

08 February 2024

Dear

ATISN 20114 – Mbale Tree Project

Thank you for your email to the Minister for Climate Change which I received on 19 January 2024. Your email about the Mbale Tree Project is being treated as a formal request for information. In your email you asked:

1. What future spending commitments has Welsh Government made towards the Mbale Tree project?
2. What steps has the Welsh Government taken by means of oversight to ensure that public funds have been directed towards the purpose intended?
3. Since the Welsh Government began spending public money on this project, how many members of the Senedd, including Ministers, have visited Uganda at taxpayers' expense, specifically in relation to this project?
4. Has the Welsh Government paid any of the staffing costs of the Size or Wales Charity? A response to each question is set out in Annex A.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

or e-mail: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

Question 1

What future spending commitments has the WAG made towards this project, I gather that just over £3.6 million has been spent to date.

The Welsh Government has committed to fund Size of Wales £450k in the next financial year to enable them to fund the Mbale Tree Project.

Question 2

What steps has the WAG taken by means of oversight to ensure that public funds have been directed towards the purpose intended.? Uganda after all has a very poor record in terms of public corruption.

The Welsh Government and Size of Wales have worked closely to ensure that the funds are spent as intended. All funds directed to the Mbale Tree Project are channelled via a Fiduciary Management Agent which ensures that all funds are properly accounted for to international standards.

Question 3

Since the WAG began spending public money on this project how many AMs. Including Ministers, have visited Uganda at taxpayers expense specifically in relation to this Project?

The Welsh Government has sent Ministers to visit Mbale on 3 occasions, Counsel General 2009, First Minister 2014, Minister for Health and Social Services in 2018. The Welsh Government does not hold a record of visits made by Members of the Senedd. This information is available from the Senedd Commission.

Question 4

Has the WAG paid any of the staffing costs of the Size or Wales Charity?

Yes. Size of Wales staff administer the project funds and help manage the project. Their costs are a part of the project spending.