

24 July 2018

Mr Wicks

Sent by email: request-491380-59175f9b@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Mr Wicks,

**Freedom of Information request: Innovate Assessors - ref UKRI – 2018/0077 IUK**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request submitted on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in which you requested the following:

**Your Request:**

*I am writing to kindly request as much information as Innovate UK holds in regards to :*

- I. Marking/scoring criteria sheets for Innovate UK assessors*
- II. Marking/scoring criteria guidance for Innovate UK assessors*
- III. Any associated information directly linked to information/training for incoming or existing assessors on their marking/scoring*

*To prevent this being an overbearing exercise, may I please ask that you prioritise the above in relation to:*

- 1. Marking/scoring criteria sheets for Open programme funding competitions, including most recently closed round and next closing round*
- 2. Marking/scoring criteria guidance literature for Open programme funding competitions, including most recently closed round and next closing round*
- 3. Marking/scoring criteria sheet for Emerging and Enabling funding competitions, including most recently closed round and next closing round*
- 4. Marking/scoring criteria guidance literature for Emerging and Enabling funding competitions including most recently closed round and next closing round*
- 5. Any further recent training/briefing literature packs that an incoming assessors would have received in the course of their duties for marking/scoring of either of the above competitions that is already not in the public domain and that can be retrieved in a*

*sensible amount of time (i.e. I am expecting that you likely store such information to in a central location).*

*Please note that in each of the above cases (1->4) I do not expect any documents that contain specific company information (e.g. examples) to be made available in order to prevent refusal of the request under the i) commercial interests or ii) information relating to a third party exemption.*

*Please also note that my request is specific towards the above, and it would be unsatisfactory to receive generic PowerPoint/literature in regards to "What are assessors looking for?" - which are already kindly contained within Innovate UK briefings.*

*Finally, if for any reason the transmission of this information is not feasible (for instance file size), then I would be happy to receive all documents in a hard copy format for which I am prepared to pay all sensible printing/mailling costs which are in line with FOI requests. If this route is the selected route then please could you also indicate whether you are willing for such documents to be uploaded by myself into the public domain and a later point?*

### **Our response:**

I can confirm that Innovate UK (UKRI) does hold the information that you have requested. Our response is detailed below:

In your request you have asked for marking/scoring criteria sheets for Innovate UK assessors, marking/scoring criteria guidance for Innovate UK assessors and any associated information directly linked to information/training for incoming or existing assessors on their marking/scoring. You have particularly highlighted competitions in the Open programme and Emerging and Enabling sector competitions. I can confirm that we hold the information requested.

We are unable to provide assessor scoring criteria and assessor briefs as we believe this request comes under the scope of the following exemption:

**Section 43 (2)** exempts information whose disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entity).

Section 43 (2) is a qualified exemption meaning that it was necessary to conduct a Public Interest Test to determine whether the public interest outweighed the effect on commercial interests.

When assessing whether or not it was in the public interest to disclose the information to you, we took into account the following factors:

Public Interest test in favour of disclosure:

- **To ensure that Innovate UK is consistent and compliant with their own assessor guidance and criteria.** Innovate UK receives a large volume of applications to their Emerging and Enabling and Open competitions. As this is the case examining the guidance and criteria used by Innovate UK's assessors to ensure they are complying with the stated standards would be in the public interest.

Public interest test in favour of withholding the information:

- **Releasing the assessor guidance and marking criteria could give certain applicants an unfair advantage in Innovate UK's competitions.** The assessor marking criteria guidance, sheets and briefings are not publicly available and could therefore give an unfair advantage to any applicants with access to these documents.

To explain further, the documents will be utilised for future Open and Emerging and Enabling competitions. As this is the case we believe releasing the documents would negatively affect the commercial interests of all applicants who do not have access to this information and give those applicants with access an unfair advantage in future competitions. In our view, we do not consider the release of such information would enable fair competition between the organisations that apply.

- **Releasing the documents would affect the integrity of Innovate UK competitions due to the advantage having the marking criteria and assessor guidance.** If released it will also have an impact on the commercial interests of Innovate UK and our reliance on running a fair and transparent competition process. This process ensures that only the best projects receive any public monies. Releasing the assessor's scoring sheets, guidance and briefs will hugely impact Innovate UK's core activities and could further compromise the integrity of Innovate UK as an organisation.
- **Releasing the documentation is not necessary to complete a strong application, Innovate UK gives a comprehensive set of guidance to enable applicants to enter a fair and transparent competition.** Our Competitions team work hard to ensure that all competitions are fair and that the grant funding is awarded on the strength of the bid. As such for each competition a comprehensive set of guidance is released to assist in creating the strongest application possible. The assessment criteria always relate directly to the applicant guidance, so we would expect that if an applicant addresses the question as detailed in the guidance then they would be addressing the assessment criteria.

It is UKRI's opinion that the public interest in non-disclosure outweighs that of disclosure; the commercial interests outweighed the public interest.

I can confirm that assessors are required to attend a training session before starting work for Innovate UK, and they also attend a specific briefing for each competition that they assess.

I hope this answers your questions.

If you have any queries about this response please contact me, or if you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to request a review of our decision, please write to:

**Complaints Officer**

UK Research and Innovation  
Polaris House  
North Star Avenue  
Swindon  
SN2 1FL  
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 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:

Information Commissioner  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Enquiry/Information Line: Between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745. Further information about the Office of the Information Commissioner can be found at <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Yours sincerely,

Jason Johnson  
Information Manager  
UK Research and Innovation, Information Governance Team  
Email: [foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org)