



[Redacted]

27 July 2022

Dear [Redacted]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2022/00204

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 31 May in which you requested the following:

Your request:

Collaborative R&D Project reference 79202 – Staht Limited

Please can you provide a copy of:

- 1) the published application documentation made available to potential bidders for this opportunity*
- 2) the application made to Innovate UK by Staht (and any co-bidders)*
- 3) the criteria for the award of the grant*
- 4) the full report (if any) from which the abstract was taken.*

Our response:

I can confirm UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) does hold the information relevant to your request. Please see the information below and attached.

- 1) The published application documentation made available to potential bidders for this opportunity*

The Innovate UK award to Staht Limited, project reference 79202, was made under the Sustainability Innovation Fund, round 1.

The competition overview for the Sustainability Innovation Fund: round 1, including supporting information, eligibility criteria and scope is publicly available and can be accessed [here](#)¹.

- 2) The application made to Innovate UK by Staht (and any co-bidders)*

A copy of the application form is provided with this response as “FOI2022_00204 79202 Application_Redacted”. Some information has been withheld, further information on the exemptions considered to apply is provided below.

We have determined that some of the information contained within the application form falls under Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence.

To explain further, information including, but not limited to, research proposals and specific applications is provided to Innovate UK in confidence. If the information was released, we believe it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality. There is a need for the information to remain confidential even after the duration of the project that was funded has completed, given that research and development can continue past this. The release of this information may affect the ongoing operation and commercial opportunities for the organisation.

¹ <https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/651/overview>

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

We have also redacted personal information relating to the lead applicant and additional team members, including contact details, names, experience and qualifications, which has been withheld under section 40(2) of the FOIA. Disclosing this information would contravene the first Data Protection Principle as defined under Section 86 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 5 of UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

In addition, we believe the information contained under “Improving the Current State-of-the-art” and “Innovation Focus” in section 4 (page 7) and “Staht’s Value Chain” in section 6 (page 11), as well as any cost information included in the application form 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.
- It would be in the public interest to view the application as public monies are used to fund these activities. As this is the case it is important that the project has a positive impact and is beneficial to all parties involved. Seeing copies of the application and full research proposal enables the public to independently assess the impact of the project.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- An applicant’s ideas may be, currently or in the future, the subject of IP filing. Disclosing descriptions of products, processes and key technical information could hinder their chances of being successful in any IP application.
- Releasing the information would be likely to weaken the position of the participants of the project in the competitive research environment as participants would usually continue working on projects, or on the research, even after the grant has come to an end, thus prejudicing the ongoing operations and marketing opportunities of the company.
- The application contains commercially sensitive information such as the business plans, cost and schedule information and extensive descriptions of the project which are disclosed to UKRI in confidence. Releasing the information requested could be taken advantage of by competitors in planning competing strategies for further business opportunities.
- We also considered the impact on UKRI if commercially sensitive information of companies we engage and work closely with were disclosed. Releasing information provided in confidence to UKRI is likely to damage the possibility of ongoing relationships with other organisations. Relationships may become untenable if third parties cannot be certain that their commercial information will remain confidential when held by UKRI.
- Breaching confidentiality may also adversely affect future negotiation opportunities for UKRI. UKRI may be seen as a ‘confidentiality’ risk if it routinely releases information relating to business arrangements into the public domain, particularly where this is third party information, which we

believe would damage trust in UKRI and likely impact our ability to carry out our role and manage our current and future investments.

- We follow the government guidance on [managing public money](#)². Standards expected of all public services include integrity, reliability, spending money in the public interest and achieving value for money. Our current thorough process ensures that only the best projects receive public monies. Releasing this information could jeopardize the fair and transparent competition process and undermine our function to fund the best projects. In turn, undermining this process would go against our responsibilities to manage our use of public funds.

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.

3) *The criteria for the award of the grant*

Please find attached the document “*New Projects Temporary Framework Terms and Conditions - Innovation Funding Service*”. This information is available to all applicants via the Innovation Funding Service system.

4) *The full report (if any) from which the abstract was taken.*

Applicants provide an abstract, as part of the Application, a copy of which has been provided in response to Request 2 above. Abstracts are also publicly available from UKRI’s Gateway to Research, the abstract for project 79202 is accessible [here](#)³ and was taken from the ‘Public description’ section of the application form.

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,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1060283/MPM_Spring_21_without_annexes_040322.pdf

³ <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=79202>