

[REDACTED]

21 March 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/00127

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 16 February in which you requested the following:

Your request:

Thank you so much for your response – your response is very helpful. However, I am writing further to your recent letter/email about my freedom of information request because I have some follow up questions.

Since you have refused to share the formal proposal and documentation associated with the application process, I would like to obtain copies of the minutes from the 2018 meetings where AHRC formulated MSPEC's proposal - involving both the research community and other interested stakeholders. Further, I would like to request the following information:

- (a) How many people were invited to these meetings?*
- (b) Who was responsible for selecting these individuals?*
- (c) What criteria were used for their selection?*
- (d) Which universities were represented by the attendees?*
- (e) How many attendees were present at both these meeting(s)?*
- (f) Who or what entity made the final decision on the composition of the consortium?*
- (g) Was there an open application process accessible to all individuals working on modern day slavery issues in the UK? If yes, please provide the relevant document and link.*
- (h) Were any individuals' interests rejected, or did anyone decline to participate in the consortium? What are the reasons for that?*

Our response

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

With regard to the meetings held in October and November 2018 we can confirm that UKRI does not hold formal minutes of these meetings. However, UKRI does hold informal draft personal meeting notes of the October 2018 meeting and we are providing this document as 'FOI2024/00127 Modern Slavery Discussion Workshop [Redacted] notes_v2'.

The information we are providing was intended for internal use and reflects internal draft notes prepared following the October 2018 meeting. This information should not be taken to represent the final position, or the sum total of evidence that informed the bid proposal.

Information relating to names has been withheld under section 40(2) personal data of the FOI Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018. In this case, we believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that processing of personal data is lawful and fair.

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and UKRI is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information.

In your request you also asked a number of questions relating to the workshops and asked for information, our responses are as follows:

(a) How many people were invited to these meetings?

This information is not held.

(b) Who was responsible for selecting these individuals?

Participants were identified by UKRI staff with experience in this policy area from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), this included the AHRC Associate Director for Skills and Public Policy and the AHRC Executive Chair.

(c) What criteria were used for their selection?

Participants were identified with relevant known experience in modern slavery research who must have been in receipt of substantial peer reviewed national and international funding, awarded through open competition for their research and policy impact over several years.

(d) Which universities were represented by the attendees?

The following universities and independent research centres were represented alongside other interested stakeholders: The British Institute of International & Comparative Law (BIICL), Durham University, the University of Bristol, the University of Exeter, the University of Hull, the University of Liverpool, the University of Nottingham, and the University of Surrey.

(e) How many attendees were present at both these meeting(s)?

The October 2018 workshop had 16 attendees, attendance is not known for the November 2018 workshop as the information is not held.

(f) Who or what entity made the final decision on the composition of the consortium?

The consortium that coalesced during the workshops and wider discussions was written into the bid that was ultimately signed off through the SPF approvals process.

(g) Was there an open application process accessible to all individuals working on modern day slavery issues in the UK? If yes, please provide the relevant document and link.

The proposal to the Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) was developed following workshops with a compressed timeline in order to align to the SPF process. Over the course of the Policy Evidence Centre's (PEC's) period of operation there were a number of PEC-led open funding opportunities that enabled a wider group of researchers and institutions to participate in the work of the PEC.

(h) Were any individuals' interests rejected, or did anyone decline to participate in the consortium? What are the reasons for that?

This information is not held.

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.

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: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,


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