███████████████████

03 February 2023

Dear ███████

Freedom of Information request: FOI2022/00399

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 14 December in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for information from UKRI, in relation to Innovate UK application success rates and scores.

Applicable competitions:
I am requesting the data detailed below for all Innovate UK competitions in Competition Year 2019/20 onwards.

Data requested:
Please provide the following information (separately for each applicable competition; not aggregated):

1. Number of applications for each individual competition:
    a. Total number of applications received
    b. Number of applications that were in scope
    c. Number of applications that were invited to interview stage (if applicable for the competition)
    d. Number of applications that received an offer of funding (either following initial assessment for competitions with no interview stage, or otherwise following the interview stage)
    e. Number of applications that received an offer of funding, but did not progress to a live project

2. Application scores for each individual competition:
    a. Breakdown of application scores, for example in groups of 5 percentage points (96-100, 91-95, 86-90, etc.)
    b. Highest and lowest overall score for all applications
    c. Highest and lowest score for applications that received an offer of funding
    d. Highest score that did not receive an offer of funding

3. Additional information for Smart Grant competitions only:
Please supply the information requested above broken down by "innovation area" on the project application form, and additionally break down applications within each innovation area into the following categories:
    a. 6 to 18 months in duration and single-applicant
    b. 6 to 18 months in duration and collaborative
    c. 19 to 36 months in duration and with project costs up to £500,000
    d. 19 to 36 months in duration and with project costs over £500,000

Our response

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) holds the information relevant to your request. Please see the information attached on document *"Data_FOI2022-00399"* and notes below.

- The number of competitions listed on tab 1 compared to tabs 2a and 2b differ due to the following:

  - Some competitions captured on tab 1 would be competitions in which applications were collected, sifted, and held by Innovate UK, but not assessed.
  - This would include competitions in which Innovate UK was the administrative agency, but assessment was undertaken externally by a collaborating agency, as laid out in the competition guidelines.
  - Therefore, we do not hold score breakdowns for points 2a and 2b for applications to these competitions.

- For some competitions run as an *"Expression of Interest"* stage, applicants would have instead been invited to 'invite-only' full stage competitions. Therefore, the data heading for tab 1 which shows successful applicants as 'Received Funding Offer' is not necessarily true of all cases listed as for some competitions, it indicates the number of applicants invited to a future full stage round of the competition.

  In addition, some competitions may be both a non-funded *"Expression of Interest"* competition as well as a competition in which assessment was taken externally.

- You requested at 1c the "*Number of applications that were invited to interview stage (if applicable for the competition)".* You have further requested at 2a*" Breakdown of application scores, for example in groups of 5 percentage points (96-100, 91-95, 86-90, etc.); 2b. "Highest and lowest overall score for all applications"; 2c "Highest and lowest score for applications that received an offer of funding"; and 2d. Highest score that did not receive an offer of funding."*

  There are 69 funded competitions in the requested timeframe which had an interview stage. If a competition has an interview stage, we will invite a shortlist of applicants to interview. Applicants will be selected based on fit against the portfolio and scores achieved in the initial written assessment. Unless stated otherwise in the competition brief, applicants will be scored by independent panelists, and their new score will supersede their written assessment scores, and the interview score along with any portfolio approach will be used to make the final funding decision. More can be read about the interview process [here].[1]

  Whilst we can confirm that we hold this information on our 'Funders Panel' spreadsheets we have determined that to manually sift through each spreadsheet to collate the number of invitees, and their updated scores, would take this request over the cost threshold which for UKRI is 18 hours of resource and is therefore exempt under Section 12 (where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit) of the FOI Act. To explain further, our reasonable estimates for the time it would take to review each competition to extract this information is approximately up to 30 minutes each depending on the size of the competition which would exceed the cost threshold.

  We have therefore provided the written assessment scores in the requested scope and format for all competitions from 2019 to 2022, however, please note for the competitions which had an interview process, the breakdowns displayed for successful scores will not reflect the final score funding decisions were based on, as those who scored higher in the written assessment may have scored lower in the interview, and vice versa.

- You requested at 2c "*Highest and lowest score for applications that received an offer of funding"* and 2d *"Highest score that did not receive an offer of funding".* Please note that for some competitions, Innovate UK reserves the right to conduct a portfolio approach, more information on which can be found [here]. Therefore, offers of funding may be made to those that scored lower than the highest scoring unsuccessful application.

- For 1e you requested for *"Number of applications that received an offer of funding but did not progress to a live project"* – this information is provided on tab 1, at column "G" labelled "*applications withdrawn".* These are projects that were originally recorded with a status of "Accepted" as they were successful after the funders panel and would have received funding, but were subsequently changed to "withdrawn".

Please note that some data figures have been supressed with only the score range provided where the information relates to fewer than five successful applications for a single competition. We consider that to disclose information relating to small numbers of individuals would lead to individual applicant scores being identifiable which 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.

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

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

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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