



## An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Our Ref: FOI/Req/19/270

7<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Dear Mr. Hughes,

I refer to your recently submitted request, FOI/Req/19/270, made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

*All documents relating to the DFAT Monitoring Visit of Mísean Cara in 2019.*

I am the responding officer in this case. I have identified 32 records that fall within the scope of your request. 29 of these records have been released in full. On the 31<sup>st</sup>, the Monitoring Visit Report, one section, one paragraph and one sentence have been exempted for security reasons.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through Irish Aid provides an annual grant of €15.5 million to Mísean Cara. This grant is subsequently sub-granted to the Irish missionary organisations and congregations, which are members of Mísean Cara. These grants are used to fund development projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Field level monitoring visits are a key element of the monitoring strategy for NGO partners that are in receipt of Irish Aid funding. They greatly assist in assessing the extent of progress towards expected outcomes and how the partner contributes to the delivery of development results in-country through its policies, systems and approaches. Such visits complement the broader monitoring strategy which includes the review of specific NGO annual programming reports, review of NGO results frameworks, bilateral partnership meetings and oversight of financial and governance reports.

### **Section 32 (1) (b) Law enforcement and public safety**

With regard to information refused under Section 32 of the Act, Law enforcement and public safety, this relates to a security issue at one of the five projects visited. Access to this part of the record concerned could, reasonably be expected to endanger the life or safety of certain people in the project area.

### **Section 33 1 (d) Security, Defence and International relations**

With regard to information refused under Section 33 of the Act, Security, Defence and International relations, section 1.2 on the context in India and a sentence on page 23 have been redacted. Access to these parts of the report could reasonably be expected to adversely affect bilateral relations between Ireland and the Government of India.

I have weighed carefully the public interest test in applying Sections 32(1) (b) and 33 1 (d) of the Act and considered the right of the public to access information, the importance of public scrutiny of bodies in receipt of public funds and accountability in relation to the manner in which such funds are applied. As such, I am satisfied that the balance favours exempting one section, one paragraph and one sentence rather than releasing the full record on this occasion.

### **Right of Appeal**

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 02 DX45 or by email to [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie). A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie), or 01-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

You may make an 'application for review' of this decision to the Information Commissioner no later than six months from the date of this letter. There is a fee of €50 (€15 for medical card holders) for non-personal appeals.

Yours sincerely

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