



[REDACTED]

24 July 2020

[REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2020/00148

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 28 May 2020 in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I would like to make a freedom of information request, for data from UKRI - ATI Innovate. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I would also like to make a freedom of information request, for project [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Our response

I can confirm UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold the information relevant to your request.

Project [REDACTED]

In your request you have asked for a copy of the application for the above project, we have determined that the information you have requested falls under Section 41, information provided in confidence and Section 43, prejudice to commercial interests, of the FOIA.

Section 41. Information provided in confidence

The information you have requested, namely the application form for funding for project [REDACTED] falls into the scope of Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence. The agreement Innovate UK have with applicants is that no confidential information will be released without their permission.

Applicants complete the application form knowing that if they achieve success only a brief overview of their successful bid will be publicly available, everything else will remain confidential. If the information was released, we believe it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality.

As this exemption is absolute there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

Section 43(2), prejudice to commercial interests

We believe the information you have requested also falls under the scope of Section 43(2) of the FOIA. This exemption is used where disclosure would likely result in a person's (an individual, a company the public authority itself or any other legal entities) commercial interests being prejudiced.

This is a qualified exemption, meaning that a test was carried out to determine whether the public interest outweighs the requirement for commercial confidentiality.

Public interest in favour of disclosure

- There is a general public interest in the disclosure of this information to ensure transparency and openness of a public organisation.
- There is also a public interest in transparency in order to ensure the accountability of public organisations and how they spend public funding.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- The bid details, including application forms and information on unsuccessful applications contain commercially sensitive information such as business plans, cost and schedule information, technical project plan and extensive description of the project which were disclosed to UKRI in confidence. The agreement we have with applicants is that we will not release any confidential information without their permission. Releasing the information requested could be taken advantage of by competitors in planning competing strategies for further business opportunities. Applicants complete the application form knowing that if they achieve success only a brief overview of their successful bid will be publicly available, everything else will remain confidential.
- This is a highly competitive field of work, and the application form requested contains detailed project plans, cost of the project, performance details and pricing strategy. This is sensitive commercial data that would allow a competitor to gain a commercial and competitive advantage if it was disclosed into the public domain. Getting to market rapidly is critical to success and providing competitors with sensitive commercial data would likely harm our applicant's commercial future.
- Innovate UK's competition process is highly competitive and composing a successful bid requires expertise and skill in providing quality information as well as understanding the most advantageous content to present in order to succeed. The applicant must also have the ability to support and justify the strength of their application. The applicant must do this whilst adhering within the strictly enforced scope and eligibility requirements of a particular competition. This knowledge is proprietary to the applicant. In addition, there are companies and consultancy groups that specialise in selling a grant writing service based on their grant writing expertise and knowledge. This exemplifies the commercial advantage and value that such expertise and skills deliver. As such, disclosing the information requested is likely to reduce commercial advantage and thereby harm commercial interests in a highly competitive field. We believe disclosing this information confers an advantage to competitors which would likely materially disadvantage and harm the interests of applicants particularly in their ability to compete for grants
- We also considered the impact on UKRI if commercially sensitive information of companies we and engage and work closely with were disclosed. We believe it would damage the trust in UKRI and likely impact our ability to carry out our role and manage our current and future investments.

Taking the above arguments into consideration, we reached the decision that the need for commercial confidentiality outweighs the public interest in disclosure; therefore, the information is exempt from disclosure.

Project [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] provided funding for the Connected Places Catapult relating to a delivery plan agreed with HMG as part of the wider Catapult network. Information about the Connected Places Catapult can be found on their website:

<https://cp.catapult.org.uk/>

Connected Places Catapult was formed in 2019 as the result of the merger between Future Cities Catapult and Transport Systems Catapult. The funding for those Catapults was announced here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/215-million-additional-investment-for-uk-innovation-centres>

Catapults are not for profit Research Technology Organisations which makes them eligible for 100% funding.

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact:

Head of Information Governance

Email: foi@ukri.org or infogovernance@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Information Governance
Information Rights Team
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