

9<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Our ref: R00124

## **Freedom of Information Request – Expenses Claims**

### **Your request to SEEDA is:**

*I would like to make a Freedom of Information request for the following.*

*I would like copies of receipts and claim forms submitted as part of expense claims during 2008 for the 5 individuals in your organisation with the highest expense claims over that year.*

### **Information requested**

A full set of expenses claims forms from SEEDA staff with the 5 highest expenses and company credit card claims are attached. In line with your confirmed agreement with ONE North East, the attached material relates to financial year 2008/09.

It has not been possible to locate, extract, collate and redact the receipts submitted by the staff members within the “appropriate limit” of 2.5 days. 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.

It has also not been possible within the “appropriate limit” of 2.5 days to identify to what extent these expenses claims relate to the individual member of staff as they also cover substantial costs relating instead to:

- Expenses for other members of SEEDA when attending joint meetings or when travelling jointly, including hotel accommodation and subsistence;
- Business costs, such as the costs of event or meeting room hire; and
- Subsistence and accommodation for project partners which is reimbursed subsequently as explained below.

In addition, in some cases the expenses claims may not provide the full detail of the individual components - for example, an invoice from a hotel may cover costs for accommodation, venue hire or meal costs for more than one person and/or more than one night.



Names of third parties not in the public domain, postcodes for private addresses, some personal information and personal signatures have been redacted. This personal information is exempt from disclosure under S40(2) Personal Information of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

SEEDA's top 5 claimants include three members of staff operating in our Inward Investment Team. The nature of their work means that travel plays a significant part in their efforts to secure additional trade and inward investment opportunities for the South East. Their journeys enable meetings with SEEDA's network of overseas representatives; with British consulates and UK Trade and Investment staff located in target regions for securing inward investment to the South East; and with businesses being targeted as prospects for inward investment to the South East and/or trade with South East businesses. They form part of a team that, in the financial year 2008-09, secured the best ever results ever, with 90 new inward investments into the South East creating an additional 1,200 jobs (29% higher than the target for the year) and securing a further 2,600 jobs (20% higher than the target for the year). Half of these investments originated from North America, the remaining half were split evenly between Asia-Pacific and Europe. Please note that these results relate solely to inward investments in which SEEDA was directly involved.

The other two colleagues operate in SEEDA's Enabling Infrastructure and Development Team, where the majority of expenses are related to projects funded from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the costs set out are mostly reclaimed from ERDF. For example, these expenses include subsistence and accommodation on behalf of international project partners (which can range from 5 people to 25) – and these are subsequently reimbursed to SEEDA from ERDF. Since 2002, SEEDA has attracted nearly €50m of EU investment into transport infrastructure projects that deliver strategic benefits for our partners in the South East of England, London and European partner regions, with a third of these funds going straight into our region.