



[Redacted]

14 November 2023

Dear [Redacted],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2023/00809

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

Your request:

Please can you share:

(1) Any/all information and/or documentation relating to the following grant:

Competition/Programme Title: Innovate UK Smart Grants: January 2022 (6-18M)

Application Number: 10034897

Project Number: 10034897

(2) Details of any/all information that needs to be reported back to UKRI/ Innovate UK (by a grantee) further to a grant (e.g. progress reports) including timelines for reporting.

(3) Copies of any updates or reports submitted to UKRI/Innovate UK in respect of the grant for Application/Project Number 10034897.

Our response:

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

Project 10034897, ["Unicard Multi-Operator Ticketing Broker"](#)¹ is an on-going grant which is due to finish in February 2024.

(1) Any/all information and/or documentation relating to the following grant:

We have identified that the following documentation is held relating to this grant:

- Grant application form
- Grant offer letter (GOL)
- Project set up documentation, including spend profile and exploitation plan
- Independent accounts report (IAR)
- Claims documentation
- Monitoring officer reports
- Documents shared with Innovate UK (IUK) during quarterly review meeting

Please find attached "FOI2023_00809 10034897 Application Form_Redacted" and "FOI2023_00809 10034897_GOL_Redacted".

¹ <https://qtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=10034897>

Some information in these documents has been withheld as exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are considered to apply, these include Section 40 relating to personal information, Section 41 information provided in confidence and Section 43 commercial interests.

We also consider that the exemptions of Section 41 and Section 43 apply to the remaining documents held, given that they contain sensitive financial and commercial information that relate to an ongoing project. Further information on the exemptions considered to apply is provided below.

Section 40, personal information

We are exempting the names, contact details, job title and work experience of individuals whose details are not already in the public domain in connection to this grant under section 40(2) of the FOIA. Disclosing this information 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).

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

Section 41, information provided in confidence

We have determined that the remaining information and documentation falls under Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence.

To explain further, research proposals and exploitation plans, financial information and project update reports are submitted to Innovate UK in confidence. If the information was released, we believe it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality. There is a need for the information to remain confidential, both for the duration of the project that was funded and following its completion, given that research and development can continue after this period. The release of this information may affect the ongoing operation and commercial opportunities for the organisation.

Section 41 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

Section 43(2), prejudice to commercial interests

We believe the information relating to project plans, market assessment, technological approach, competitive analysis and commercial impacts, as well as cost and financial information, falls under the scope of Section 43(2) of the FOIA. This exemption is used where disclosure would likely result in a person's (an individual, a company the public authority itself or any other legal entities) commercial interests being prejudiced.

This is a qualified exemption, and a test was carried out to determine whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs public interest in disclosure.

Public interest in favour of disclosure

- There is a general public interest in the disclosure of this information to ensure transparency and openness of a public organisation.
- There is also a public interest in transparency in order to ensure the accountability of public organisations and how they spend public funding.
- It would be in the public interest to view the available information as public monies are used to fund this activity. As this is the case it is important that the programme has a positive impact and is beneficial to all parties involved. Seeing copies of this information enables the public to independently assess the impact of the project.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- These documents contain commercially sensitive information which is disclosed to IUK in confidence. Releasing the information requested could be taken advantage of by competitors in planning competing

strategies for further business opportunities. Applicants apply to IUK knowing that if they achieve success only a brief overview of their successful bid will be publicly available, everything else will remain confidential.

- Releasing the information would be likely to weaken the position of the participants of the project in the competitive research environment as participants would usually continue working on projects, or on the research, even after the grant has come to an end, thus prejudicing the ongoing operations and marketing opportunities of the company.
- An applicant's ideas may be, currently or in the future, the subject of IP filing. Disclosing descriptions of products, processes and key technical information could hinder their chances of being successful in any IP application.
- We also considered the impact on UKRI if commercially sensitive information of companies we engage and work closely with were disclosed. We believe it would damage the trust in UKRI and likely impact our ability to carry out our role and manage our current and future investments. Relationships may become untenable if third parties cannot be certain that their commercial information will remain confidential when held by UKRI.
- Breaching the commercial interest may also adversely affect future negotiation opportunities for UKRI. UKRI may be seen as a 'confidentiality risk' if it routinely releases information relating to business arrangements into the public domain, particularly where this is third party information.
- We follow the government guidance on [managing public money](#)². Standards expected of all public services include integrity, reliability, spending money in the public interest and achieving value for money. Our current thorough process ensures that only the best projects receive public monies. Releasing this information could jeopardize the fair and transparent competition process and undermine our function to fund the best projects. In turn, undermining this process would go against our responsibilities to manage our use of public funds.

Taking the above arguments into consideration, we reached the decision that the need for commercial confidentiality outweighs the public interest in disclosure; therefore the information is exempt from disclosure.

(2) Details of any/all information that needs to be reported back to UKRI/ Innovate UK (by a grantee) further to a grant (e.g. progress reports) including timelines for reporting.

Reporting requirements and timelines for reporting of IUK competitions vary depending upon the programme and amount of funding. General guidance on what happens when an application is successful can be found [here](#)³. Information on 'Project Impact' questions can be found [here](#)⁴. You may also find the [terms and conditions of an Innovate UK grant award](#)⁵ to be of interest.

The IUK Smart Grants competitions utilise standard quarterly monitoring and does not request any non-standard reporting or information as part of this process. Projects complete a Projection Completion Form (PCF) as part of their final quarter.

(3) Copies of any updates or reports submitted to UKRI/Innovate UK in respect of the grant for Application/Project Number 10034897.

As previously mentioned in answering Q1, quarterly monitoring officer reports and associated documents are considered exempt from disclosure under Section 41 and Section 43 of the FOIA.

'Project Impact' questions are not held for this project, as the application was made to the IUK Smart Grants: January 2022 competition and project impact management had not been implemented at that time. The first round of IUK Smart Grants that this data was collected for was the October 2022 competition.

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/742188/Managing_Public_Money_MPM_2018.pdf

³ <https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-if-you-are-successful/#contents-list>

⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/project-impact-guidance/>

⁵ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/terms-and-conditions-of-an-innovate-uk-grant-award/>

In addition, a PCF is not held for this project as it is not due to complete until February 2024.

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,


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UK Research and Innovation
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