Freedom of Information request: 2019/0036 IUK

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 5th February 2019 in which you requested the following:

Your Request:

I would like to know about Innovate UK funding of food reformulation programmes. I would like to know -

- Details on the programmes that have been funded since 2015 (i.e., the names of the company carrying out the research, and the name of the research programme, any other basic details).

- Summary reports provided to Innovate UK as a result of these funding programmes (i.e., any reports provided to Innovate UK, giving results of the funded programme, giving the results of experiments, taste tests, etc.) Just to be clear - I am asking for existing research held by Innovate UK, which therefore should be easily obtainable and fall within the time limit of an FOI.

Our response:

I can confirm UK Research and Innovation hold information relevant to your request.

Details of all programmes funded by Innovate UK since 2004 can be found on the below link. This includes the name of organisation(s) involved in the project (column K), the name of the project (column G) and which Innovate UK programme/competition (column C) this is part of.

Innovate UK funded projects since 2004

In regard to the second half of your request asking for summary reports of the programmes, we have determined that this falls under the scope of Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act; disclosure would result, or would likely, result in a person's (an individual, a company the public authority itself or any other legal entities) commercial interests being prejudiced.

Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption, meaning that a test was carried out to determine whether the public interest outweighs the requirement for commercial confidentiality. The outcome of this test was that the need for confidentiality outweighed the public interest.
The reports generated contain commercially sensitive information that industry partners use in various ways including as part of new product development and/or commercialisation strategies. Disclosing this information could result in the companies we fund being put at a competitive disadvantage and negatively impact their commercial interests.

We also considered the impact of disclosure on Innovate UK if commercially sensitive information of companies they work and engage with were disclosed. The agreement Innovate UK have with the participant of a project states that they will not release confidential information. The reports requested contain commercially sensitive information such as costs, project plan and schedule information. Disclosure of this information would damage the trust in Innovate UK and likely impact their ability to carry out their role and manage their current and future investments.

Taking the above considerations into account, we reached the decision that the need for commercial confidentiality outweighed the need for public interest, therefore, the information is exempt from disclosure.

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

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,

UK Research and Innovation, Information Governance Team
Email: foi@ukri.org