



[REDACTED]

3 November 2021

Dear [REDACTED],

**Freedom of Information request: FOI2021/00435**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 23 September in which you requested the following:

**Your request:**

*Thank you for your email and explanation.*

*If I narrow my request down to only AI/Data Science, would it please be possible to determine how many applications for UKRI submitted vs funded by year (from January 2015 till the end of 2020)?*

*I have the totals data from their published stats. It would be very helpful to understand how many of the projects were AI.*

On 24 September 2021 we sought clarification informing you that:

*"The published data detailed in your request is actually from NIHR, which is not part of UKRI. UKRI is therefore not able to comment on this data. As stated in our response to your previous request (FOI2021/00395) UKRI does not hold any information on programmes which are run by NIHR, which falls under NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care.*

*Please could you therefore clarify which UKRI programmes you are interested in, in relation to AI/data science applications."*

Clarification received 7 October 2021:

*Thank you for your email.*

*I have attached the letter in your email to me on the 16th of September (Reference: FOI2021/00395), in which it states that although the UKRI holds this data, I need to narrow my request.*

*My request is for the number of awards vs applications made for grant funding and the amounts applied for AI and biotechnology over the last five years.*

*I am asking for totals of how many of the applications made AND awarded were for AI and biotechnology projects.*

*The data currently provided on the website in the Excel document (attached) only provides information about the funded projects, not about how many applications were made.*

*I am collecting this information as part of the research I am currently busy with.*

## Our response

I can confirm UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold information relevant to your request.

With regard to your request for “*the number of awards vs applications made for grant funding and the amounts applied for AI and biotechnology over the last five years*” we can confirm that UKRI holds records on AI for both MRC and Innovate UK.

Prior UKRI analysis on AI related research has identified records for Innovate UK and the attached spreadsheet ‘*FOI2021-00435 IUK AI and Biotechnology Applications Summary*’ provides the number of total applications and successful applications and amount of funding sought for AI-related research and innovation for Innovate UK. This relates to applications submitted between July 2017 and June 2021 to the Innovation Funding Service only and the data is restricted to applications where a funding decision has been made.

UKRI does not hold equivalent analysis for biotechnology however Innovate UK has identified a few competitions that are specifically for biotechnology research and innovation; these include the Industrial Biotechnology (IB) Catalysts. The attached spreadsheet summarises the number of applications and successful applications and the amount of Innovate UK funding sought for those competitions identified. The information is limited to those competitions from Commitment Years 2016/17 to 2020/21.

For MRC the analysis we hold on AI related research is restricted to funded projects only and the figures are available in the attached spreadsheet ‘*FOI2021-00435 AI funded projects (MRC)*’. We do not hold data on total applications.

With regard to your request for biotechnology data for MRC we estimate that the cost of complying with your request and providing the totals of how many of the applications made and awarded were for biotechnology projects 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.

Initial searches based on search terms relevant to ‘biotechnology’ have returned over 700 records for MRC. We have determined that a manual review of these records to assess their relevance would take 5 to 6 minutes for each record which equates to over 53 hours. We anticipate that due to the volume of records involved it would take in excess of the appropriate cost limit to comply with your request. Consequently, UKRI is not obliged under Section 12 of the FOIA to process your request further.

In order for UKRI to comply with this request, we would advise you to further refine the parameters of your request by narrowing the scope. In your request you ask for all biotechnology projects; we recommend narrowing the definitions of biotechnology by choosing from categories in [Dimensions](#)<sup>1</sup> used by MRC to categorise research projects. For Innovate UK we would recommend identifying particular competitions you are interested in from Innovate UK’s [transparency data](#)<sup>2</sup> which may bring your request under the cost threshold and enable us to proceed with your request.

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](mailto:foi@ukri.org) or [infogovernance@ukri.org](mailto: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: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://app.dimensions.ai/browse/categories/data\\_set/for](https://app.dimensions.ai/browse/categories/data_set/for)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/innovate-uk-funding-competition-winners-2021>

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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