



[REDACTED]

19 September 2024

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/00644

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request, received on the 21 July, and clarification received on the 27 August, in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I would like to make an FOI request for information relating to the following contract awards:

[GSS24119 - UKRI Office Supplies¹](#)

[MRC Harwell Data Storage expansion²](#)

Please can you provide a breakdown of the items included in these contracts?

For each item, could you provide the following information, preferably in a CSV or Excel file (one sheet per contract):

1. Product Name
2. Product Brand
3. EAN number (where applicable)
4. SKU number (where applicable)
5. Manufacturer name
6. Part Number
7. Requested Quantity
8. Price per item

To be clear, I am not looking for the catalogue of available items in each contract but a list of items that have actually been ordered (to date). Accordingly, are you able to provide the details of the actual items that have been ordered (to date) under these contracts?

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.

GSS24119 - UKRI Office Supplies

Please find attached "FOI2024_00644 Annex 1" which contains a list of purchases that have been made through this contract between 1 March 2024 and 4 September 2024.

Where available, the product name (1) and brand (2), as well as the manufacturer name (5) is contained in the product description. If the information is not included in this field, then it is not held.

¹ <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/0fd0a80a-ddca-46fe-b511-d2fc9b628008>

² <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/323a3438-edfb-4b12-a22d-24397471d78c>

The catalogue/manufacture part number is the only information held that may be relevant to EAN (3), SKU (4) or part number (6). The quantity (7) of each order is also indicated.

We are withholding the price per item (8) under the exemption at Section 43(2) of the FOIA. Further details of this exemption are provided below.

MRC Harwell Data Storage expansion

Under Section 21 of the FOIA, Information already reasonably accessible the following information you have requested is already available in the public domain:

- (1) Product Name
- (2) Product Brand
- (5) Manufacturer name

This information is included in the document [“DDaT23157 - Contract Final - Countersigned redacted.pdf”](#)³ which is available under the Award information (expand Show supplier information > Attachments).

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

The information requested relating to EAN (3), SKU (4) and part number (6) is considered to be exempt from disclosure, as release would prejudice the prevention or detection of crime as per Section 31(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 31(1)(a) is a qualified exemption and therefore subject to a public interest test. UKRI applied the Public Interest Test to this request as set out below:

Public interest in favour of disclosure:

- There is a public interest in favour of release of the information, to uphold the principles of transparency and accountability, in disclosing information about government or public authority infrastructure and contracts

Public interest test in favour of withholding the information:

- The release of this information would make UKRI vulnerable to crime, such as malicious attacks on UKRI's computer infrastructure and/or systems.
- The release of this information would be seen to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, by making UKRI's computer systems more vulnerable to hacking and therefore facilitate the possibility of a criminal offence being carried out.
- There is an overwhelming public interest in keeping public authority computer systems secure, which would be best served by non-disclosure.

UKRI has therefore reached the conclusion that, on balance, the public interest is better served by withholding the selected information under Section 31(1)(a).

We are also withholding the quantity (7) and price per item (8) under the exemption at Section 43(2) of the FOIA. Further details of this exemption are provided below.

Section 43 – Commercial Interests

We believe that information identifying the price per item 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.

³ <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/SupplierAttachment/13f1c485-693d-4cb2-aba8-166e8a68d597>

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 details of prices paid for goods purchased as public monies are used to fund this activity. Making this information available enables the public to independently assess the value of goods purchased.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information:

- As noted in "[GSS24119-UKRI Office Supplier Call Off REDACTED Contract.pdf](#)⁴", page 4 identifies pricing information to be commercially sensitive to the supplier. "[DDaT23157 - Contract Final - Countersigned redacted.pdf](#)⁵" identifies the subtotal cost for the goods supplied under the agreement, therefore providing information on quantity would also make individual pricing information identifiable for this contract.
- Releasing information on the individual prices paid for specific items as part of a contract agreement would weaken a company's position in future negotiations with suppliers or customers, as it reveals their cost structure and pricing strategies.
- Competitors could use this information to gain an unfair advantage, to undercut prices or tailor their bids to obtain contracts and identify cost efficiencies or inefficiencies, affecting a company's market position.
- 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.
- We also considered the impact on UKRI if commercially sensitive information of companies we and 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 reached the decision that the need for commercial confidentiality outweighs the public interest in disclosure; therefore the information is exempt from disclosure.

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.

⁴ <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/SupplierAttachment/05a13c1b-88ea-40c3-b8a7-db01c545ce11>

⁵ <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/SupplierAttachment/13f1c485-693d-4cb2-aba8-166e8a68d597>

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](#)⁶.

Yours sincerely,


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

⁶ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>