UK Research and Innovation

[redacted]

30 September 2026

Dear [redacted]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00664

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 1 August in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I request the following information relating to the Innovate UK-funded project "Zero Emission Cross River Ferry" (reference 10057223), funded under the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition Round 3 and led by Collins River Enterprises Limited (project dates 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025).

Each numbered item is severable. If any item is exempt or would exceed the appropriate cost limit, please process the remaining items independently and identify which item or items could not be provided and why.

1. The final grant payments made for the project, broken down by consortium partner.

2. The monitoring, progress and evaluation reports submitted by the consortium during the project and at its conclusion, including any information relating to the ferry's usage, patronage, service frequency, operating performance or operating costs.

3. The project's final or completion report or, if this has not yet been submitted or approved, the most recent version held by Innovate UK.

4. Any reports, returns, datasets or other material relating to this project that were provided for the evaluation of the UK SHORE programme, including any post-completion or in-service reporting held by UKRI and received after the project's closure. I note that the demonstrated service entered public operation as Orbit Clipper on 5 December 2025, after the project end date, so any in-service information may have been submitted separately from the project's own monitoring.

If any of the requested information is held by the Department for Transport or another public authority rather than by UKRI, I would be grateful if you could advise me accordingly and, where appropriate, transfer or forward the relevant part of this request.

The published project description states that the project would assess operational performance, operating costs and wider societal impacts. Given that this was a publicly funded demonstration project intended to inform wider deployment, I ask that any consideration of sections 41 or 43 carefully weighs the strong public interest in disclosure. Where only parts of a document are exempt, I request that exempt material be redacted and the remainder disclosed.

For clarity, I have seen the published CMDC3 winners spreadsheet, the project's entry on Gateway to Research and the published evaluation of the UK SHORE programme. This request concerns information not contained in those sources, particularly the final payment figures and the project-level reporting and returns.

Our response

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

1. The final grant payments made for the project, broken down by consortium partner.

The information requested is provided in the table below.

Table 1: Project reference 10057223 participants and final grant offers

Participant	**Grant Offered (£)**
Collins River Enterprises Limited	£699,529.46
Aqua Superpower Limited	£568,739.87
Beckett Rankine Limited	£259,726.43
Wight Shipyard Company Limited	£4,712,898.03

2. The monitoring, progress and evaluation reports submitted by the consortium during the project and at its conclusion, including any information relating to the ferry's usage, patronage, service frequency, operating performance or operating costs.

Please see the answer for question 3.

3. The project's final or completion report or, if this has not yet been submitted or approved, the most recent version held by Innovate UK.

Following a search of our records, I can confirm that UKRI hold information in the scope of your request. However, the information requested has been withheld from disclosure as we believe the information contained within the project monitoring reports and final project report falls within 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.

The reports contain significant amounts of commercially sensitive information provided by project partners during a collaborative research and development project. This includes detailed information relating to vessel design, technical specifications, engineering solutions, photographs documenting the vessel build and development process, intellectual property considerations, commercial operating assumptions, licensing and regulatory challenges, supply chain arrangements, project risks, and future commercialisation plans.

Disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the consortium partners by revealing proprietary knowledge, technical innovations and business information that may be used to secure future commercial opportunities in the maritime and clean transport sectors.

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 information requested 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 information requested enables the public to independently assess the impact of the project.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- Disclosure of information provided in confidence would be likely to damage UKRI's relationships with businesses and other organisations. If third parties cannot be confident that commercially sensitive information will remain confidential, they may be less willing to engage openly with UKRI.
- Disclosure would be likely to prejudice UKRI's ability to negotiate and collaborate effectively with current and future partners. Releasing commercially sensitive third-party information could create a perception that UKRI presents a confidentiality risk.
- We follow the government guidance on Managing Public Money,[1] including integrity, value for money and effective stewardship of public resources. The ability to obtain full and frank information from applicants and grant recipients is essential to ensuring funding decisions are robust and that public funds are directed to the strongest projects.
- The reports contain commercially sensitive technical information relating to the vessel's design, development, engineering solutions, operational performance and construction. Disclosure would provide competitors with access to valuable technical knowledge and research and development outcomes without the associated investment of time, expertise and resources.
- The reports also contain photographs, build documentation and information relating to licensing, regulatory engagement, operational challenges and commercial strategy. Disclosure would provide commercially valuable insights that competitors could use to inform their own technical, regulatory and commercial activities.
- The consortium partners operate in a competitive market where intellectual property, technical know-how and specialist expertise are valuable commercial assets. Disclosure would be likely to prejudice their commercial interests and ability to exploit the project's outcomes.
- Disclosure would also be likely to damage trust between UKRI and funding recipients, discouraging businesses from sharing commercially sensitive information in future. This would adversely affect UKRI's ability to monitor, evaluate and manage funded projects effectively.

Disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of both the consortium partners and UKRI by revealing commercially valuable technical, operational and strategic information, and by undermining UKRI's ability to obtain and manage commercially sensitive information in support of its funding activities. Taking the above arguments into consideration, we have reached the decision that the need for commercial confidentiality outweighs the public interest in disclosure; therefore the information is exempt from disclosure.

4. Any reports, returns, datasets or other material relating to this project that were provided for the evaluation of the UK SHORE programme, including any post-completion or in-service reporting held by UKRI and received after the project's closure. I note that the demonstrated service entered public operation as Orbit Clipper on 5 December 2025, after the project end date, so any in-service information may have been submitted separately from the project's own monitoring.

UKRI do not hold any further information in the scope of your request and no further information has been received post-award.

Your rights

If you have any queries regarding our response, please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

[1] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69e0b17861d2e8e9b9e42e13/Managing_Public_Money_-_April_2026.pdf

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 procedure.[2]

Yours sincerely,

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

[2] https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target