UK Research and Innovation

[redacted]

8 October 2026

Dear [redacted]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00517

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 17 June in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the release of information relating to the WEDUSEA Project (https://wedusea.eu/about/), which we understand was jointly funded by Innovate UK and the European Union. We note that the project abstracts indicate that the testing will feed both the environmental databases and IEC electrotechnical standards, thus to the extent there is information available pursuant to the Environmental Information Regulations, we would also seek that information.

Our search of the UK Research and Innovation website (https://gtr.ukri.org) identified the following projects, each involving WEDUSEA. The project abstracts describe the WEDUSEA project as "WEDUSEA led by Irish Wave Energy Developer, Ocean Energy, will demonstrate a grid connected 1MW OE35 floating wave energy converter (known as the OE Buoy) at the European Marine Energy Test Site (EMEC) in Orkney, Scotland."

- *101075527 – WEDUSEA*
  - *Funded value £404,907*
  - *Project Reference 10061671*
  - *Award to Hydro Group Limited and Heather Andrade*
- *WEDUSEA: Wave Energy Demonstration at Utility Scale to Enable Arrays*
  - *Funded value £994,997*
  - *Project Reference 10103051*
  - *Award to the University of Plymouth and Lars Johanning*
- *WEDUSEA: Wave Energy Demonstration at Utility Scale to Enable Arrays*
  - *Funded value £1,121,736*
  - *Project Reference 10050996*
  - *Award to the University of Exeter and Lars Johanning*
- *Wave Energy Demonstration at Utility Scale to Enable Arrays – WEDUSEA*
  - *Funded value £1,237,874*
  - *Project Reference 10038045*
  - *Award to the European Marine Energy Centre Limited and Carly Tait*
- *Wave Energy Demonstration at Utility Scale to Enable Arrays*
  - *Funded value £68,451*
  - *Project Reference 10052179*
  - *Award to Offshore Wind Consultants Limited and Remy Pascal*
- *Wave Energy Demonstration at Utility Scale to Enable Arrays (*
  - *Funded value £162,240*
  - *Project Reference 10050649*
  - *Award to Longitude Consulting Engineers Limited and Jonathan Land*
- *Wave Energy Demonstration at Utility Scale to Enable Arrays*

- *Funded value £1,621,195*
- *Project Reference 10055724*
- *Award Green Marine (UK) Limited and Myles Metson*

Specifically, we would request copies of the following documents:

- *The project proposals*
- *Any modifications to the project proposals*
- *Project timelines*
- *All project status updates and reports provided by the project participants*
- *Documents produced during Phase 1, including any review of the design of the OE35 floating wave energy converter*
- *Any independent third-party verifications, validations or reviews of the OE35 design*
- *Documents considered in issuing a Go/No Go decision during Phase 1 of the project*
- *Documents confirming whether the OE35 buoy is in construction*
- *All publicly available information relating to the projects*
- *Contracts with any naval architects, engineers, or other entities retained to perform design or engineering services, including any review of the design*
- *The WP2 Design Review Summary Report and Comment Sheets*
- *WP2 Implementation Plan and Deliverables for Go/No Go Submission*

Our response

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) does hold information relevant to your request. Please see the information attached in the following documents, including applications, proposals, amendments, reports, grant agreements, and budgets, related to each project reference:

- **FOI2026_00517 Annex 1 - 10103051**
- **FOI2026_00517 Annex 2 - 10061671**
- **FOI2026_00517 Annex 3 - 10055724**
- **FOI2026_00517 Annex 4 - 10052179**
- **FOI2026_00517 Annex 5 - 10050996**
- **FOI2026_00517 Annex 6 - 10050649**
- **FOI2026_00517 Annex 7 - 10038045**

Section 40 – Personal Data

We have removed some information such as employee names and salary information 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 43 – Commercial Interests

We believe some of the information you have requested such as salary information and business plans, cost and schedule information, technical project plans and extensive descriptions of the projects 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 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 to ensure the accountability of public organisations and how they spend public funding.

- It would be in the public interest to view project documents as public monies are used to fund these activities. Seeing copies of project documents enables the public to independently assess the impact of the projects' work.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- Some of the information requested contains commercially sensitive information such as salary information and business plans, cost and schedule information, technical project plans and extensive descriptions of the projects which were disclosed to UKRI in confidence. The agreement we have with participants in our programmes is that we will not release any confidential information without their permission. Releasing the information requested could be taken advantage of by competitors in planning competing strategies for further business opportunities. Applicants complete the application form knowing that if they achieve success only a brief overview of their successful bid will be publicly available, everything else will remain confidential.

- Innovate UK's competition process is highly competitive and composing a successful bid requires expertise and skill in providing quality information as well as understanding the most advantageous content to present in order to succeed. The applicant must also have the ability to support and justify the strength of their application. The applicant must do this whilst adhering within the strictly enforced scope and eligibility requirements of a particular competition. This knowledge is proprietary to the applicant. There are companies and consultancy groups that specialise in selling a grant writing service based on their grant writing expertise and knowledge. This exemplifies the commercial advantage and value that such expertise and skills deliver. As such disclosing the information requested is likely to reduce WEDUSEA's commercial advantage and thereby harm its commercial interests in a highly competitive field. We believe disclosing this information confers an advantage to competitors which would likely materially disadvantage and harm the interests of the applicants, particularly in their ability to compete for grants.

- Releasing information provided in confidence to UKRI is likely to damage the possibility of ongoing relationships with other organisations. 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

- Grant agreements and contracts contain information commercially sensitive to the supplier such as pricing information, methods and intellectual property, which if released may harm their ability to compete for future commercial opportunities.

- Contracts contain information that the supplier would not anticipate UKRI releasing into the public domain.

- We follow the government guidance on managing public money.[1] 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.

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

- 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.

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.

Section 21 – Information Reasonably Accessible

We note, under section 21 of FOIA, that some of the information you have requested is already publicly available at the following website: Wave Energy Demonstration at Utility Scale to Enable Arrays | WEDUSEA | Project | Fact Sheet | HORIZON | CORDIS | European Commission.[2]

Section 21 is an absolute exemption which means that there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

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.[3]

Yours sincerely,

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

[2] https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101075527
[3] https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/