

17 July 2024

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OIA 29402

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We refer to your email of 28 May 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"I request all advice, briefings, reports, notes or meetings, aides memoire and communications to and from the Ministry's SLT regarding the government's public service saving's initiative. This should include, but not be limited to, communications between the SLT and ministers and their offices. It should also include any discussion of the public service savings target of 6.5 - 7.5% and MFAT's target of 1%, also the steps MFAT took to achieve its target."

On 6 June 2024, you were contacted to discuss the scope of your request, and you were advised that responding to your request as it is currently framed would capture significant volume of information. As such, it is likely that your request will be refused under section 18(f) of the OIA.

A response was not received from you.

On 26 June 2024, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 15 working days due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA refers).

Background

The Ministry has had to find savings within Vote Foreign Affairs in order to return NZ\$5.000 million departmental and NZ\$10.000 million non-departmental expenditure back to the Government. Some specific reductions were implemented to achieve these savings as follows:

- Specific reductions implemented to provide NZ\$10 million non-departmental savings were:
 - Cessation of funding for the Pacific Cooperation Foundation (NZ\$1.400 million)
 - A reduction in funding to Asia New Zealand (NZ\$0.355 million)
 - A reduction in funding to Antarctica New Zealand (NZ\$0.630 million)
 - A reduction in International Development Cooperation funding (NZ\$7.615 million)
- Specific reductions implemented to provide NZ\$5.000 million of departmental savings were:
 - Delivery of New Zealand Foreign Policy NZ\$4.255 million (taken from contractors and consultants, specialised funds, and back-office savings)
 - Management of International Development Cooperation NZ\$0.745 million (reflecting the reduction in International Development Cooperation funding)

In addition to the above, the Ministry has engaged in business-as-usual budget processes that take place every financial year. Much of the advice relating to Budget 2024 will soon be proactively released by the Treasury on the website: <https://budget.govt.nz/>

You can find more detail on Vote Foreign Affairs Budget 2024 here:
<https://budget.govt.nz/budget/2024/by/vote/faffairs.htm>

Response to request

We have interpreted your request to be for information relating to the specific reductions set out above, and not to include any business-as-usual budget processes.

Your request is refused in full under section 18(f) of the OIA, as it would require substantial collation and research in order to provide a response.

I note that you have sent similar requests to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Finance. Please refer to their responses for information in scope of your request.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade