



[REDACTED]

24 February 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2023/00023

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 25 January in which you requested the following:

Your request:

1. *How much in government grants and investment was given to NAM research for 2021 and also 2022 and how much has been earmarked for 2023. The figure given out in a Ministers response to the Shadow Minister for DEFRA was £100 million since 2004 but that equates to less than £6 million a year.*
2. *How much money has the government granted or invested in animal testing via grants, donations, vat relief etc. in 2021 and also 2022 and how much has been earmarked for 2023?*
3. *An additional question resulting from a reply that Tom Tugendhat gave to Chi Onwurah in a written answer today.*

He said:

"The Government continues to actively support and fund the development and dissemination of the 3Rs. This is achieved through UK Research and Innovation who fund the National Centre for the 3Rs and research into the development of alternatives through Innovate UK, the Medical Research Council, and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council:

- a. *Could you provide 3 examples of how your funding has developed any kind of alternatives to animal testing because I have looked through the Innovate UK website and published papers and I can find no reference to alternatives either achieved or in their forthcoming plans.*
- b. *And as for the Biological Sciences Research Council they say "The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) supports the continued use of animals in scientific research, but only when strict conditions are met: applicants must provide sound scientific justification in their funding application for the use of animals" I'm afraid this is not very encouraging that they have a commitment into looking at NAM's .*

Clarification requested: 26 January 2023

Please could you clarify what the acronym 'NAM' means?

Clarification received on 27 January 2023: NEW APPROACH METHODOLOGIES or NON ANIMAL METHODS

Our response

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

We can advise that UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (formerly the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy - BEIS). The information provided below relates to UKRI funding only as UKRI does not hold information on funding provided by government departments, other agencies or public bodies.

1. How much in government grants and investment was given to NAM research for 2021 and also 2022 and how much has been earmarked for 2023. The figure given out in a Ministers response to the Shadow Minister for DEFRA was £100 million since 2004 but that equates to less than £6 million a year.

UKRI funding for the development and dissemination of non-animal technologies, including new approach methodologies (NAMs), is achieved primarily through core-funding from UKRI for the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs). NC3Rs works nationally and internationally to drive the uptake of approaches that replace, reduce, and refine the use of animals in research. Core funding for NC3Rs from UKRI is reviewed on a five-year cycle. The latest funding settlement is for financial years 2020/21 to 2024/25 and the total core budget for this period is £49.1M.

While we do not hold information on the amount of funding that was used to support the development of non-animal technologies as part of individual studies across the UKRI portfolio, UKRI is committed to advance further improvements through the development, integration, and promotion of the 3Rs (the replacement, reduction and refinement) principles and require applicants to consider them when applying for funding for research involving animals.

2. How much money has the government granted or invested in animal testing via grants, donations, VAT relief etc. in 2021 and also 2022 and how much has been earmarked for 2023.

UKRI funding takes the form of grants and UKRI does not provide donations or VAT relief.

Below are figures for amounts granted for research involving animals across UKRI, based on application data for the last two complete financial years, where such data exists.

	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22
BBSRC ¹	£40.3m	£36.3m
UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships	£13.2m	£11.5m
NC3Rs	£3.82m	£2.49m
NERC	£0.6m	£4.0m
MRC ²	£114.1m	£140.8m

¹This excludes spend on strategically funded institute projects, training, and small international awards.

² This excludes funding granted to MRC-owned establishments or MRC units and centres, which undertake research involving animals, as the costs specific to animal research are not reported separately within the overall costs.

The above figures reflect the total spend (NERC/BBSRC) or committed budget (MRC/NC3Rs/FLF) for awards where the proposed research involves the use of animals licensed under the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA). However, for each individual award we cannot separate the budget directly related to the use of animals from other research methods. Please also note that the use of animals includes any use, and is not restricted to activity that might be classified as “testing”.

We do not hold relevant information for Innovate UK, as Innovate UK do not currently collate data on projects that include either animal testing or that are specifically developing replacements for animal testing. We estimate that the cost of complying with this section of your request would exceed the appropriate statutory limit as specified within Section 12 of the FOIA which for UKRI is set at £450. This represents the estimated cost of 18 hours of staff resource on locating, retrieving and extracting the information. We have determined that to gather this information it would be necessary to manually review each application across all of Innovate UK’s competitions in the period specified and manually access and extract the information from hundreds of applications. Taken over the period specified and the volume of applications involved this would exceed the appropriate limit.

Consequently, UKRI is not obliged under Section 12 of the FOIA to process this section of your request further. We have tried to identify a way in which you could refine your request to bring it under the appropriate cost limit which would enable us to comply with this request, however due to the volume of work required this has not been possible.

However, we can advise that the development of technology to replace animal testing is in-scope for regular funding opportunities such as Biomedical Catalyst and SMART competitions.

UKRI does not allocate specific funds to be used for research involving animals, therefore nothing has been earmarked for 2023.

3a. Could you provide 3 examples of how your funding has developed any kind of alternatives to animal testing because I have looked through the Innovate UK website and published papers and I can find no reference to alternatives either achieved or in their forthcoming plans.

Examples of alternatives to animal research and testing are available on the on the [NC3Rs](https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/)¹ website, where it is possible to search for replacements that have been funded across the NC3Rs portfolio using the [search function](#)². Information is also available at the NC3Rs [resource library](#)³. There are replacement case studies in the reports that the NC3Rs has published on the impacts from its research and innovation funding – please see the 2019 research review and 2019 CRACK IT review [here](#)⁴.

Further examples are available from Innovate UK and information on the following projects can be found on Innovate UK's [transparency data](#)⁵ page, where you can filter for 'project number' for more information including a project summary under 'public description'.

- 92486 Fully synthetic animal-free scaffolds: the future of sustainable and scalable organoid culture
Competition: The Sustainable Innovation Fund: round 3
- 95482 Addressing the need for animal free testing of human acute toxicity
Competition: Smart Grants: August 2020
- 830238 Further Development and Innervation of a 96 Well, 3D, Skin Model for Drug and Toxicity Testing
Competition: Innovation continuity loans: Strand 2 November 2020

As this information is in the public domain, we consider that Section 21 - Information already reasonably accessible, of the FOIA would apply and have provided the relevant links above. Section 21 is an absolute exemption which means that there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

3b. And as for the Biological Sciences Research Council they say "The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) supports the continued use of animals in scientific research, but only when strict conditions are met: applicants must provide sound scientific justification in their funding application for the use of animals" I'm afraid this is not very encouraging that they have a commitment into looking at NAM's.

Please note that under the FOI Act we're only obligated to respond to requests for information held and cannot provide commentary or opinion; the above statement therefore falls outside the scope of the legislation as it's expressing an opinion.

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

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.

¹ <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/>

² <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/our-portfolio/search?r%5b%5d=19>

³ <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/3rs-resources/search?topic%5B0%5D=504>

⁴ <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/who-we-are/our-reports-and-reviews>

⁵ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/innovate-uk-funded-projects-since-2004/>

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