

Our Ref: R00029

20 February 2008

RE: Freedom of Information Request – SEEDA’s Guidelines: Staff Travel, Subsistence and Hospitality

Your Request:

Please provide details of SEEDA’s staff travel, subsistence and hospitality

Information Response:

All staff employed by SEEDA have agreed and signed our Terms and Conditions of Employment which provides clear guidance on travel and subsistence. The Terms and Conditions of Employment state that “reasonable subsistence expenses will be reimbursed to employees who, while engaged on official SEEDA business, travel outside their usual place of sleeping or obtaining meals”. It is our policy that all foreign travel will depend on business need and requires prior approval by an Executive Director for European travel and by the Chief Executive (CEO) or the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for travel outside Europe. Expenses claims must be authorised by the employee’s line manager. Should the claim include overseas travel within Europe the respective Executive Director, and outside Europe the CEO or COO needs to countersign the claim. All receipts must be attached to the claim.

In addition SEEDA’s Financial Procedures Guidance provides further detail on employee expense claims and about overseas travel. This guidance states that “for flights longer than five hours, business class travel will be allowed”. Compliance with this guidance is ensured through line managers and Executive Directors approval of travel claims. The standard of the hotel may vary depending on the country/location but a value for money assessment would be carried out in advance of the booking.

With regards to hospitality given and received we have a code of practice that sets out guidelines for all staff.

You will see from our response that SEEDA has appropriate guidance and procedures in place to ensure that expenditure is appropriately controlled and provides value for money.

I have copied both your letters and my responses to our Accounting Officer.