UK Research and Innovation

[redacted]

15 September 2023

Dear [redacted],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2023/00616

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 16 August in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I have seen from previous published Freedom of Information requests to UKRI that the Assessing Matrix, used by Assessors to score bids, are available to be shared.

Please can you share with me, either under the FOI scheme or from Innovate UK support, the Assessing Matrix for all current Innovate UK grant schemes?

For reference these are the schemes listed on the Innovation Funding portal as of the 16th August 2023.

Clarification Requested: 17 August 2023

We have received your email from the Innovate Customer Support team listing 7 competitions for which you would like assessor matrix/scorecards. Please could you clarify if this is the full information you require or whether you are still interested in the Assessing Matrix for all current Innovate UK grant schemes listed on the Innovation Funding portal as of the 16th August 2023?

Clarification Response received: 17 August 2023

Please can I request them all current Innovate UK grant schemes listed on the Innovation Funding portal as of the 16th August 2023?

As an aside, it would probably save Innovate UK a lot of time if these were made available in the Supporting Information when the scheme was published and also the success rates for the scheme, based upon previous rounds, was also published for transparency.

Our response

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

There are 35 competitions in scope of your request as listed on the Innovation Funding portal as of 16 August 2023. Of the 35 competitions, matrices for 2 competitions are already published (Smart[1] and Loans[2] programmes), and 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

[1] https://www.ukri.org/publications/smart-assessor-and-scoring-guidance/?_ga=2.239649347.1741800835.1693296463-1775969928.1654595499
[2] https://ukri.disclosurelog.co.uk/case/f293adde-fa19-4758-b3f0-09aec5cec24c

Of the 35, 6 competitions (for the *Eureka Eurostars*, *Ofgem Strategic Innovation Fund: Call for Ideas*, *Analysis for Innovators*, and *Horizon Europe Guarantee programmes*) have a bespoke or external assessment process for which UKRI do not hold a scoring matrix.

The Horizon Europe Guarantee programme is only for applicants who have already been successful in a Horizon Europe funding call.

The Ofgem Strategic Innovation Fund offers a unique opportunity through the Call for Ideas process. Applicants are invited to submit ideas which could be suitable for Ofgem funding. These are considered by the Networks through a pitching process, rather than assessment. If Networks wish to partner with applicants, these partnerships will be invited to a future funding opportunity.

The Analysis for Innovators programme is a two-stage competition. Stage one (expression of interest) entails identifying a probable solution of the applicant problem through brokerage. The second stage focuses on a collaborative partner/applicant funding application which is assessed by a standard Innovate UK assessment process.

The Eureka Eurostars programme runs an assessment process decentralised from all national funding bodies, further information on this can be found here[3].

Of the remaining 27 out of 35 competitions, we have determined that the information you have requested is exempt from disclosure under Section 22(1) of the FOIA as it is intended for future publication. Section 22 is a qualified exemption meaning that it is subject to the public interest test.

Public interest in favour of disclosure

- There is a general public interest in favour of the disclosure of this information to ensure transparency and openness of Innovate UK's assessment process.

- There is also a public interest in transparency in order to ensure the accountability of public organisations and how they spend public funding.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- Innovate UK has scheduled a staggered release of scoring matrices in the next few months to monitor the impacts of publication on its programmes. Disrupting this staggered release would place undue burden on Innovate UK as they would not be able to measure impacts of publication and respond to any negative impacts appropriately.

- UKRI understand that being transparent in regard to grant funding is in the public interest. However, the information requested is being reviewed for future release and we are of the view that releasing the information as it currently stands would be inaccurate, and misleading and thus not in the public interest.

- We consider that premature release would give a misleading impression of the assessment process and would put undue pressure on Innovate UK to publish outside of its scheduled timeframes which would lead to a disproportionate burden on the Institution. This would not be in the public interest.

- Premature release would also give an unfair advantage to applicants of future and current open rounds. To ensure future and current applicants have equal access to information, it is reasonable to maintain the scheduled timeframes for publication, as scoring matrices will be made available to future applicants when rounds open on the Innovation Funding Service.

The balance of the public interest therefore lies in withholding this information, as the public interest does not justify release of this information outside of the scheduled timeframes.

[3] https://www.eurekanetwork.org/programmes/Eurostars-guidelines/How%20Eurostars%20assesses%20and%20ranks%20applications.pdf

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
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,

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