



[REDACTED]

2 February 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

**Freedom of Information request: FOI2022/00418**

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

**Your request:**

*For Innovate UK's 'Innovation in Professional and Financial Services – single applicants' projects competition (which closed on 9 November 2022), please could you release the following information:*

**[Part 1]**

1. *The number of applications.*
2. *The number of assessed applications.*
3. *The number of successful applications.*
4. *The success rate.*
5. *The minimum successful score.*
6. *The maximum successful score.*
7. *Average score of failed applications.*
8. *Average grant fund value per project.*
9. *Average score of funded projects.*
10. *Total funds allocated*
11. *The score distributions of the applications (e.g. % (or number) of applications which scored <70, 70.1-75, 75.1-80, 80.1-85, 85.1-90, 90.1-95, 95.1-100).*
12. *The count of assessed applications by innovation area.*
13. *The count of successful projects by innovation area.*
14. *The count of assessed applications by research category (feasibility studies, industrial research, experimental development).*
15. *The count of successful projects by research category.*
16. *The number of unsuccessful applications, if any, which scored above the minimum funded score.*
17. *The number of external assessors who assessed the applications.*
18. *The number of internal assessors who assessed the applications.*
19. *The average score awarded per question, split by each assessor.*
20. *The selection method used e.g. applications were recommended for funding descending from the top score until all funding was utilised or a selective portfolio approach whereby certain lower scoring applications have received funding?*
21. *What constitutes an outlier when moderating assessor scores and what calculation threshold was used to determine valid outliers?*
22. *The number of applications where one or more outliers in scores were identified during the moderation process?*
23. *The number of applications where one or more outliers in scores were removed and scores updated? Is it UKRI's policy to inform applicants of these occurrences?*
24. *The largest change in an individual question score (across all applications) following the removal of an outlier in connection with any question?*

25. The number of applicants who were notified that outlier scores have been removed in connection with their application?
26. When an outlier score is removed, how is the relevant score updated? Is this calculated based on the average of the remaining assessor's scores excluding the outlier score?
27. Where outliers are identified, what are the main reasons for not removing them and updating the relevant score(s)?
28. Could you kindly provide 1) the number of applications and 2) successful projects with total project costs within the following divisions and 3) the lowest and highest successful application scores for each division, as shown in the table below:

Finally, I would be extremely grateful if you could provide the following information in relation to the above competition:

## **[Part 2]**

1. In relation to question 2 (Need or challenge), did the proposed solution offered by applicants need to be a brand new discovery or could it utilise existing technology in a new way and/or for a different problem / use case?
2. With regards to question 3 (Approach and Innovation), could the innovation proposed by applicants utilise existing technology but in a different way / use case to what is currently being used?
3. With regards to question 3 (Approach and Innovation), can individual assessors decide on what proposals they believe will work (or won't work) and can proposals be deemed to be 'bad' ideas at this stage i.e. prior to user research being carried out?
4. In respect of question 4 (Team and resources), are smaller UK businesses without large in-house teams at a disadvantage when applying i.e. does Innovate UK prefer / score companies with larger in-house teams?
5. Does question 4 (Team and resources) relate to the applicant's strategy or their team selection and skillset? Could applicants be marked down here if the assessors did not like the applicant's plan of action?
6. In respect of question 5 (Market Awareness), could applicants / businesses at an early stage of development (TRL2) that have not worked within a wide range of different industries be marked down? Could applicants who proposed to start by working with a single sector (before exploring other sectors) be marked down / disadvantaged?
7. With regards to question 6 (Outcomes and routes to market), were the assessors looking for innovative routes to market? And could applicants with more innovative routes be scored more highly?
8. With regards to question 6 (Outcomes and routes to market), does your innovation framework recognise researching, learning, pivoting and iteration as part of innovation development?
9. With regards to question 8 (Project Management), did the applicants' project plan need to have interdependencies and milestones?
10. With regards to question 9 (Risks), were applicants scored in respect to their project's ability to gain long-term mass adoption, or could projects with a more short-term and/or narrow niche score equally highly even if there is a risk of customers eventually migrating to more established market participants with a stronger market position?
11. With regards to question 10 (Added value), were applications scored on their long-term versus short-term competitive advantage?
12. In question 11 (Costs and value for money), are applicants scored down for paying themselves a market rate salary? Is there an expectation that salaried staff members who are working on the project should not incur eligible costs?

Thank you for your assistance in this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

## **Our response:**

In your request you have asked two set of questions, the first set of questions relates to statistical information for the Innovate UK competition Innovation in Professional and Financial Services. The second part, consisting of 12 questions, is asking about the Innovation in Professional and Financial Services competition and for views from Innovate UK addressing a number of points.

Upon reviewing your request, we have deemed that only the first part of your request is in scope of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). To explain further, the FOIA gives the public access to recorded information held by a public body, rather than to solicit opinions or commentary. This means we do hold, and can provide you with the

statistical information you have asked for in Part 1 of your request. For the second part of your request, we have passed on to Innovate UK, who will be in touch in due course regarding your queries.

Therefore, for Part 1 of your request, I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) holds the relevant information. Please find the information you have requested below:

1. *The number of applications.*

213

2. *The number of assessed applications.*

185

3. *The number of successful applications.*

23

4. *The success rate.*

12% of eligible applications were funded for the single strand competition

5. *The minimum successful score.*

80.8%

6. *The maximum successful score.*

90.08%

7. *Average score of failed applications.*

62.44%

8. *Average grant fund value per project.*

The average grant fund value for successful applications was £168,198.96. For unsuccessful applications it was £145,314.10. The overall average of both successful and unsuccessful applications was £148,159.24.

9. *Average score of funded projects.*

84.47%

10. *Total funds allocated*

£3,868,576.00

11. *The score distributions of the applications (e.g. % (or number) of applications which scored <70, 70.1-75, 75.1-80, 80.1-85, 85.1-90, 90.1-95, 95.1-100).*

Score Range	Single Strand Applications
95.1-100%	0
90.1-95%	2
85.1-90%	7
80.1-85%	17
75.1-80%	22
70.1-75%	32

<70%	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>

12. *The count of assessed applications by innovation area.*

Not applicable, as this was a single themed competition, the theme for the competition was Digital Technology.

13. *The count of successful projects by innovation area.*

Not applicable, as this was a single themed competition.

14. *The count of assessed applications by research category (feasibility studies, industrial research, experimental development).*

<b>Research Category</b>	<b>Count</b>
Experimental development	64
Feasibility studies	38
Industrial research	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>

15. *The count of successful projects by research category.*

<b>Research Category</b>	<b>Count</b>
Experimental development	1
Feasibility studies	5
Industrial research	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

16. *The number of unsuccessful applications, if any, which scored above the minimum funded score.*

None, however, two applications scored the same as the minimum funded application and were not funded on a portfolio choice.

17. *The number of external assessors who assessed the applications.*

65

18. *The number of internal assessors who assessed the applications.*

None

19. *The average score awarded per question, split by each assessor.*

Please find the information attached in "FOI\_Response\_FOI2022\_00418".

20. *The selection method used e.g. applications were recommended for funding descending from the top score until all funding was utilised or a selective portfolio approach whereby certain lower scoring applications have received funding?*

A top-down approach was utilised until funding was exhausted, with a portfolio choice made to determine the final funded application, as per Q16.

21. *What constitutes an outlier when moderating assessor scores and what calculation threshold was used to determine valid outliers?*

A potential outlier is identified when there is score spread of more than a 20% difference to the next highest /lowest assessor score. However, in the case of two outliers that are similar, this would not be

considered as an outlier. The innovation lead will look at the scores and the assessor comments and determine if they are fair and reasonable. If the innovation lead feels they are not the score is removed and re-averaged across the 4 assessor scores.

22. *The number of applications where one or more outliers in scores were identified during the moderation process?*

29 potential outliers were identified.

23. *The number of applications where one or more outliers in scores were removed and scores updated? Is it UKRI's policy to inform applicants of these occurrences?*

3 outliers were found. It is not Innovate UK's policy to inform applicants about outliers.

An outlier is only recorded as such if the innovation lead deems it so. This score is removed, and the total score is re-averaged.

24. *The largest change in an individual question score (across all applications) following the removal of an outlier in connection with any question?*

The largest change was the removal of a low outlier bring an application score from 70% to 85.5%.

25. *The number of applicants who were notified that outlier scores have been removed in connection with their application?*

0

26. *When an outlier score is removed, how is the relevant score updated? Is this calculated based on the average of the remaining assessor's scores excluding the outlier score?*

Yes, the average of the remaining assessor scores are taken.

27. *Where outliers are identified, what are the main reasons for not removing them and updating the relevant score(s)?*

If the innovation lead feels that the comments are justified, and they are confident the assessor has a very good understanding of the aims of the competition.

28. *Could you kindly provide 1) the number of applications and 2) successful projects with total project costs within the following divisions and 3) the lowest and highest successful application scores for each division, as shown in the table below:*

Total Project Costs		Applications			
From	To	Number of applications	Number of successful applications	Score of lowest successful applicant	Score of highest successful applicant
£0	£50,000	1	0	-	-
£50,001	£70,000	1	0	-	-
£70,001	£90,000	4	0	-	-
£90,001	£100,000	3	0	-	-
£100,001	£120,000	6	0	-	-
£120,001	£140,000	7	0	-	-
£140,001	£160,000	11	0	-	-
£160,001	£180,000	9	1	80-85%	80-85%
£180,001	£200,000	33	9	81.6%	87%
£200,001+		110	13	80.8%	90.8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>185</b>	<b>23</b>		

We have provided a score range for the successful application with a project cost between £160,001 and £180,000, as specific application scores are exempt under Section 41(1), information provided in confidence.

The guidance provided to applicants clearly states that applications are submitted to UKRI in confidence and that the assessment process will be carried out with the same degree of confidence. Under these circumstances applicants would expect scores relating to their applications to remain confidential.

Breaching the duty of confidence already established would result in an actionable breach of confidence and therefore Section 41(1) has been engaged. UKRI may also be viewed as a 'confidentiality' risk if it routinely released information that had previously been acknowledged as being provided in confidence.

Section 41(1) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

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](mailto: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](http://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/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,

  
Information Governance  
Information Rights Team  
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