UK Research and Innovation

[redacted]

8 September 2026

Dear [redacted]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00633

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 22 July in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I am writing on behalf of a constituent regarding UKRI's collection and publication of data relating to the gender of applicants and recipients of research and innovation funding.

My constituent has drawn my attention to UKRI's published diversity reporting and has queried whether the published data captures all funding routes administered across UKRI and its constituent councils.

Specifically, she has asked whether UKRI can clarify:

1. *What information is collected regarding the gender of funding applicants and recipients.*
2. *Whether UKRI holds historical data on the proportion of funding awarded to male and female applicants.*
3. *Which funding programmes are included within published diversity reports and which are excluded.*
4. *How Catapult programmes, strategic programmes, direct awards and invitation-only funding routes are reflected within diversity reporting.*
5. *Whether further datasets or analysis are available that could assist in understanding the overall gender distribution of UKRI-funded activities.*

Our response

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

1. What information is collected regarding the gender of funding applicants and recipients

UKRI collects applicant information through its grant application system (the UKRI Funding Service, TFS). There is a question on sex (with options *Female*, *Male*, and *Prefer not to say*) and a separate question on gender reassignment information. Completing the questionnaire is mandatory for project leads but optional for individuals applying for other roles on an application.

Prior to 2024, data was collected by The Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system, which asked applicants to provide information on gender with *male*, *female* and '*not disclosed*' as response options. We realise this is not in alignment with data reporting categories for equality monitoring data, and that gender and sex terminology is more nuanced and highly personal. UKRI has addressed this in the new funding system as mentioned above.

Innovate UK operate a different grant application system (the Innovation Funding Service, IFS). Data on gender is collected through the IFS EDI survey. This asks applicants to provide information on Gender with multiple answer options of *Man*, *Woman*, *Non Binary*, *Prefer not to Say*, *Prefer to Self Describe*, *Questioning* or *Unsure*.

2. Whether UKRI holds historical data on the proportion of funding awarded to male and female applicants.

The published UKRI data reports can be found here: Diversity data – UKRI[1]. UKRI also holds historical data on gender of applicants and awards holders, subject to the UKRI data retention policies. Innovate EDI diversity data is published here[2].

3. Which funding programmes are included within published diversity reports, and which are excluded.

UKRI diversity reports
Diversity analysis reports have been published since 2014-15. UKRI plans to publish a further report later this year covering 2024-26. Data and reports are published here: Diversity data – UKRI[3] and here UKRI equalities monitoring – UKRI[4].

The 2021-22 and 2023-24 reports are based on applications and awards relating to competitive UKRI funding to named individuals from across seven research councils and cross-UKRI funds. Competitive funding opportunities typically involve an open call for proposals or applications where only the highest-ranked proposals, based on a peer review assessment process, are funded. Details of the opportunities included can be found in the annex of the reports.

The 2024-26 publication will extend the scope of the data to include all applications and awards, rather than only those associated with competitive opportunities. This includes applications and awards through:

- a competitive opportunity
- through direct awards driven by algorithms (for example, block awards)
- other non-standard decision routes.

The following are excluded:

- Open Access Block Grant data is excluded.
- Managed programmes administered by UKRI on behalf of other government departments. The full list of excluded managed programmes can be found here[5].
- Initial application stages (such as outlines or expressions of interest)

Funding delivered by Innovate UK and Research England is excluded from these reports. Innovate UK (IUK) publishes a report on diversity characteristics, including gender data, here[6].

Innovate UK diversity reports
IUK published reports are based only on Lead applicants of projects that have provided self-reported answers to the EDI survey on IFS.

The following are excluded from IUK's published EDI reports:

- Horizon Europe competitions are excluded
- Loans are not included as the survey is not mandatory for these competitions and loans have their own EDI survey using Qualtrics.

Expression of Interest (EOI) competitions are included for applicant numbers but removed from success rate calculations as there is no funding awarded.

[1] https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-data/
[2] https://www.ukri.org/publications/innovate-uk-applicant-diversity-data/innovate-uk-diversity-data-report-2023-to-2025
[3] https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-data/
[4] https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-equalities-monitoring/
[5] https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-investments-and-outputs/statistical-publication-ukri-investment-and-outputs-april-2015-to-march-2026/
[6] https://www.ukri.org/publications/innovate-uk-applicant-diversity-data/innovate-uk-diversity-data-report-2023-to-2025/

4. How Catapult programmes, strategic programmes, direct awards and invitation-only funding routes are reflected within diversity reporting.

UKRI collects diversity data through the UKRI TFS, and previously Je-S. Innovate UK collect data through their IFS platform. Any programmes outside of these systems will not be included in UKRI diversity reporting.

UKRI Invitation only and any direct awards will be routed through TFS, and where grants are part of strategic programmes, these will also be captured in TFS.

Catapult programmes are not currently included in Innovate UK diversity reporting.

5. Whether further datasets or analysis are available that could assist in understanding the overall gender distribution of UKRI-funded activities.

No further datasets are currently available beyond those already published.

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:

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[7].

Yours sincerely,

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

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