

[REDACTED]

20 September 2021

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2021/00384

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 23 August in which you requested the following:

Your request:

Can you please furnish me with the number of companies Innovate UK has contracted Newable in the financial year from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 to give business advice for covid relief?

Can you please provide the numbers by programme, in particular, Growth/Covid19 and, Innovate to Succeed?

Can you please provide the same for the financial year to 31st March 2021 in terms of what was targeted and what was actually achieved?

Our response:

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

Newable are part of a 19-partner consortium, led by Innovate UK (IUK) who work together to deliver the services of [Innovate UK EDGE](https://www.innovateukedge.ukri.org)¹, which is jointly funded by Grant Funding Agreements (GFA) from IUK and the European Commission.

We believe that providing the information you have requested 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.

To explain further, providing the number of companies IUK has contracted to Newable, when combined with published GFA information, makes it possible to model their rates and budgets. Consortium partners do not work solely for IUK, therefore making this information available could be used by competitors to give them a competitive advantage when planning competing strategies.

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.

¹ <https://www.innovateukedge.ukri.org>

- It would be in the public interest to view the **number of companies contracted to Newable** 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. Seeing this information enables the public to independently assess the impact of Innovate UK EDGE.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- 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.
- Information that is commercially sensitive to the supplier such as pricing and overheads, if released, may harm their ability to compete for future commercial opportunities.
- We follow the government guidance on managing public [money](#)². 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 and organisations receive public monies. Releasing this information could jeopardize the fair and transparent competition process and undermine our function to fund the best projects and organisations. In turn, undermining this process would go against our responsibilities to manage our use of public funds.
- 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:

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,


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

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/742188/Managing_Public_Money_MPM_2018.pdf