

SFO Investigations

Company / Individual	Last updated	Summary	Additional notes
GPT Special Project Management Ltd (individuals)	16 March 2023	<p>In October 2011 it was rumoured the SFO may investigate allegations that European defence group Airbus (at the time known as EADS) gave Saudi Arabian officials luxury cars, jewellery and briefcases of cash in an apparent attempt to smooth the passage of a £2bn communications contract. According to reports, the ‘kickbacks’ were exposed by whistleblower Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Foxley and involved Airbus UK subsidiary GPT Special Project Management. In August 2012, the SFO officially opened an investigation into these allegations.</p> <p><i>Sources: Sunday Times, Transparency International; SFO case progress</i></p> <p>In July 2014 the SFO made arrests and questioned individuals in connection with this investigation into GPT. Charges were brought against GPT Special Project Management and three individuals in July 2020 in connection with the SFO's investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of GPT's business in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.</p> <p>April 2021: GPT Special Project Management pleaded guilty to one count of corruption. <i>See our Enforcement Trends tracker for details.</i></p> <p>The individuals had their first appearance at Westminster Magistrates' Court in September 2020. A trial took place in July 2022 but was halted mid-way through. A retrial was due to take place in March 2023 but was adjourned til later in the year.</p>	GPT Special Project Management pleaded guilty to one count of corruption in April 2021. <i>See our Enforcement Trends tracker for details.</i>
G4S (Individuals)	16 March 2023	The SFO charged three former executives of G4S with multiple offences relating to a multi-year scheme to defraud the MoJ. Richard Morris, Mark Preston and James Jardine appeared before Westminster Magistrates' Court in September 2020.	SFO abandoned prosecution in March 2023. <i>See our Enforcement Trends tracker for information on the DPA that G4S</i>

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		<p>Trial expected in January 2023 (after it was postponed from January 2022).</p> <p>Sources: SFO, 8 Sept 2020; FT, 21 Oct 2021.</p>	entered into.
Rio Tinto	7 March 2023	<p>The SFO launched an investigation into a 2011 payment made by Rio Tinto to a consultant working on an iron ore deposit in Guinea. The company alerted the SFO, US DOJ and Australian Federal Police in November about the payment.</p> <p>In March 2023, Rio Tinto agreed with the US SEC to pay a \$15m civil penalty to settle allegations that it violated the books and records provisions of the FCPA as part of its efforts to retain its mining rights in Guinea.</p> <p>Sources: SFO; Financial Times; Global Investigations Review,</p>	
Chemring	2 July 2022	<p>The SFO launched an investigation into bribery, corruption and money-laundering concerns at Chemring Group and Chemring Technology Solutions Ltd in January 2018, following a self-report by CTSL.</p> <p>Source: SFO press release 2018</p>	In July 2022, the SFO closed the investigation into Chemring. Source: The Times, 2 July 2022
Quindell plc (now Watchstone Group PLC)	13 October 2021	<p>The SFO confirmed it had opened an investigation into business and accounting practices at Quindell plc in August 2015. It had been rumoured in the press in June 2015 that the company might be subject to an SFO investigation.</p> <p>In April 2020 Watchstone Group PLC was informed it was no longer a suspect in the ongoing investigation, which remains active.</p> <p>Source: SFO press release; SFO case page</p>	The SFO closed its investigations into Watchstone in October 2021 and will take no further action against the group, its subsidiaries or its people. The SFO formally discontinued investigation into individuals of Quindell. Source: Law360, 15 Oct 2021

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Unaoil	March 2021	<p>The SFO is conducting an investigation into the activities of Unaoil in connection to suspected offences of bribery, corruption and money laundering. In March 2017, the High Court ruled in favour of the SFO in a judicial review brought by Unaenergy and others relating to the content of the SFO's letter of request to authorities in Monaco.</p> <p>November 2017: SFO charges two people (Ziad Akle and Basil Al Jarah) in connection with the Unaoil investigation.</p> <p>December 2017: SFO arrests two people (Paul Bond and Stephen Whiteley) in connection with Unaoil investigation.</p> <p>March 2018: Wood Group completes internal probe into dealings with Unaoil and hands file to investigators.</p> <p>May 2018: additional charges brought against Basil Al Jarah and Ziad Akle by the SFO.</p> <p>June 2018: SFO commenced proceedings against Unaoil Monaco SAM and Unaoil Ltd (under s.1 of Criminal Law Ac 1977 and s.1 of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906).</p> <p><i>Source: SFO Unaoil cases page; Scottish Mail on Sunday, March 2018; SFO press release June 2018;</i></p>	<p>The SFO secured convictions against three individuals and one individual pleaded guilty. Sentencing took place in 2020 and 2021.</p> <p>In late 2021, Ziad Akle successfully appealed his conviction. In March 2022, the Court of Appeal allowed Paul Bond's appeal.</p> <p>A company that is part of the corporate group of John Wood Group plc agreed a civil settlement with the COPFS in March 2021.</p> <p>See our <i>Enforcement Trends tracker</i> for more information.</p>
British American Tobacco plc	15 January 2021	<p>The SFO announced an investigation into BAT plc in August 2017 on suspicions of corruption, which is thought to be related to earlier news reports of allegations of bribery in east Africa.</p> <p><i>Source: SFO; Financial Times</i></p>	<p>SFO closed the investigation in January 2021 - the evidence did not meet the evidential test for prosecution as defined in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. <i>Source: SFO.</i></p>

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Bombardier Inc	5 November 2020	<p>The SFO announced it had opened an investigation into Bombardier over suspected bribery and corruption in relation to contracts and/or orders from Garuda Indonesia.</p> <p><i>Source: SFO, 5 Nov 2020.</i></p>	
KBR, Inc	6 August 2020	<p>The SFO announced it had opened an investigation into the activities of KBR for suspected offences of bribery and corruption. The investigation relates to the SFO's investigation into Unaoil.</p> <p><i>Source: SFO April 2017</i></p>	<p>It was reported in August 2020 that the US and UK authorities had closed their Unaoil-related investigations into KBR without taking enforcement action. The closure of the SFO investigation into KBR, due to insufficient evidence, was formally announced in March 2021.</p> <p><i>Source: SFO, 18/03/2021</i></p>
De La Rue	16 June 2020	<p>Banknote printer De La Rue contacted the Serious Fraud Office as its investigation into printing irregularities deepened. The SFO confirmed it had been contacted and said they are monitoring the situation. In May 2011 it was reported that the SFO had conducted an investigation and was still considering the matter. <i>Source: Daily Telegraph</i></p> <p>The SFO opened another investigation into De La Rue in 2019 relating to suspected corruption in South Sudan but this investigation was dropped in June 2020 as the case did not meet the relevant test for prosecution.</p> <p><i>Source: SFO</i></p>	<p>Case relating to South Sudan dropped as it did not meet the relevant test for prosecution.</p>
GlaxoSmithKline	22 February 2019	<p>The SFO opened an investigation into GSK plc and its subsidiaries in May 2014. No details were given as to what activities the SFO were investigating. It had been reported various press articles that the</p>	<p>SFO announced the closure of the investigation into GSK in February 2019.</p>

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		<p>company is investigating allegations of wrongdoing in China, Jordan, Poland and Lebanon.</p> <p>In July 2015, there were fresh allegations of bribery relating to payments to doctors in Romania between 2009 and 2012.</p> <p>Sources: SFO press release; <i>The Times</i>, 28/05/2014, 30/07/2015</p>	<p><i>Source: FT, Reuters</i></p>
Patisserie Holdings PLC	12 October 2018	<p>The SFO confirmed it has opened an investigation into an individual.</p> <p>Source: SFO, 12 Oct 2018.</p>	
Eurasian Natural Resources Corporation (ENRC)	17 August 2018	<p>The SFO has confirmed it is investigating allegations of fraud, bribery and corruption relating to the activities of the company or its subsidiaries in Kazakhstan and Africa.</p> <p>In July 2018, the SFO issued an arrest warrant for the CEO of Eurasian Resources Group, only to later have it withdrawn.</p> <p>Source: SFO case update</p> <p><i>Previous news:</i> It was reported that cash was siphoned from a workers' education fund run by ENRC to allegedly send to the son of a police chief in Kazakhstan to college in the US. This allegation is at the heart of an internal investigation at ENRC, being overseen by the SFO, although Mehmet Dalman, new chairman of ENRC, clarified in May 2012 in <i>The Sunday Times</i> that the SFO is not investigating the company, but had received information from a whistleblower. In January 2012, it was reported ENRC had agreed to hand over details of an internal investigation into its activities in Kazakhstan and information regarding a mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo to the SFO.</p>	

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		<i>Sources: The Independent on Sunday and Daily Telegraph; The Sunday Times</i>	
Ultra Electronics	19 April 2018	SFO opened an investigation into Ultra Electronics in April 2018 following a self-report by Ultra. <i>Source: SFO press release 2018</i>	
Formula One	27 August 2017	Formula One confirmed the SFO has begun a pre-investigation into the sport following a tip-off from Damian Collins, MP. The allegations relate to the Concorde Implementation Agreement, the contract which underpins F1. News of the SFO review of material relating to Formula One initially began in April 2017. <i>Sources: BBC, The Independent</i>	
Europcar	16 July 2017	It was reported in the press that Europcar may be subject to an SFO investigation over alleged fraudulent repair costs. <i>Source: Telegraph, July 2017</i>	
Soma Oil & Gas	14 December 2016	The SFO confirmed in 2015 it had opened an investigation into SOMA Oil & Gas Holdings Ltd, SOMA Oil & Gas Exploration Limited, SOMA Management Limited in relation to allegations of corruption in Somalia following a report from a whistleblower. The investigation was subsequently closed. <i>Source: SFO press release</i>	Closed, insufficient evidence. <i>Source: SFO, December 2016</i>
Gyrus Group Limited and Olympus Corporation	10 November 2015	The SFO commenced criminal proceedings against Gyrus Group Ltd, a UK subsidiary of Olympus Corporation and Olympus in September 2013, charging with offence of making a statement to an auditor which was	SFO offered no evidence against Olympus and Gyrus Group at a hearing on 10 November 2015.

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		<p>misleading, false or deceptive, contrary to s.501 Companies Act 2006. Gyrus Group faced 4 charges, Olympus faced one charge.</p> <p>At a hearing in November 2015, the SFO offered no evidence against the companies and as such not guilty verdicts were given.</p> <p>Source: SFO press release</p>	Source: SFO
British Seafood Group	May 2013	<p>The Serious Fraud Office confirmed that it is investigating the affairs of the British Seafood Group which collapsed in February. A spokeswoman for the SFO told Fishupdate: "We have been asked to look into allegations of fraud and false accounting. Because the investigation is ongoing I cannot comment any further at this stage." Source: FishUpdate.com</p>	Closed, no realistic prospect of conviction. Source: Undercurrent News, May 2013
Harlequin Property	23 April 2013	<p>The SFO, with Essex police, is investigating complaints in relation to the Harlequin group, in particular on property developments in resorts in the Caribbean. The SFO are seeking information from those who have invested in the schemes.</p> <p>On 23 April, it was reported that Harlequin had filed for administration citing "unfounded negative publicity".</p> <p>Sources: SFO case progress; CityWire</p>	
Securrency International	7 December 2012	<p>More than 100 police and investigators from the SFO carried out searches at nine properties connected to Securrency International, a joint venture between the Reserve Bank of Australia and Innovia Films, a British chemicals manufacturer in October 2010. Securrency, an Australian-based company that makes polymer films used to protect banknotes, is being jointly investigated by the SFO and the Australian</p>	SFO charged Bill Lowther with conspiracy to corrupt in September 2011 – he was cleared of charges by a jury at Southwark in December 2012.

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		<p>Federal Police. It is one of the biggest raids that the SFO has carried out and two men were arrested.</p> <p>More arrests were made in October in relation to the activities of the employees and agents of Securrency International and their alleged corrupt role in securing international polymer banknote contracts.</p> <p><i>Source: SFO press release</i></p> <p>Former Securrency bosses arrested in July 2011. Federal police charged two Reserve Bank of Australia currency firms, Securrency and Note Printing Australia, along with several of the company's former senior managers with paying massive bribes to foreign officials in order to win banknote supply contracts. ... The arrests and charges marked a major milestone in Australia's biggest bribery scandal and are the first time foreign bribery laws have been used in the nation's history.</p> <p><i>Source: Sydney Morning Herald</i></p> <p><i>Latest update 7 December 2012:</i> Bill Lowther was accused of bribing the Vietnamese bank governor by paying for his son to attend Durham University in exchange for a printing contract in September 2011. A jury at Southwark Crown Court cleared Mr Lowther of conspiracy to corrupt in December 2012. <i>Source: The Northern Echo</i></p> <p><i>Update 28 October 2011:</i> Note Printing Australia and Securrency to appear before Supreme Court of Victoria on 8 November. <i>Source: The Age (Melbourne)</i></p> <p><i>Update September 16:</i> SFO charges Bill Lowther with taking part in conspiracy to help secure a university place for the son of the then governor of Vietnam's state-owned bank Le Duc Thuy. <i>Source: The</i></p>	

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		<p><i>Guardian</i></p> <p><i>Update September 13:</i> Former executive from Note Printing Australia (subsidiary of Reserve Bank of Australia) extradited from Germany to Australia - Christian Boillot. <i>Source: The Age (Melbourne)</i></p> <p><i>Update August 11:</i> A former Securrency executive faces charges of facilitating the largest bribe allegedly paid by the Reserve Bank subsidiary to win currency contracts in Asia. Federal police allege that former Securrency sales boss Clifford John Gerathy facilitated payments of \$17.2 million to an agent in Vietnam and falsified accounts in regard to a contract in Malaysia. <i>Source: The Age (Melbourne).</i></p>	
Keydata Investment Services	November 2012	SFO launched investigation into Keydata in July 2009 following a referral from the FSA. The investigation was closed after the SFO concluded there was insufficient evidence to secure a prosecution. The SFO said it would then focus on tracing the assets of SLS Capital, which was controlled by controversial businessman David Elias but this investigation too has closed – the efforts made by the SFO to trace assets of SLS Capital and David Elias were not successful.	Closed, insufficient evidence. <i>Source: SFO case update</i>
A1 Grand Prix	27 February 2011	The Serious Fraud Office has started looking into companies behind the A1 Grand Prix Series – the collapsed rival to Formula One – whose creditors still claim to be owed more than £400m. <i>Source: Sunday Telegraph</i>	
E-Clear	February 2011	The SFO began a formal investigation into the collapse of E-Clear, the credit card processing firm, reported in May 2010. In February 2011, SFO officials said there was “insufficient evidence” to pursue a prosecution against E-Clear	Closed, insufficient evidence. <i>Source: Herald Scotland</i>

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AIG Financial Products	May 2010	An investigation into AIG Financial Products' UK operations began in 2009 but was dropped 15 months later due to insufficient evidence to bring a prosecution	Closed, insufficient evidence. <i>Source: Daily Telegraph</i>
Rio Tinto	March 2010	Rio Tinto faced a possible SFO investigation after four former executives from the UK company were convicted of bribery in China. <i>Source: Daily Telegraph</i>	