



Sent by email: [REDACTED]

3 December 2024

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/01031

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 4 November in which you requested the following:

Your request:

Please provide copies of all decision-making communications within UKRI, NERC and BAS explaining:

- 1. Why the recruitment for the BAS Director of Polar Operations, Engineering and Infrastructure was conducted internally, whereas recruiting for the BAS Director of Science is being conducted externally? Both director roles are graded as Band X (SCS Pay Band 1). The Director of Science role has been advertised on both the Civil Service Jobs website and UKRI's. Conversely, the Director of Polar Operations, Engineering and Infrastructure role was only advertised internally within BAS for 10 days.*
- 2. Why the BAS Director of Polar Operations, Engineering and Infrastructure vacancy was only posted 27 months after the previous incumbent had left, during which time an interim job holder had been appointed? Conversely, the Director of Science vacancy has been posted within weeks of the previous incumbent resigning.*
- 3. Which roles were on the interview panel for the BAS Director of Polar Operations, Engineering and Infrastructure?*
- 4. Which roles will be on the interview panel for the BAS Director of Science?*

Our response

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold information relevant to your request, we conducted a search of the correspondence between UKRI and BAS, for the period of 1 July 2024 to 31 October 2024 and identified two emails, where a decision was made about the advertising the vacancy of the Director of Polar operations, Engineering and Infrastructure (POEI) as being internal only.

Please see the emails and attachments below/attached:

- "FOI2024_01031 Appendix 1 – (Email) correspondence"
- "FOI2024_01031 Appendix 2 – (Attachment) British Antarctic Survey"
- "FOI2024_01031 Appendix 3 – (Attachment) Director_of_Polar_Operations"
- "FOI2024_01031 Appendix 4 – (Attachment) UKRI JESP Form _ Director of POEI" (Duplicated in emails)
- "FOI2024_01031 Appendix 5 – (Attachment) Vacancy Briefing Template_DofPolarOps"
- "FOI2024_01031 Appendix 6 – (Attachment) Vacancy Briefing Template_DoS"

Within these documents we are exempting the names and contact details of individuals under section 40(2) of the FOIA. Disclosing this information 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).

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.
To be as transparent as possible we have provided direct answers to each question raised below:

1. *“Why the recruitment for the BAS Director of Polar Operations, Engineering and Infrastructure was conducted internally, whereas recruiting for the BAS Director of Science is being conducted externally?”*

The BAS Director of Polar Operations, Engineering and Infrastructure (Dir. POEI) and the Director of Science (Dir. Sci) are different roles requiring different knowledge, experience and skills, found in different candidate pools.

The Dir. POEI role requires experience in leading operations (specifically Polar operations), a strong background in health, safety and risk management and a proven track record of supporting Antarctic expeditions. These requirements highlighted our existing staff as our primary candidate pool. BAS has a large cohort of existing staff with applicable operational experience in managing operations in Antarctica, an understanding of the sensitivity, complexity, and unique nature of the role, and the primary importance of the health and safety and the wellbeing of our researchers.

The Dir. Sci. role requires an individual recognised and respected by the entire polar community as an international expert in their field.

2. *“Why the BAS Director of Polar Operations, Engineering and Infrastructure vacancy was only posted 27 months after the previous incumbent had left, during which time an interim job holder had been appointed?”*

The interim appointment for the role of the Dir. POEI was due to the strategic need for changing the requirements and responsibilities of this position, and the need for attendant business processes to be undertaken to fully identify and reflect these. These included finalising the BAS Business Strategy (aspects of which informed the revised role), the production of a revised job description, undertaking a Job Evaluation and Grading Support (JEGS) process and subsequent re-banding of the role, which had to be appropriately planned and budgeted for. The recruitment process for this role started immediately on completion of these processes.

3. *“Which roles were on the interview panel for the BAS Director of Polar Operations, Engineering and Infrastructure?”*

The hiring panel consisted of:

- The Director of BAS
- The Director of Corporate Services (BAS)
- The Head of HR (BAS),
- Alison Robinson, Deputy Executive Chair the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the Chair of the NERC Directors'.

4. *Which roles will be on the interview panel for the BAS Director of Science?*

The hiring panel for the role of *BAS Director of Science* has not been agreed yet.

If you have any queries regarding our response, please do let us know.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why.

Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:


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 procedure](#)¹.

Yours sincerely,


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

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>