

## **ANNEX REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION**

The Scottish Government does not have the information you have asked for relating to the transparency of the organisations we provide funding to because the Scottish Government is not responsible for holding this information. Each individual organisation can provide the information you are looking for by contacting their FOI departments. We have provided the appropriate contacts in our response.

This is a formal notice under section 17(1) of FOISA that the Scottish Government does not have the information you have requested.

For the years 2012-13, 2014-15 and 2016-17 we have provided an estimate of the funding provided to each organisation using information from our general ledger, as methods of record keeping have changed over time with movement of personnel.

For the current year, we have provided the spend up to 8 January 2021 as requested, as well as the budgets assigned at the commencement of the 2020-21 financial year.

An exemption under section 30(c) of FOISA (prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs) applies to some of the information requested. It is essential for officials to be able to communicate, often in confidence, with external stakeholders on a range of issues, including the use of public funds for the purpose of animal disease control. Disclosing the information requested, particularly without the consent of the stakeholder, is likely to undermine their trust in the Scottish Government and will substantially inhibit communications on this type of issue in the future. These stakeholders will be reluctant to liaise with the Scottish Government if they believe that their views are likely to be made public, particularly while these discussions relate to a sensitive issue such as animal disease control. This would significantly harm the Government's ability to carry out many aspects of its work, and could adversely affect its ability to gather all of the evidence it needs to make fully informed policies.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in allowing Ministers and officials a private space within which to communicate with appropriate external stakeholders as part of the process of exploring and refining the Government's policy position on animal disease control, until the Government as a whole can adopt a policy that is sound and likely to be effective. This private space is essential to enable all options to be properly considered, so that good policy decisions can be taken based on fully informed advice and evidence. Premature disclosure is likely to undermine the full and frank discussion of issues between the Scottish Government and this stakeholder, which in turn will undermine the quality of the policy making process, which would not be in the public interest.