



[REDACTED]

24 October 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

Environmental Information Regulations request: EIR2023/00743

Thank you for your Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) request received on the 30 September in which you requested the following:

Your request:

UKRI recently stated in its answer to Environmental Information Regulations request EIR2023/00612 that the environmental impact of the malfunction at Rothera Research Station's sewage plant had been assessed.

The full response can be found here, see question 3 on page 2:

<https://ukri.disclosurelog.co.uk/case/990f1177-d96f-402d-acc9-447a29f3ab06>

I am writing to request a copy of the impact assessment.

Our response:

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

A formal Environmental Impact Assessment has not been undertaken for the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) malfunction at Rothera Research Station, as these are only completed for planned activities.

The assessment referred to in our response EIR2023/00612 is a report "Wastewater treatment at British Antarctic Survey Research Stations", from November 2022 which contains information on the situation at Rothera and has been provided to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

A copy of this report is attached, "*Appendix 1 BAS Station Wastewater Treatment Report 291122 revised_Redacted*".

Personal information, in this case the names of individuals, has been redacted under Regulation 12(3) and 13 of the EIR, which provides an exemption for information that is the personal data of an individual other than the applicant where disclosure to any member of the public would contravene any of the data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Legislation.

We consider that information identifying individuals is personal data as defined by the current UK Data Protection Legislation. It is our view that to release information identifying individuals would be a breach of GDPR principles and associated legislation: it would be unfair to the individuals concerned as they had no expectation that their names would be released.

Please note that the section of this report titled "Plans for the 2022/23 season" (page 6) is now out of date.

We can confirm that during the 22/23 Antarctic Summer season the following were completed:

- Engineers conducted a full examination of the plant
- A new Reverse Osmosis plant was installed
- Repairs to the control panel were made
- An improved cleaning and Maintenance schedule was put in place
- An updated microorganism seeding/dosing schedule was put in place.

This report is currently being updated, but at present the updated document remains in draft form and is unfinished, therefore, in this case we find that the exception to release, Regulation 12(4)(d), 'the request relates to material which is still in the course of completion, to unfinished documents or to incomplete data' applies.

In applying the exception in Regulation 12(4)(d), we are required to consider the public interest test when determining whether to release the information.

UKRI understands that being transparent in regard to this information is in the public interest. However, the main text of the document currently remains largely unchanged, with some notes having been added as part of the process for updating the report. These notes are the views and opinions of one individual and are currently unverified, therefore we are of the view that releasing the information as it currently stands would be inaccurate, incomplete and misleading and thus not in the public interest.

We have therefore determined that the outcome of this test is that the public interest is insufficient to justify immediate disclosure.

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,


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