



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/20/137

Date: 30 July 2020

Dear Mr. Thomas,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

*All correspondence/records - including emails, briefing notes, DFA minutes, letters - in relation to an approach made to the Department by a Hong Kong-based consortium exploring the feasibility of a potential large-scale urban development in Ireland between January 2020 and June 2020.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 13 July 2020.

I have identified 10 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to part-grant all of the records.

As you will see in the attached records, the Department was initially approached about this matter in December 2019, and for the sake of completeness, we have included this correspondence in this release. There has been a limited amount of correspondence between the individuals involved and officials in this Department since that date. In this correspondence the Department has aimed to be helpful but realistic, and to provide relevant information to the individuals involved.

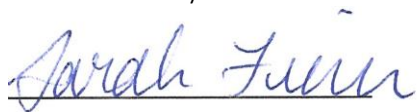
The decision to part-grant the records has been taken in correspondence with Section 37(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. While Section 37(1) Personal information is a mandatory exemption, I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full. I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to correspondence in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. I have particularly considered whether releasing the personal information, which includes names, addresses, email addresses etc., would provide any additional benefit in this regard. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private. The personal information which I have redacted does not have any bearing on the substance or detail of the records, and does not diminish or alter the views expressed, and as such, I am satisfied that on balance the decision to partially redact the records and remove identifiable information is correct.

## 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 2 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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Finn". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sarah Finn