

Public Interest Test – EIR

Reference Number – DAERA/26-130

Requested Information

Copies of any environmental due diligence assessments, environmental risk appraisals, or compliance history reviews undertaken by DAERA (including any consultation with or input from NIEA) prior to awarding SBRI Phase 2 funding in February 2026 to Natural World Products in respect of the Glenside facility.

Exemption / Exception under consideration

- Regulation 12(4)(e) – internal communications
- Regulation 12(5)(e) – disclosure would adversely affect the confidentiality of commercial or industrial information where such confidentiality is provided by law to protect a legitimate economic interest.

Reasons why the public interest would favour disclosure:

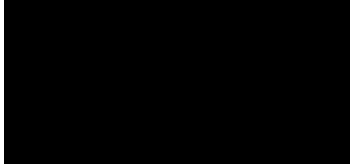
- Regulation 12(2) requires DAERA to apply a presumption in favour of disclosure and DAERA is committed to conducting its business in a manner that is as open and transparent as possible.
- Disclosure would lead to greater transparency and accountability.
- There is significant interest among the public in matters concerning the environment.

Reasons why the public interest would favour withholding:

- Internal communications or discussions between officials are for internal department use only. The Department requires a safe space to develop ideas, debate live issues and reach decisions away from external interference and distraction.
- Chilling Effect: the disclosure of internal discussions inhibits free and frank discussions, and that the loss of frankness and candour damages the quality of advice, leading to poorer decision-making.
- Releasing the information could prejudice future public decision-making and procurement processes.
- Releasing this information could undermine the competitive position of Natural World Products, particularly as the project is ongoing and subject to future commercial negotiations.
- Research and Development Sensitivities – the information requested is part of a competitive research and development in phases project carried out by the Authority under the Pre-Commercial Procurement principles. Research and development projects can attract higher sensitivity under EIR disclosures compared to purely commercial projects.
- Disclosure of some of the information could harm legitimate economic interests of Natural World Products.

Conclusion

Following consideration of the Public Interest Test the Department has decided that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.



Green Growth & Innovation Division, DAERA