



[REDACTED]

3 June 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/00335

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 18 April in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I am writing to you to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act as to the following information please.

- 1. How many companies that are either a) all female founded or b) have a female director have Innovate UK awarded funding to in the last 5 years in the UK and internationally - please equate this into a percentage against male founded business for example 'Innovate UK has funded xx companies at yy amount and this equates to zz% - please break this down into sole female founded companies and then co-founded companies (where there may be one female director).*
- 2. How many working class or minority women has Innovate UK funded? So those outside of the university and education networks please? This should also include the figures for London and Cambridge and Oxford as separate entities - what we are seeking is to understand how the money is spread across the UK by geographic location.*
- 3. How much public money does this equate to in real terms - so how much money has been awarded by Innovate UK to female founded companies in the past 5 years and how has this been allocated and under what project headings - so for example Women In Innovation has awarded xxx over 5 years to yyy companies Unlocking Potential has awarded xxx amount etc.*
- 4. How many academics that are on the selection and funding panels are female for Innovate UK? How is DEI ensured through the selection and award processes to ensure parity and prevent against unconscious bias - please supply copies of policies and any examples that you have for policies.*
- 5. How is Innovate UK addressing the woeful lack of funding for women in business and innovation in the UK, please share any strategies and copies of policies that are in the public domain and that are addressing this.*
- 6. In total, how many women vs men has Innovate UK's funding benefitted in real terms? So Innovate UK funding has benefitted xxx women compared to yyy men over the past 5 years. Please break this down with figures across all grants and awards for the 5 year period in a table please.*
- 7. How many female and neurodivergent women has Innovate UK funded in the past 5 years please? This should be across all funding awards.*
- 8. How many people of colour has Innovate UK funded in the last 5 years please? This should be across all funding awards*
- 9. What are the top 5 sectors (market verticals) that Innovate UK award funds to (along with the total funds awarded)*

10. How much money in total across all grant awards has Innovate UK given out in the past 5 years please

11. How much money has been returned and not awarded that could have been used for the sole use of female founders in the UK by Innovate UK

Our clarification

We contacted you on 30 April to seek clarification on your request (see below):

UKRI does not hold the information in the format requested as Innovate UK funds businesses and not individuals. Innovate UK only holds EDI related information for lead applicants since May 2022 and this data does not directly represent business owners or directors. We clarified that we held information as follows: for Questions 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 we hold some information on lead applicants for 2 years. On question 2 this includes a breakdown of socioeconomic background and educational background divided by region of which Oxford and Cambridge would be encompassed in the regions and London is a region on its own.

We added that information for question 6 would be covered by that for question 3.

We advised that UKRI does not hold information for question 11.

For question 9 we have provided information for 'innovation area' as stated on funders panel documentation for only 2 years for successful women lead applicants. For question 10 we have provided information on all funding for 2 years only, to cover funding awarded to both men and women successful applicants.

Clarification Received: 30 April 2024

Your response to our contact seeking clarification is copied below:

Yes please proceed as suggested.

I would like the figures for female led companies as suggested as well as male led companies on the basis of the data that you hold.

We are interested in grant offers as well as monies paid and broken down by gender if you have this.

Our response

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

The relevant data is provided in the attached document 'FOI2024/00335 Funding to Women'. We are providing data on 'gender' and not 'sex'. The data covers decisions for funding made between financial years 2022/23 to 2023/24 only, starting from mid-May 2022, as this was when the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) survey was introduced.

Some information has been withheld from disclosure under section 40(2), the exemption relating to personal information:

- The counts of successful applicants have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 5. This reduces the risk of data being used to identify individuals.
- Any counts of 1 to 4 lead applicants have been denoted with '-'. We consider that to disclose information relating to small numbers of individuals 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) of lawfulness, fairness and transparency.
- Any competitions with less than 10 award holders have been removed from the response for Question 3. This reduces the risk of data being used to identify individuals.

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

1. *How many companies that are either a) all female founded or b) have a female director have Innovate UK awarded funding to in the last 5 years in the UK and internationally - please equate this into a percentage against male founded business for example 'Innovate UK has funded xx companies at yy amount and this equates to zz% - please break this down into sole female founded companies and then co-founded companies (where there may be one female director).*

Sheet Q1, Table 1 of the attached document provides information for the period 2022/23 to 2023/24 on successful applications, broken down by the number and percentage of successful lead applicants that are women and men. Data on the grant value of funding to women and men lead applicants and the total funding awarded is also provided.]

Please note that the lead applicant may be neither a founder nor a director of the company in question.

2. *How many working class or minority women has Innovate UK funded? So those outside of the university and education networks please? This should also include the figures for London and Cambridge and Oxford as separate entities - what we are seeking is to understand how the money is spread across the UK by geographic location.*

Sheet Q2, Table 2a provides data on successful women lead applicants by region for the period 2022/23 to 2023/24.

Innovate UK collects data on the socioeconomic background of lead applicants, and not their current social grade. Table 2b provides data on successful women lead applicants displayed by region and using the National Statistics Socio-economic (NS-SEC) classification, for the period 2022/23 to 2023/24.

Innovate UK collects data on the highest educational qualification a lead applicant has obtained. Table 2c provides data on successful women lead applicants displayed by region and highest educational qualification, for the period 2022/23 to 2023/24.

Please note that the lead applicant may be neither a founder nor a director of the company in question.

3. *How much public money does this equate to in real terms - so how much money has been awarded by Innovate UK to female founded companies in the past 5 years and how has this been allocated and under what project headings - so for example Women In Innovation has awarded xxx over 5 years to yyy companies Unlocking Potential has awarded xxx amount etc.*

Sheet Q3, Table 3 provides the information on total grant value provided for the period 2022/23 to 2023/24 across all Innovate UK competitions for successful women lead applicants and successful men lead applicants.

Where total grant funding is denoted as '£0.00' in both Column C and Column E, this relates to 'Expression of Interest competitions' where there is no funding requested as part of the application.

Please note that the lead applicant may be neither a founder nor a director of the company in question.

4. *How many academics that are on the selection and funding panels are female for Innovate UK? How is DEI ensured through the selection and award processes to ensure parity and prevent against unconscious bias - please supply copies of policies and any examples that you have for policies.*

UKRI does not hold data on the gender of academics that are assessors for Innovate UK.

Information on assessor quality monitoring is available in Innovate UK's [General Guidance](#)¹. The relevant Equality, Diversity and Inclusion assessor guidance issued by UKRI is available on the [UKRI Disclosure Log](#)², in particular the following three documents:

- FOI2024-00060 3_EDI_Assessment_Redacted
- FOI2024-00060 EDI case 1_Redacted
- FOI2024-00060 EDI Details_Redacted

As this information is in the public domain, we consider that Section 21 of the FOIA - Information already reasonably accessible, would apply and have provided the relevant links above. Section 21 is an absolute exemption which means that there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

5. *How is Innovate UK addressing the woeful lack of funding for women in business and innovation in the UK, please share any strategies and copies of policies that are in the public domain and that are addressing this.*

Innovate UK applied positive action by launching the [Women in Innovation programme](#)³ in 2016 to increase representation of women in business innovation and to encourage more women to apply to Innovate UK's funding opportunities.

The overall aim was to find and support more women with excellent ideas and high growth potential businesses and to inspire more girls and women into careers in innovation. Women in Innovation is part of [our commitment](#)⁴ to promote greater diversity and inclusion in business innovation.

In 2016, we [commissioned research](#)⁵ to understand who was applying to Innovate UK, as we were not collecting disclosed data. The insights showed that, prior to initiating the Women in Innovation programme, 1 out of every 7 applications to Innovate UK were led by a woman. Since launch of the Women in Innovation programme, Innovate UK has seen a well over 70% increase in the proportion of applications and successful applications across the entire portfolio of funding competitions.

To date, the Women in Innovation programme has invested over £10 million in over 200 award winners. We have built up a community of over 9,500 women innovators.

On 13 May 2024, Innovate UK opened the 6th competition for [Women in Innovation 2024/25](#)⁶, where women within UK registered micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can apply for a share of up to £4 million to develop their innovative ideas and accelerate the growth of their businesses. Award holders will receive a £75,000 grant and bespoke business support.

6. *In total, how many women vs men has Innovate UK's funding benefitted in real terms? So Innovate UK funding has benefitted xxx women compared to yyy men over the past 5 years. Please break this down with figures across all grants and awards for the 5 year period in a table please.*

Please see answer to question 3 above and Sheet Q3, Table 3 of the attachment.

7. *How many female and neurodivergent women has Innovate UK funded in the past 5 years please? This should be across all funding awards.*

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/#contents-list>

² <https://ukri.disclosurelog.co.uk/case/76ec8fcf-3656-49ba-b711-38f60321a159>

³ <https://iuk.ktn-uk.org/programme/women-in-innovation/>

⁴ https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/innovate-uk/our-plan-for-action/?_ga=2.82685526.1128944829.1715008242-2094379535.1690625201

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/women-in-innovation-research-reveals-barriers-and-opportunities>

⁶ <https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/1894/overview/68cc8452-3251-4a92-9019-006cc790ccf7>

'Neurodiversity' has only been included as an optional response in the EDI survey since November 2023. Therefore, the data we have collected is not representative of the applicant pool. As such, we are currently unable to provide reliable data at this level.

8. *How many people of colour has Innovate UK funded in the last 5 years please? This should be across all funding awards*

Sheet Q8, Table 4 provides the information on successful ethnic minority (excluding white minorities) lead applicants across all Innovate UK competitions for the period 2022/23 to 2023/24.

9. *What are the top 5 sectors (market verticals) that Innovate UK award funds to (along with the total funds awarded)*

Sheet Q9, Table 5 shows the number of successful lead applicants by the top 5 innovation areas for the period 2022/23 to 2023/24. Note that a proportion of lead applicants do not have an innovation area defined for their projects. This has been denoted in the Sheet Q9 response with 'category not defined'.

10. *How much money in total across all grant awards has Innovate UK given out in the past 5 years please*

Sheet Q1, Table 1 provides information on the total funding awarded for the period 2022/23 to 2023/24. Data on additional years can be accessed using publicly available information on [Innovate UK funded projects since 2004⁷](#).

11. *How much money has been returned and not awarded that could have been used for the sole use of female founders in the UK by Innovate UK*

This information is not held.

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/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/>

Yours sincerely,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation

⁷ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/innovate-uk-funded-projects-since-2004/>

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