



Sent by email: [REDACTED]

11 June 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

**Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/00430**

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

**Your request:**

*This is an information request relating to the members of the AHRC panel*

*Please include the following information:*

- 1. Please provide a list of all the members of the various AHRC panels that were involved in making decisions over funding allocations for the 2023/24 financial year*
- 2. For each panellist, please include which projects they were involved in judging*

**Our response**

*1. Please provide a list of all the members of the various AHRC panels that were involved in making decisions over funding allocations for the 2023/24 financial year.*

AHRC regularly and routinely publish information here: [AHRC panel outcomes and attendance – UKRI<sup>1</sup>](#) where you will find information about our panel members and the successful projects who received public funding.

For the information between 2023/2024 you have requested, this 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.

When disclosing personal information, great care must be taken to ensure that all identifiable individuals are subject to disclosure, and that any proprietary information that is deemed commercially sensitive is withheld from disclosure.

We consider that prematurely releasing this information would put undue pressure on UKRI to publish outside of our scheduled timeframes which would lead to a disproportionate burden on the organisation. This would not be 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. This information is likely to be available before the end of 2024.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ahrc-panel-outcomes-and-attendance/>

2. For each panellist, please include which projects they were involved in judging

We have determined that the information you have requested falls under Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence.

To explain further, we cannot share unsuccessful project information as it is considered commercially sensitive and confidential. We also cannot disclose each panel members contribution to individual assessments.

There is an expectation of confidence for both the applicant and the panel member when reviewing and assessing applications for viability, in which proprietary and commercially sensitive information will be assessed and scored.

The scores against each application would be considered a reflection on the commercial viability of the project at that time and could be misinterpreted to reflect the commercial entity instead, which would prejudice their position in the market. Furthermore, our panel members need to be able to assess applications on their individual merit and do so under an expectation that their assessments will be handled confidentially.

If the information was released, we believe it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality. Section 41 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

In making this decision, we have also considered the [principles behind the Freedom of Information Act<sup>2</sup>](#), as set out by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

UKRI must adhere to the principle that all requests should be considered "applicant blind", meaning that the information we disclose and the response we provide should be the same, irrespective of who is seeking the information. We must also consider that any information released under the Act would be disclosed into the general public domain.

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](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<sup>3</sup>](#).

Yours sincerely,

  
Information Governance  
Information Rights Team  
UK Research and Innovation  
[foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org) | [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

<sup>2</sup> <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi-eir-and-access-to-information/guide-to-freedom-of-information/what-is-the-foi-act/#2>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>