

AIC Decision on appeal #53

CASE NUMBER AI4530 SALARY SCALES OF WORLD BANK EMPLOYEES (Decision dated December 1, 2016)

Summary of Decision

- The Access to Information Committee (“AIC”) reversed the World Bank’s decision to deny access to the requested “salary scales for all grades of employees working in [...] UK [...], EU [and] Middle East[.]” The AIC found that no exception under Bank Policy: Access to Information, July 1, 2015, Catalogue No. EXC4.01-POL.01 (“AI Policy”) is applicable to said information. Accordingly, the AIC concluded that – even though not asserted in the appeal submitted by the requester – the decision to deny access to the requested information violated the AI Policy.
- In view of the AIC’s decision above, consideration of the portion of the appeal asserting “public interest” was not required.

The Decision

Facts

1. On September 16, 2016, the requester submitted a request (“Request”) seeking to access “the salary scales for all grades of employees working in the following countries (UK, US, North America, EU Middle East)World Bank”. On October 4, 2016, the World Bank (“Bank”) replied to the Request by: (a) providing access to the salary structure (net of tax) and annual average net salaries and benefits as of June 30, 2015 for World Bank Group staff stationed in Washington, D.C.; and (b) denied access to the remaining requested information (i.e. salary scales for UK, EU and Middle East) on the basis that it is restricted by the *Personal Information* and the *Corporate Administrative Matters* exceptions under the *Bank Policy: Access to Information*, July 1, 2015, Catalogue No. EXC4.01-POL.01 (“AI Policy”).

2. On October 5, 2016, the secretariat to the Access to Information Committee (“AIC”) received an application (“Application”) appealing the Bank’s decision to deny public access to the requested information (i.e. salary scales for UK, EU and Middle East). The Application challenges the Bank’s decision to deny public access to the requested information on the basis that there is a “public interest” case to override the AI Policy exceptions that restrict the information. The Application did not provide any further justification.

Findings and Related Decision

3. In reviewing the Application in accordance with the AI Policy, the AIC considered:
 - (a) the Request;
 - (b) the Bank's denial of access;
 - (c) the Application;
 - (d) the AI Policy's *Personal Information* and the *Corporate Administrative Matters* exceptions that justified the Bank's decision to deny public access to the requested information; and
 - (e) the information provided by the relevant business unit.

“Public Interest” case

4. Pursuant to the AI Policy, a requester who is denied public access to information by the Bank may file an appeal on a “public interest” basis if the requester is able to make a public interest case to override certain AI Policy exceptions that restrict the information. Public interest appeals are limited to information restricted by the *Corporate Administrative Matters*, *Deliberative Information*, and/or *Financial Information* (other than banking and billing information) exceptions (see AI Policy at Section III.B.8 (a) ii).

5. In this case, the AIC found that the Bank has readily available aggregate information about the salary scales of World Bank staff per grade in North America, UK, EU and Middle East (for fiscal year 2016). As such, based on the information provided by the relevant business unit, the AIC found that this information is not restricted by the *Personal Information* or the *Corporate Administrative Matters* exceptions under the AI Policy. Finally, the AIC found no other AI Policy exception to apply to the requested information.

6. Based on the above findings, and even though the Application did not assert a violation of policy, the AIC found that the Bank improperly denied access to the requested information based on the *Personal Information* and the *Corporate Administrative Matters* exceptions, and thus, the denial was in violation of the AI Policy. For this reason, the AIC reversed the Bank's decision to deny access to the requested information.

7. Please find the requested information attached below.

[*Information attached in original decision sent to the requester.*]

8. In view of the AIC's decision above, consideration of the portion of the appeal asserting "public interest" was not required.