



[REDACTED]

2 August 2022

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2022/00227

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 8 July in which you requested the following:

Your request:

Dear Information team,

Thank you very much for your response. The information you sent me did not go beyond what is already published on your web-interface. In fact it is less, because it does not include, for example the value of panel rejected grants.

From your justification, it is not clear to me why you feel unable to send me the requested information.

I understand that your main concern is confidentiality and your that the release of the information may "prejudice UKRI's capacity to successfully attract applicants to participate in any future competition processes."

The second reason is particularly puzzling to me. I can follow the reasoning that sharing scoring information could, potentially, identify candidates. However, the bulk of the information I requested was grant number, grant value and whether or not accepted. This information can in no way be used to identify unsuccessful candidates. So there are no confidentiality issue.

In order to lay to rest any remaining concerns about confidentiality, I re-formulate my FOI and ask for summary data only. Please find below my re-vised FOI request:

Please send me the success rates on a per value and per grant number basis for all panels since January 2017. This information is of essential interest to the public because it will provide information whether or not there is a value bias in the application approvals, and will thus provide information about the effectiveness of the EPSRC peer review process.

Please calculate this data as follows:

For each panel of EPSRC, split up the data into three classes of grants according to the amount asked:

£0-150000 , £150001-£400000, £400001 – unlimited

For each of the three classes and each panel, please report:

- 1-Number of grants that did not go to panel (but would have done so had they been of sufficient quality).*
- 2-Number of grants that were rejected by panel*
- 3-Number of grants accepted by panel.*
- 4-Combined Value of grants that did not go to panel (but would have done so had they been of sufficient quality).*
- 5-Combined of grants that were rejected by panel*
- 6-Combined of grants accepted by panel.*

Please send this to me as an Excel file where the first column should be the name of the panel. The remaining 6x3 = 18 cols should contain the information requested above for the relevant panel.

Our response

I can confirm UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold information relevant to your request. Please see the information attached in document 'FOI2022/00227 EPSRC Panel data'.

Regarding confidentiality and the identification of unsuccessful candidates, under the Terms and Conditions of funding calls, there is usually an expressed understanding that applications are submitted in confidence and that information would not be disclosed if applications are unsuccessful. As explained previously, applications are submitted in confidence, with the expectation that the requested information, including application value, reviewer scores, and whether or not they were funded, will be kept in confidence. For this reason, we previously withheld the information in relation to unfunded awards.

Recognising the need for transparency around our funding decisions, we are able to release summary data on all EPSRC Funding panels from 01/01/2017 to 31/03/2022. We do not hold information for questions 1 and 4 across each category. This is because when a proposal is rejected prior to a panel meeting, any data relating to which panel that proposal would have been considered at is removed and is no longer held by UKRI.

Further, proposals are not specifically rejected/funded at a panel meeting; the panel prioritise applications for funding and make recommendations which EPSRC then make its decisions based upon those recommendations. In addition, grants are sometimes involved in a number of panels and there may be double counting if the values are aggregated across panel meetings.

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: www.ico.org.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,


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