

Our Ref: FOI2017-038

Date: March 2017

Subject: Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) – new requests registered

This request asked about incoming MLA requests.

The SFO is not a receiving authority for MLA requests. Requests are received by the United Kingdom Central Authority which is part of the Home Office, and they may refer them to the SFO for execution if they appear to involve serious or complex fraud.

The number of new cases registered* by the SFO in each calendar year is as follows:

2012 – 24
2013 – 24
2014 – 33
2015 – 37
2016 – 22

*This is not the same as the number of requests received.

For example, in addition to new cases on which we are asked to assist, we received supplementary requests for further assistance on existing cases.

The SFO sometimes receives requests where we find we cannot assist – for example if the case does not appear to involve serious or complex fraud or the evidence sought is simply not available in this jurisdiction. Requests will also be received which, on review, appear better dealt with by another law enforcement agency, for example because the agency has some previous involvement or is working on a linked domestic matter. We do not routinely capture information about the number of requests which fall into this category.
