We can confirm that we hold some information in scope of your request. However, we are withholding the information we do hold under Section 22 (information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. Annex A provides details of this exemption, how it applies to your request, and our consideration of the Public Interest Test.

The National Audit Office (NAO) is the UK's independent public spending watchdog and is independent of government. We support Parliament in holding government to account through the certification of government departments accounts and other public sector bodies and carrying out value for money examinations.

The NAO does not create or publish the information you requested about ICT projects at risk. The information you requested is produced by government departments with major project data and is available from the [Infrastructure and Projects Authority](#) (IPA). It is a government body that reports to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury. The IPA's responsibilities include tracking and monitoring assignments carried out by the Government Major Project Portfolio (GMPP), which includes ICT projects. Furthermore, government departments provide quarterly data returns to the IPA to monitor progress.

In accordance with government's transparency policy around major projects, the IPA is required to publish an [annual report of the GMPP](#). This includes data about major projects. Typically, the IPA publishes its annual report of the GMPP in July each year. The data provided by government departments and IPA in the report includes the characteristics of projects you have requested. This information is available in a spreadsheet, accessible from [this link](#). For ease of reference, we are also providing a version of this data where we have specifically highlighted the columns listing the major ICT projects within the spreadsheet. Please find this

information attached to the email with this letter.

The NAO can request interim updates of GMPP data from the IPA to perform our audit functions, and we currently have access to the latest data that is not available to the public. However, this will soon be superseded by the data IPA and other departments are scheduled to publish in July 2022.

Section 22 of the FOIA allows for exemption if the information is intended for future publication and public interest would appear better served to allow the IPA to publish updated data under its agreed publication schedule. Annex A explains our reasoning for applying this FOIA exemption.

I trust that the publicly available information that we have pointed to is helpful. Annex B sets out the steps you may wish to take if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request for information under the FOIA.

Yours sincerely

NAO FOI Team

Annex A

Details of the exemption we have applied to your request

Section 22 - Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Information intended for future publication.

(1) Information is exempt information if—

(a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),

(b) the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for information was made, and

(c) it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a).

(2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would involve the disclosure of any information (whether or not already recorded) which falls within subsection (1).

Reason why we have applied this exemption:

We have applied this exemption to the information you have requested because this information is intended to be published as part of the IPA's annual report and the accompanying departments' datasets. When the information is published it will be placed on the IPA's website.

The IPA's 2020-21 annual report, the consolidated data and narratives and each department's individual Major Projects data is available [here](#). The government's transparency policy which explains the annual publication timetable is available [here](#).

Reasons why the public interest in maintaining the exclusion outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information in this case:

We acknowledge there is a general public interest in the delivery status of projects, including your specific enquiry about ICT projects, within the Government Major Projects Portfolio. However, we have weighed this against what we consider to be a stronger public interest in allowing government to agree and set its own publication timetables that balances the need for transparency against the risk of jeopardising project delivery through the release of information outside of the agreed publication schedules.

Therefore, we consider the balance of the public interest rests with the NAO withholding the information you have requested and allowing the IPA to publish the information in line with the government's agreed transparency policy.

Annex B

Statement of Policy

Our policy is to respond to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as helpfully and promptly as possible, having regard to the principles set out in the Act. I therefore hope you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not, then you should take the following steps.

In the first instance, within 40 working days, write to the National Audit Office Freedom of Information (FOI) Team at FOI.requests@nao.org.uk or by post to:

FOI Team, Green 2, National Audit Office, 157-197 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SP

The Head of FOI will arrange a review, which will be conducted by a senior member of staff who was not involved in decisions relating to your original request. Once the review has been completed, we will write informing you of the outcome.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

<https://ico.org.uk/>

or

Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF