

Summary of investigation

May to October 2023

Organisation or person investigated

Big Innovation Centre (“BIC”)

Matter(s) investigated

Whether BIC conducted unregistered consultant lobbying

Registrar’s decision

Based on assurances received, BIC has not conducted unregistered consultant lobbying activity.

Summary of rationale for decision

Based on substantive and unequivocal written information from BIC, no registerable communications have taken place. Where BIC provides secretariat services for All-Party Parliamentary Groups (“APPGs”), all communications with ministers are undertaken by APPG parliamentary officers.

Under the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union administration Act (2014), a registrable communication is made by a VAT registered company or individual communicating with a Minister, Permanent Secretary (or equivalent) on behalf of a paying client. BIC provided assurance that no such communication has taken place.

Chronology

Date	Action
9 May	Article in The Guardian regarding an event hosted by the APPG on Blockchain.
19 May	Letter from the Registrar giving background on the requirement for registering and requesting information regarding BIC’s client communications.
8 June	Re-sent letter of 19 May, following no response.
20 June	Registrar letter to the APPG on Blockchain’s former Vice Chair regarding no response from BIC.

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Date	Action
21 June	Email from the former Vice Chair to BIC, copied to the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists, asking them to respond.
18 July	Re-sent letter of 19 May, following no response.
18 July	Initial response from BIC saying a proper response would come in the next few days.
10 August	Formal investigation letter from the Registrar giving background on the requirement for registering and asking if BIC's activities fall within the criteria to be registered with particular reference to, but not limited to, any communications made on behalf of APPGs.
5 Sept	Registrar issues a formal Information Notice, following no response.
26 Sept	Email response from BIC.
3 Oct	Letter from Registrar with a follow up question.
3 Oct	Email response from BIC.
6 Oct	Email from Office with a follow up question regarding ministerial contact by an APPG.
9 Oct	Email response from BIC.
23 Oct	Letter from Registrar concluding his investigation.

23 October 2023

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