



[REDACTED]

17 February 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/01252

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

Your request:

I request the following information regarding funding allocations and decision-making practices by Innovate UK:

1. Funding Allocation by Gender

The total amount of funding awarded in the last five financial years through:

- *SMART Grants*
- *Innovation Loans*
- *Women in Innovation Program*
- *Future Economy funding streams*
- *Any other grant funding programs administered by Innovate UK*

A breakdown of the funding amounts awarded to women-led businesses vs. men-led businesses, where "women-led" is defined as businesses with at least 50% female ownership or a female CEO/Managing Director

The number of businesses led by women vs. men that received funding in each program

2. Decision-Making and Gender Composition

The gender composition (number and percentage of men and women) of decision-makers at each stage of the funding process, including:

- *Review panels or committees evaluating grant and loan applications.*
- *Final decision-making bodies or individuals responsible for approving funding allocations.*
- *Any policies or steps taken by Innovate UK to ensure gender diversity among decision-makers involved in funding processes.*

3. Supporting Information and Data Transparency

- *Any internal reports, KPIs, or monitoring mechanisms Innovate UK uses to track and address gender disparities in grant and loan funding allocation and decision-making.*
- *Steps taken to comply with the Equality Act 2010, particularly in promoting equitable access to grant funding for women-led businesses.*

4. If the requested data is not available, please confirm:

- *Why the data has not been collected.*
- *How Innovate UK ensures compliance with the Equality Act 2010 without this data.*
- *Whether there are plans to collect and monitor this data in the future, and if so, the timeline for implementing such measures.*

Our clarification:

We contacted you on 07 January 2025 to seek further clarification on your request:

Question 1. We can only provide 3 years of financial data, but more information can be found by previously published material. We do not capture how the organisations are led I.E: (Owner), only who the lead participants/applicants are. We cannot confirm the percentage of ownership nor the current CEO/MD of any specific organisation supplying a proposal.

Question 2. Some assessor EDI data is available, but it isn't the most accurate or up to date. To explain further, although carrying out an EDI questionnaire is mandatory when undergoing the assessment process, the option to "Prefer not to say" is available and approximately 60% of applicants and assessors do not disclose this information with us.

Most of these data sets around EDI information are disconnected from each other and it will require a great deal of time and manual work to consolidate and quality assure the information we do hold.

Correction: Please note that the following corrections to the information provided for Q2 in the clarification:

- The "Prefer not to say" response rates for gender (as evidenced in the recent publication - [Innovate UK applicant diversity data 2022 to 2023 – UKRI](#)): for lead applicants is 4% "preferred not to say" for applicants and 3% for funding recipients
- The EDI survey for assessors is optional

Clarification received: 13 January 2025

Q1. UKRI: We can only provide 3 years of financial data...

Response: Agreed that the request will only cover these years

Q2. UKRI: Some assessor EDI data is available, but it isn't the most accurate or up to date..

Response: Please provide information of who did not select 'Prefer not to say'. We would also need to know the number who did and didn't select this option.

Our response

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

Please note that the information that has been provided in this response is from mid-May 2022 to present, and data regarding the gender of applicants collected relates to the lead applicant only.

1. Funding Allocation by Gender - The total grant value of funding to women and men lead applicants and the total funding awarded in the last three financial years

The data provided covers decisions for funding made between financial years 2022/23 to present only, starting from mid-May 2022, as this was when the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) survey was introduced for all competitions on IFS as a mandatory part of the application process for lead applicants. Please note that the lead applicant may be neither a founder nor a director of the company in question.

Data for competitions that have "Future Economy" in the title are a subset of the Investor Partnerships competitions over this timeframe; as the nomenclature for the competitions changed, the data we hold is incomplete and therefore not representative. To identify all relevant information that falls within scope would require a manual review of each individual competition, which would greatly exceed the cost threshold under section 12 of the FOI Act, which for UKRI equates to 18 hours of staff resource on locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Consequently, UKRI is not obliged under Section 12 of the FOIA to process this section of your request further.

Whilst we have collected EDI data on Innovation Loans for lead applicant and at a company level, we have determined that it would require considerable time to conduct an analysis of this and correlate the data

collected to successful applications. As this would require the creation of a new data set in order to provide a response to this part of your request, this element is beyond the scope of the FOI Act.

Table 1: “Smart Grants”:

IUK Smart grants	
Gender	Funding Sought
Man	£74,224,469
Non-Binary	£507,729
Prefer not to say	£7,823,895
Woman	£24,344,413
Grand Total	£106,900,505

The total funding for Women in Innovation award winners was £6,153,426.

Table 2: “All other competitions”:

All other competitions (excluding EOI's and Horizon comps)	
Gender	Funding Sought
Man	£1,244,220,754
Non-Binary	£1,535,172
Prefer not to say	£114,250,299
Prefer to self-describe	£1,008,027
Unknown	£49,050
Woman	£452,646,037
Grand Total	£1,813,709,338

- A breakdown of the funding amounts awarded to women-led businesses vs. men-led businesses, where “women-led” is defined as businesses with at least 50% female ownership or a female CEO/Managing Director.
- The number of businesses led by women vs. men that received funding in each program.

This information is not held.

2. “Decision-Making and Gender Composition”

The gender composition (number and percentage of men and women) of decision-makers at each stage of the funding process

The data in the tables below is for the composition of all assessors involved in assessing applications where decisions for funding were made between from mid-May 2022 to present, as this was when the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) survey was introduced.

The demographic data held for assessors is likely inaccurate. Innovate UK conducted a one-off survey for assessors in March 2022. This survey was optional, as a result a high proportion of assessors either did not complete the survey or selected prefer not to say.

This is not representative of the gender balance for assessments within a competition. The number of assessors assigned to each application varies by competition and each assessor will be allocated a different number of applications to review. So, the gender split of the overall assessor pool used for a competition is not representative of the gender split for the assessors assigned to each individual application and nor is it representative of the gender split for the decision making for the competition as a whole.

In preparing this response we have considered the risks of identifying individuals from small numbers, therefore, in line with standard statistical reporting practice, data has been suppressed to mitigate against the disclosure of personal data. Under Section 40(2) of the FOIA, this data is exempt where it relates to fewer than five individuals. We consider that to disclose information relating to small numbers of individuals

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) of lawfulness, fairness and transparency.

Members in each category have been rounded to the nearest value of five. As mentioned above, categories consisting of between one and four individuals have been suppressed as personal information under section 40(2) of the FOIA and are indicated by '<5'. Where there are no members within a category, a count of zero is recorded.

Table 3: "Smart Grants":

IUK Smart Grants	
Gender	Assessors
Man	3,135
Woman	1,070
Non-binary	20
Prefer not to say	115
Prefer to self-describe	<5
Not specified/supplied	1,330
Grand Total	5,675

Table 4: "Women in Innovation program":¹

Women in Innovation	
Gender	Assessors
Man	515
Woman	215
Non-binary	<5
Prefer not to say	15
Prefer to self-describe	<5
Not specified/supplied	270
Grand Total	1,015

Table 5: "Investor Partnerships"^{**}:

Investor Partnerships	
Gender	Assessors
Man	490
Woman	300
Non-binary	10
Prefer not to say	10
Prefer to self-describe	<5
Not specified/supplied	250
Grand Total	1,060

¹ The assessors are experts from across business and academia and are allocated based on their skills and expertise relevant to each project. For the Women in Innovation Awards 2024-25, UKRI ensured that each project had at least two women assessing, out of the total of 5.

Table 6: "All other competitions":

All other competitions	
Gender	Assessors
Man	9,290
Woman	3,135
Non-binary	50
Prefer not to say	300
Prefer to self-describe	<5
Not specified/supplied	5,215
Grand Total	17,990

3. Supporting Information and Data Transparency.

Under Section 21 – Information already reasonably accessible, of the FOIA the following information you have requested is already available in the public domain and is provided below. Section 21 is an absolute exemption which means that there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

[Innovate UK's Plan for Action and Strategic Delivery Plan \(2022-2025\)](#)² outline the importance EDI has a foundation for all we do. Innovate UK's ambition is to create a more diverse innovation ecosystem that values difference, excites future talent and enables the best ideas to succeed.

Our actions will lead to more businesses driving an inclusive culture, create and promote role models that inspire and build a more diverse pipeline of talent for the future, and encourage more innovations to be developed with improvements in equality, diversity, and inclusion as a goal.

Innovate UK are required by the Equality Act 2010 to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means that we need to carry out an equality analysis of our services and any proposals for change. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) should be carried out during the initial stages of developing new policies, practices and activities, prior to starting a procurement exercise and before decisions are made. View to identifying its potential impact on equality.

In 2024, Innovate UK published the '[Who are the Innovators?](#)³' report which provides an analysis of Innovate UK applicants and beneficiaries. Also, in 2024, Innovate UK published [applicant diversity data 2022 to 2023](#)⁴ and are committed to publishing applicant data annually.

Innovate UK is committed to making support for applicants accessible to everyone. We welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and are committed to making our application process accessible to everyone. This includes making reasonable adjustments, for people who have a disability or a long-term condition and face barriers applying to us.

As we have provided the requested data that we hold, question 4 is not relevant for us to respond to.

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance
Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

² <https://www.ukri.org/publications/innovate-uk-strategic-delivery-plan/innovate-uk-strategic-delivery-plan-2022-to-2025/>

³ <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/perspectives/who-are-the-innovators-report/>

⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/innovate-uk-applicant-diversity-data/innovate-uk-applicant-diversity-data-2022-to-2023/>

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 procedure](#)⁵.

Yours sincerely,


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

⁵ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>