



26 September 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2022/00278

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

Your request:

(1) For 2021 could you please advise the total amount granted for research involving, the use of live animals, licenced under ASPA 1986. For the same year, could you please, let me know, the amounts granted to develop human relevant research which would reduce/replace the use of animals.

(2) For MRC-funded research grants involving (in full or part) the less commonly used species of dogs for 2021 could you please let me know the amount of grants awarded.

Our response

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

Medical Research Council (MRC), Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) are the main funders of research involving animals at UKRI along with the National Centre for the Replacement Refinement & Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs).

(1) For 2021 could you please advise the total amount granted for research involving, the use of live animals, licenced under ASPA 1986. For the same year, could you please, let me know, the amounts granted to develop human relevant research which would reduce/replace the use of animals.

In the calendar year 2021, 138 grants were awarded by MRC that involved the use of animals, with a total value of approximately £129m. This is not the specific cost of research involving animals, but the total cost of these grants, of which the use of animals may be only one aspect of the proposed research. The figures include all grants involving the use of animals, including the use of live animals and research that uses animal samples (for example, animal tissues). MRC is unable to provide figures for the total amount of funding granted to MRC-owned establishments or MRC units and centres to specifically support research involving animals, as these costs are not reported separately. In the 2021/22 financial year, BBSRC spent £36.3m on research involving animals. This excludes spend on strategically funded institute projects, training, and small international awards.

All research funded by the MRC is targeted toward improving human health and is thus 'human relevant'. BBSRC funds research with a focus on developing bio-based solutions that contribute to tackling global challenges, such as sustainable food production, climate change, and healthy ageing, all of which are also 'human relevant'.

The replacement, refinement and reduction principles are embedded in all the research within UKRI's remit involving (or potentially involving) animal use, with all animal research funded by MRC and BBSRC required to integrate the principles of the 3Rs. MRC cannot provide figures for the total amount granted towards replacement or reduction of the use of animals, outside of the core funding provided to the NC3Rs, as grants are not selectively categorised in this way. In 2021/22, BBSRC spend £2.2m directly on such awards.

UKRI encourages the development of new methodologies in all areas of health research and funds the development of non-animal technologies both directly through research council funding rounds and by its core funding commitment to the [National Centre for 3Rs \(NC3Rs\)](#).¹ MRC and BBSRC provide the core funding to NC3Rs which amounts to **£49.1 million** over 5 years (2021-2026).

Earlier this year BBSRC and NC3Rs launched a £4 million [joint funding call](#)² focused on supporting alternatives to *in vivo* models in bioscience research. BBSRC has previously provided specific funding to the NC3Rs for a [funding call](#)³ to generate new models for bovine tuberculosis (bTB) research that avoid the use of animals. Furthermore, MRC's Experimental Medicine Panel awarded £9.3M in 2021 to projects investigating disease mechanisms directly in humans using non-invasive techniques.

UKRI also encourages grant applicants, including those whose research does not involve animals but could contribute to greater reduction and replacement, to consider further opportunities to advance the 3Rs. Relevant to this, opportunities to develop the 3Rs may sometimes arise from research during the course of a project, even if 3Rs was not the initial purpose at the project's outset. MRC captures these occurrences in researcher evaluations of their funded research through the ResearchFish platform. In 2021, 6% of MRC researchers identified potential in their research outputs to advance the 'replacement' of the use of animals. BBSRC also captures these occurrences in its evaluations, and over the period 2018-2021, a 'yes' response to this question averaged around 6.9%.

(2) For MRC-funded research grants involving (in full or part) the less commonly used species of dogs for 2021 could you please let me know the amount of grants awarded.

There were no grants involving dogs awarded in 2021.

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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Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
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¹ <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/>

² <https://nc3rs.org.uk/bbsrc-nc3rs-joint-call-development-next-generation-non-animal-technologies>

³ <https://nc3rs.org.uk/news/replacing-animal-models-studying-bovine-tuberculosis>