



[REDACTED]

17 August 2020

[REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2020/00196

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 28 June in which you requested the following:

Your request:

1. *When data for the Jan 2020 applications will be available*
2. *Applicants name and reference*
3. *The scoring mechanism Innovate uses for the proposal criteria*
4. *Who completed the application, if known (i.e. academics, outside consultants or the commercial entity themselves)*
5. *Financial value of grants awarded, broken down by category*
6. *Financial value of grants rejected, broken down by category*
7. *Which area of innovation was addressed by the application (i.e. Health, Ecology etc), broken down by successful vs unsuccessful per category*
8. *The geographic location of each grant application, broken down by successful vs unsuccessful per category*
9. *What additional employment was forecast by each grant application*
10. *What specific export potential was demonstrated in each grant application*
11. *What KPI or measurement is used to determine "innovation"*

All questions are relating to in the Innovate UK Smart Grants 2020 competition. Where an individual application is referenced in a question above, information is being sought for grant applications of over £499,000 up to a maximum of the top 50 successful applications and up to a maximum of the top 50 unsuccessful applications.

Our response:

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

1. Innovate UK is expecting the data for the "Smart Grants: January 2020" competition to be available from week commencing 17 August 2020.
2. For successful applicants, names and reference numbers are exempt from disclosure at this time under Section 22(1) of the FOIA as it is intended for future publication. For unsuccessful applicants, we have determined that the information you have requested falls under Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence.

Section 22 – intended for future publication

For successful applicants, this information is exempt from disclosure under Section 22(1) of the FOIA as it is intended for future publication. Section 22 is a qualified exemption meaning that it is subject to the public interest test.

UKRI understand that being transparent in regard to successful grant applications is in the public interest. However, the data is still incomplete and we are of the view that releasing the information as it currently stands would be inaccurate, incomplete and misleading and thus not in the public interest.

We have therefore determined that the outcome of this test is that the public interest is insufficient to justify immediate disclosure. This information will be made available on the Innovate UK [transparency page](#)¹ in due course; however, no time frame can be offered on this as the information cannot be released until all offer letters have been signed and financial due diligence checks have been completed. Furthermore, if the organisation fails due diligence, they will not be awarded a grant and will then fall back in to the unsuccessful category.

Section 41 – information provided in confidence

For unsuccessful applicants, we have determined that the information you have requested falls under Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence. To explain further, Innovate UK's guidance states that if applications are successful that their information will be published. It is therefore implied that all organisations can confidently apply to Innovate UK and information relating to their application will be kept confidential unless they are successful. If the information was released, we believe it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality.

As this exemption is absolute there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

3. The scoring mechanism Innovate UK used for the proposal criteria of this competition may be used for future competitions, therefore we believe this information 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, meaning that a test was carried out to determine whether the public interest outweighs the requirement for commercial confidentiality.

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 scoring mechanism Innovate UK uses for the proposal criteria 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. Making the scoring mechanism available enables the public to independently assess the funding decisions made by Innovate UK.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- 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. In addition, 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 an applicant's commercial advantage and thereby harm their 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 other applicants, particularly in their ability to compete for grants

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.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/innovate-uk-funded-projects>

4. UKRI does not hold the information you have requested in regard to who completed the application. This information is not requested during the application process and is therefore not held by UKRI.
5. The Smart Grants: January 2020 competition is currently still in the assessment period and therefore the information requested is not current available. The earliest that this information is expected to be available is week commencing 17 August 2020 once notifications and feedback have been sent.
6. See response to point 5.
7. See response to point 5.
8. See response to point 2. Once the assessment period is complete total numbers by regions will be made available, but these figures might differ to the numbers that will subsequently be published on the transparency page depending upon the results of due diligence. In addition, please note that this field is not mandatory, therefore it may not be possible to provide a full data set for all applicants.
9. UKRI does not hold the information you have requested in regard to additional employment forecasted. This information is not requested during the application process and is therefore not held by UKRI.
10. UKRI does not hold the information you have requested in regard to export potential demonstrated. This information is not requested during the application process and is therefore not held by UKRI.
11. There is no specific guidance to determine "innovation" within an application, this is left to the assessors to judge based upon the competition criteria.

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:

Head of Information Governance


Email: foi@ukri.org or infogovernance@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: <http://www.ico.gov.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/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,


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