UK Research and Innovation

16 June 2023

Dear ██████,

Freedom of Information request: FOI2023/00300

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 18 May in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I am attempting to establish some baseline data regarding Atlantic Salmon population change research. I would be tremendously grateful if you would be able to provide me with the following information to inform my research project.

By year, over the financial years 2013/14 to 2022/23 inclusive details of applications received and projects funded (research, studentships, innovation and engagement activities) sorted by research council (and IUK)) which address: Atlantic Salmon population monitoring; aquaculture impacts on the species; water engineering interventions for Atlantic Salmon protection; genetic integrity studies of the species; and, economics of salmon aquaculture.

Further, it would be helpful to receive information about any engagement or outreach events that may have been supported or delivered by UKRI (and RCUK as was, IUK or individual councils) during the same time period – e.g., the event title, date and any weblinks/publicly available reports.

I would appreciate the following information about the identified activities.

Applications
Title, submission date (or proposed start date), proposed Department and host institution, name of PI (if that is allowable under GDPR), sum requested and a copy of the abstract where Seibel captured that.

Awards
Title, start and end date, Department and host institution, name of PI. Sum awarded and a copy of the abstract

I recognise this is quite a complex request, and I understand that you have limited time resources. If it is difficult to sift projects about Atlantic Salmon in the way requested, if you could perhaps provide a list of all applications and awards on the species by research council (and IUK) including the information as per 'Awards' above, and provide details about any engagement or outreach events, I could work with that.

Further information received:

I would be tremendously grateful if you would be able to provide me with the requested information. It is not available via the GtR because the filters are insufficiently sensitive to access the categorical information, and searches by title only are producing inaccurate data – e.g., it is listing projects with some focus on aspects of the Atlantic ocean and not the issue related to the species as requested. For example, the search produced projects and publications re urban flood risk on peri Atlantic cities. Hardly related to species decline or genetic diversity... Further, GtR does not hold data regarding events and activities as requested.

Our response:

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

Under Section 21 of the FOIA, information already reasonably accessible, the information you have requested on funded projects is already available on UKRI's Gateway to Research[1]. This includes the project title, start and end date, research organisations, name of the Principal Investigator, grant amount awarded and a copy of the project abstract.

It is not possible for research councils to filter projects to the level of detail you have requested without manually reviewing the project abstract to determine if they are related specifically to Atlantic Salmon. Furthermore, manual interrogation and a level of subjective opinion is required to further categorise projects into the areas you requested.

Section 21 is an absolute exemption which means that there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

Considering our obligations under Section 16 of the FOIA, the duty to provide advice and assistance, we would like to offer some guidance on how the information you are seeking can be obtained from Gateway to Research.

A search can be conducted using the Boolean operator "AND" to ensure that search results returned are related to both "Salmon" and the "Atlantic". This returns a search result[2] of 104 funded projects, which can be further refined by the available options to the right hand side of the page. This includes "Funder" and "Start Year".

Once you have refined the search as required you are able to export the results into a spreadsheet using the "CSV" button towards the top of the page. This spreadsheet contains all the information you have requested on each project and allows you to review the project abstract to determine whether it is in scope of one of your topics of interest and enables you to categorise them as you see fit.

We have determined that the information you have requested on applications received (unsuccessful project applications) falls under Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence. To explain further, applicants apply for funding in confidence and with the expectation that information relating to their application will be kept confidential unless they are successful. If the information was released, we believe it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality.

Section 41 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

With regard to your request for information on engagement or outreach events that have been supported, or delivered by, UKRI, please find attached the spreadsheet *"FOI2023 00300 Salmon Outreach Events"*.

The first tab, "ARCH-UK Programme", lists a record of events we hold relating to the Aquaculture Research Collaborative Hub UK programme[3], which was led by BBSRC and co-funded with NERC. Where type and date fields are blank, this information is not held.

The second tab, "GtR Engagement", is a summary of information on engagement events and activities extracted from relevant projects on UKRI's Gateway to Research.

In compiling this information, we took a broad approach and included engagement activities and events which covered salmon and other species or subjects. These events are therefore not necessarily specific to Atlantic salmon, or the subcategories you have listed.

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 within the next 40 working days:

Head of Information Governance

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[1] https://gtr.ukri.org/
[2] https://gtr.ukri.org/search/project?term=Salmon+AND+Atlantic
[3] https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/browse-our-areas-of-investment-and-support/aquaculture-research-collaborative-hub-uk-arch-uk/

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.

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