

2nd October 2008

Our ref: R00061

Freedom of Information request – SEEDA's accountability

Your request is:

I would be grateful if you could inform me to whom SEEDA is accountable for its spending, especially travel and other expenses incurred by its members and officials.

Information requested

SEEDA is a non-departmental public body. It is directly accountable through the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) to Parliament. SEEDA's accounts are scrutinised by the National Audit Office and signed off by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

SEEDA's Corporate Plan 2008-11, which is submitted to the Secretary of State, BERR, sets out our expenditure plans for the next three years and is available on the SEEDA website (www.seeda.co.uk).

Our Chief Executive, Pam Alexander, as the Accounting Officer, is accountable both to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and to Parliament. She is responsible for ensuring regularity, propriety and good value for money in the management of public funds and all other resources for which she has charge; and for the day to day operations and management of the Agency. All expense claims must be made in accordance with SEEDA's policies and procedures and are not approved unless they comply.

SEEDA activities are also scrutinised by the South East England Regional Assembly. SEEDA's Chair and Chief Executive attend an annual 'holding to account' session with Assembly members in full plenary and SEEDA's Chief Executive reports to regular meetings of the Assembly's Executive Committee. Three scrutinies are also conducted each year, focusing on specific policies and interventions across various aspects of SEEDA's remit.

SEEDA is also subject to periodic reviews and evaluations of our performance. The 2006 Independent Performance Assessment (IPA) assessed organisational performance, including capacity, and judged that SEEDA was performing strongly, with 21 points out of a possible maximum of 24, with Ambition and Achievement both scoring maximum points, and with Prioritisation, Capacity and Performance judged to be performing well. The IPA provides advice for a continuous improvement action plan currently being taken forward, and is conducted by a team of external assessors led by staff of the National Audit Office.



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