

1st June 2009

Your ref: Email dated 30/04/09

Our ref:

Dear

Freedom of Information Request - Agency Expenditure.

Thank you for your Freedom of Information Request, dated 30th April 2009, concerning Agency expenditure.

Your request to SEEDA is:

I would like to request information about the agency's spending in the most recent financial year 2008/09.

- 1. I would like to request the full bill for taxis/private cars for both the Chief Executive and the Chairman for 2008/09 and 2007/08.*
- 2. I would like to request a full list of all flights taken by employees of the Agency in 2008/09 including the destination and the cost of each flight.*
- 3. I would like to request a total bill for how much was spent on hotel accommodation by the agency in 2008/09. I would request that this be broken down by city and by country however if there is an easier way for the agency to break this down e.g. by individual hotel, by employee etc then please let me know and we can modify this part of the request.*
- 4. I would like to request a full list of overseas offices maintained by the agency including the total cost of maintaining the office and the number of individuals employed there.*
- 5. I would like to request a full list of events staged by the agency in 2008/09 including the cost of each event, the location and a brief summary of its purpose.*

Information requested

1. Taxi/ Car Costs for 07/08 and 08/09

In the financial year 2007/08 taxi costs totalled £8,241 for the Chief Executive and £5,197 for the Chairman. In the financial year 2008/09 their respective taxi costs were £7,271 and £4,267.

SEEDA also uses private hire cars. In the financial year 2007/08 the cost of this service was £11,095 for the Chief Executive and £49,594 for the Chairman. In 2008/09, these costs were £6,694 for the Chief Executive and £39,555 for the Chairman. Neither the Chairman nor Chief Executive of SEEDA has a company or lease car, and neither made any claim for personal mileage costs in 2007/8 or 2008/9.

SEEDA's region comprises 74 local authorities, 83 MPs, 11 MEPs and some 700,000 businesses covering an area from Milton Keynes to the Isle of Wight to the East Kent coast. To work effectively with businesses and partners in a region of this scale, both the Chairman and Chief Executive consider travel an essential part of their roles and cover many miles each week on SEEDA's behalf. In 2008/09, the Chairman alone travelled 25,700 miles on SEEDA business. They use the most appropriate means of transport for each trip to ensure the hours spent travelling are productive. Wherever possible they avoid the cost of overnight hotels.

The South East's lack of direct rail routes across the region also often means that travel to many parts of the region requires use of a car. However, public transport is used wherever possible, particularly for travel to and from London. Taxi and private hire car arrangements are regularly tested for value for money.

2. Flights travelled by SEEDA staff in 08-09

The following list is full and complete as far as we have been able to ascertain in the time available to respond. The information is not held centrally in a form that would allow further interrogation without exceeding the "appropriate limit". If you would like to send us confirmation to proceed on your behalf, we will issue a formal fees notice before commencing the work setting out the likely cost against the amount of time anticipated.

Destination	No. of travellers	Cost per traveller
LDN – Dubai – LDN	2	£1,240
LDN – Chicago – LDN	1	£1,060
LDN – Dallas – LDN	1	£2,638
LDN – San Diego – LDN	1	£1,482
LDN – Los Angeles – Chicago LDN	1	£4,650

LDN – Brussels – LDN	1	£102
New York – Boston	1	£189
Southampton – Newcastle – Southampton	1	£135
LDN – Shanghai – LDN	3	£3,125
LDN – Leipzig – LDN	1	£761
LDN – Amsterdam – LDN	1	£264
LDN – Boston – LDN	2	£2,469
LDN – Chicago - LDN	1	£2,609
LDN – Luxembourg – LDN	5	£231
Brisbane – Sydney – Christchurch – Wellington – Auckland	1	£451
LDN – Brisbane – LDN	1	£5,110
LDN – Seattle – San Francisco – Los Angeles – San Diego – Los Angeles – LDN	1	£5,292
Los Angeles – San Diego – Los Angeles	1	£933
Southampton – Newcastle – Southampton	1	£181
LDN – Chicago – Washington – LDN	1	£1,174
LDN – Boston – Chicago – Washington – LDN	1	£5,995
Southampton – Edinburgh – Southampton	1	£205
LDN – Nice – LDN	1	£322
LDN – Dallas – LDN	1	£3,126
LDN – Bombay – Seattle – San Francisco – Los Angeles – San Diego – Los Angeles – Singapore – Bombay – Delhi – LDN	1	£7,972
LDN – Boston – LDN	2	£2,302
LDN – Brussels (returned by Eurostar)	1	£440
LDN – Brussels – LDN	2	£479
Southampton – Brussels – Southampton	2	£279
LDN – Bombay – Bangalore – LDN	1	£1,848
LDN – Tokyo – Hong Kong – LDN	2	£3,805
LDN – Bremen – LDN	1	£128
LDN – Doha – LDN	1	£2,474
Abu Dhabi – Doha	1	£532
LDN – Nice – LDN	1	£573
LDN – Chicago – LDN	1	£1,562
Chicago – Kansas	1	£154
Chicago – Kansas	1	£171

3. Hotel Costs

Claims for hotel accommodation are entered on our financial systems under the general heading of “subsistence”. The time required to extract this information would be disproportionate and would exceed the “appropriate limit”. If you would like to send us confirmation to proceed on your behalf, we will issue a formal fees notice before commencing the work setting out the likely costs against the amount of time anticipated

4. Overseas Offices 08/09

The only overseas office costs incurred by SEEDA are to maintain a shared presence in Brussels to influence European policy and funding. The cost to SEEDA of this office is £36,100, excluding staff costs for 2008/09. Through this office, since 2002, SEEDA has leveraged €40m of ERDF funding for transport and infrastructure improvements in the South East. Two people were based in our Brussels office until 1st December 2008, when this was reduced to one.

5. Corporate Events

Corporate events staged by SEEDA are shown below. This list does not include small-scale, roadshow-type events that are designed to deliver business support advice to businesses across the South East.

Date	Event Title	Venue	Purpose	Cost
4 Jul 08	First Regional Economic Strategy Partners' Conference	Mandolay Hotel, Guildford	Agree actions needed to deliver regional economic targets in the face of the impending economic downturn.	£5,450
8 July 08	Skills Summit	Sofitel Hotel, Gatwick	Business briefing on national and regional skills issues, offering business the opportunity to influence skills strategy.	£3,398
7 Aug 08	Economic Prospects – Ministerial Launch	Sofitel Hotel, Gatwick	Businesses invited to update Ministers on the initial impact of the economic downturn. SEEDA's £10m regional support package for businesses was launched at this event.	£11,700

Date	Event Title	Venue	Purpose	Cost
16 Sep 08	Liberal Democrat Conference – Fringe Meeting	Westcliff Brasserie, Bournemouth	Highlighting importance of the South East's £2bn sustainable business sector, including success case study on low carbon business practices.	£4,736
23 Sep 08	Labour Party Conference – Fringe Meeting	GMEX Centre, Manchester	Mainstreaming zero carbon and zero waste in business, including success case study.	£4,871
30 Sep 08	Conservative Party Conference – Fringe Meeting	Hyatt Regency, Birmingham	The role of hi-tech business in the South East economy, including success case study on creating jobs and attracting £250m investment to the region.	£3,310
30 Oct 08	Annual Open Public Meeting	Southampton Cruise Terminal	A requirement under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998, to report on SEEDA's performance over the previous financial year and set out plans for the future.	£30,356
10 Nov 08	Regional Housing Summit	Institute of Directors, London	Working meeting with leading house builders and housing organisations, to understand the impact of poor market conditions on house building and identify actions to help revitalise this key element of the South East economy.	£2,465

Date	Event Title	Venue	Purpose	Cost
02 Dec 08	Regional Infrastructure Conference	Sofitel, Gatwick	Gain agreement on the key infrastructure improvements needed across the South East to inform regional advice to Government and identify how projects can be delivered despite the economic downturn.	£3,474
29 Jan 09	Second Regional Economic Strategy Partners' Conference	Mandolay, Guildford	Review impact of recession on regional economic targets and identify actions for SEEDA and partners that will maximise economic potential during the downturn.	£10,991

This information will also be made available on SEEDA's Freedom of Information Disclosure Log on the SEEDA website (www.seeda.co.uk/About_SEEDA/Freedom_of_Information_disclosure_log/). Personal details and other information that could identify requesters is redacted (removed) from the disclosure log version.

Conclusion

If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request, or if you are unhappy with our response, you can appeal using our Complaints Procedure as follows:

A request for a review should be addressed to Robert Crawford, Chief Operating Officer, and sent by email to: robertcrawford@seeda.co.uk or by post to SEEDA, Cross Lanes, Guildford, GU1 1YA. You will be notified of the outcome within 20 working days.

If you are still dissatisfied after pursuing our Complaints Procedure, then under Section 50 of the Act, you are entitled to appeal to the Information Commissioner (Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, telephone: 01625 545700, fax: 01625 524510).

Please contact me if you have any other queries.

Yours sincerely

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