



[REDACTED]

9 March 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

**Environmental Information Regulations request: EIR2023/00097**

Thank you for your Environmental Information Regulations request received on the 27 February in which you requested the following:

**Your request:**

*I am writing under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the release of information relating to NERC's funding of the Seabed Mining And Resilience To Experimental impact project, Smartex (NERC Reference NE/T003537/1).*

*The abstract in the details of the award*

*([http://gotw.nerc.ac.uk/list\\_full.asp?pcode=NE%2FT003537%2F1&cookieConsent=A](http://gotw.nerc.ac.uk/list_full.asp?pcode=NE%2FT003537%2F1&cookieConsent=A)) states: 'as a partner in the first full-scale mining test done in 1979, they [UK Seabed Resources] have been able to release new data on the location and results of a 40-year old large-scale mining operation. Our project team have secured access to data and test plans, to allow detailed experimental evaluation of impact and recovery from realistic mining disturbance on a decadal scale of vital relevance to understanding the long-term sustainability of deep-sea mining'*

*Based on the above, please release the data and test plans related to the 1979 full-scale deep sea mining test done that was provided by the applicants to the Natural Environment Research Council as part of the application for funding to support the Smartex expedition JC241.*

**Our response:**

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) does not hold the information relevant to your request.

The data and test plans relating to the 1979 full-scale deep sea mining test were not included in the application for funding made to the Natural Environment Research Council for project NE/T003537/1. This information remains with the project partner UK Seabed Resources and will be made available directly to the Smartex team as required throughout the project, therefore under the EIRs exception 12(4)(a) 'Information not held' applies.

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)

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](http://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