

15<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Your ref: Email dated 14/08/09  
Our ref: R00158

## **Freedom of Information Request**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information Request, dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 2009, concerning SEEDA's transport costs for 2008-09.

## **Information Requested**

Your request to SEEDA is:

*"Please could you state how much your organisation spent on transport costs in the 08/09 financial year. Specifically,*

- 1. Taxi fares*
- 2. Train fares broken down into first and second class*
- 3. Airline tickets broken down into the various categories of travel. For any first or business class trips please state the destination and the cost for that particular journey*
- 4. Hire cars."*

## **Information Held**

SEEDA does not operate a central taxi booking system and individuals making taxi journeys must reclaim taxi fares as expenses. SEEDA's financial systems currently do not distinguish between employees' transport expenses for taxis and train fares (by class). In order to provide you with the requested information would require manual processing of all employee expenses claims, and invoices, for 2008-09, to extract the requested information.

To provide the maximum information within the appropriate limit we have therefore provided a combined total of taxi and train fares, and you have agreed that we can supply information previously issued in recent FOI requests to answer other parts of your request.

Information provided comprises:

- The total expenditure in relation to travel costs reclaimed by SEEDA employees for 2008-09 for taxis and train fares (Response 1).
- Air travel by SEEDA employees in 2008-09 showing the destination, the number of travellers and the cost per traveller (Response 2).
- The total amount reclaimed by SEEDA employees (reclaimed on an expense form or charged to a corporate credit card) relating to the use of a hire car (Response 3).

### **Response 1 - Taxis and Train Costs**

Taxi and train fare expense claims for the financial year 2008-09 totalled £111,205.

### **Response 2 - Air Travel Costs**

Travel plays a significant part in SEEDA's efforts to secure additional trade and inward investment opportunities for the South East. Overseas visits enable meetings with businesses being targeted as prospects for inward investment to the South East and/or trade with South East businesses. The visits also allow contacts to be maintained with SEEDA's Overseas Representatives, British consulates and UK Trade and Investment staff located in these regions.

The flights therefore represent part of an effort by SEEDA that in 2008-09 secured 90 new inward investment projects securing 2,600 jobs and will create 1,200 jobs over the next 3 years.

SEEDA's foreign travel policy is that all foreign travel bookings should be at standard class where the flight duration is expected to be less than five hours. For flights longer than 5 hours, business class travel is allowed to reflect the fact that travellers typically have full schedules of meetings at both ends of the flight, and/or are expected to work while on the flight.

Air travel costs for the financial year 2008-09 totalled £84,211. The full list of flights for 2008-09 is given in SEEDA's Disclosure Log at entry R00116:

[http://www.seeda.co.uk/about\\_seeda/freedom\\_of\\_information\\_disclosure\\_log/docs/R00116\\_requestresponse.pdf](http://www.seeda.co.uk/about_seeda/freedom_of_information_disclosure_log/docs/R00116_requestresponse.pdf)

First-class travel on domestic flights is not allowed for SEEDA staff except where such flights are provided to passengers holding business-class international tickets at no extra cost to SEEDA.

In 2008/09 there were two flights which had first-class domestic flights included as part of a business-class international travel ticket, as detailed below:

<b>Destination (2008/09)</b>	<b>No. of travellers</b>
Dallas – New Orleans	1
Doha – Dubai	2

**Hire Car Cost**

SEEDA's Hire Car cost for the financial year 2008-09 totalled £5,631. This comprises the cost of self drive cars and excludes taxis and cars on long term lease.