

Annex A

REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION

An exemption under section s30(c) of FOISA applies to some of the information you have requested.

Your request asks specifically for information relating to infrastructure. Disclosing this information would substantially prejudice our ability to protect government digital assets and digital information. Providing details about specific products and configurations we use puts information into the public domain which could subsequently be used by attackers or hackers to identify vulnerabilities, or to determine what our defences are. Indications are that such attacks on systems are by no means unusual and this risk of substantial prejudice can therefore be classed as likely.

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. However, there is a greater public interest in protecting government information systems from attack or compromise and ensuring that the Scottish Government is able to conduct its business effectively. There is also greater public interest in ensuring that any identified vulnerabilities could not be used to attack Scottish Government systems that hold information entrusted to us by the citizens for whom we provide online services, and for whom we also have responsibilities under the Data Protection Act to protect personal information.