Dear [Name],

Thank you for your email of 25 May 2016 where you requested the following information (I quote):

- “I would like to request the names of all companies that applied for the export of equipment with Military List ratings from 1997 to 2009 inclusive. I would like the list to be broken down by destination country and Military List rating.

The request is as for FOI 2016/00457 and I would appreciate a response in the same format, i.e. a spreadsheet with three columns - one for company name, one for destination country, and a third for the Military List rating. If the data isn’t available for the whole period, please provide the data in reverse chronological order as far back as possible within the cost limit”.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have the right to:
- know whether we hold the information you require
- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).

I can confirm that the Department holds some of the information you have requested.

Some of the information that you have requested is attached. This information dates from 3 September 2007 (the date SPIRE was implemented) to 31 December 2009.

When SPIRE was first introduced it ran in parallel with some of the older licensing systems until the end of 2007. This means some licence applications were processed on the older systems between 3 September and 31 December 2007. Consequently some information from this period
might be incomplete because information from the older systems was migrated into SPIRE at a later date. The way the data was migrated from the older systems means that we are unable to run searches according to certain criteria for that time period.

**Information from 1999 – 31 August 2007 (including applications processed on older systems during 1 September to 31 December 2007):**

Whilst we hold the information you have requested from 2000 to 31 August 2007 we estimate that to comply with this part of your request would exceed the appropriate limit. This is because data from this period was migrated to SPIRE from older licensing systems that were in use before SPIRE was implemented. The data which includes company names, company contact names and individual applicant names was migrated as a single data field. As a result we are unable to easily extract data relating to applications submitted by companies only. To provide you with the information requested would require us to manually extract the companies’ name data for the list, which as noted above includes names of individual applicants, companies and contact names all in one data field. Since there are thousands of applications listed in this way, extracting the company names to comply with this part of your request would exceed the appropriate limit.

Additionally, electronic records for 1999 might be incomplete due to the time data was transferred from the previous export licensing systems that were in use prior to SPIRE.

**Information from 1997 and 1998:**

Information from 1997 and 1998 is not available. This is because the Export Control Organisation’s (ECO’s) web-based processing system, SPIRE, only contains electronic records dating back to 1999. Therefore, we do not hold any electronic records for 1997 and 1998. Additionally electronic records for 1999 might be incomplete due to the time data was transferred from the previous export licensing systems that were in use prior to SPIRE. These databases are now defunct and are no longer accessible.

In order to provide you with information from 1997, 1998 and 1999 (where electronic records for the latter are incomplete) would require extensive searching of historic paper files, which are not easily accessible and many, if not the majority, of which will no longer be available. The Department’s current record retention policy in relation to export licence application data is to keep such records for 10 years. The majority of records beyond this time-frame are not retained, unless they are assessed to be of historical significance. Records of historical value are passed on to the National Archives for further retention.

Consequently Section 12 (disproportionate costs) applies to this part of your request e.g. your request for information from 1997 to 31 August 2007. Normally when section 12 is engaged it is applied to the request in its entirety. However, you have requested that “if the request is deemed to exceed the cost limit, please provide the data in reverse chronological order as far back as is possible within the cost limit” and so we have provided the information from 1 September to 31 December 2009 accordingly.

In respect of the information that we have been unable to provide, please note that Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act is a provision which provides that a public authority is not obliged to comply with requests where the cost of complying would exceed a set limit known as the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.
To help us provide the information you are particularly interested in, you may wish to refine your request by narrowing its scope, including any dates or period of time relevant to the information required.

**Appeals procedure**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original request and should be addressed to the Information Rights Unit:

Information Rights Unit  
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

Email: [FOI.Requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FOI.Requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Export Control Organisation