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**INFORMATION RELEASED UNDER THE  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

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Information released title	Employer Ownership Pilot Round 2: 544530
Original request	Please can you provide the following information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The score sheet for the Skills Pathway 'Made in Oxfordshire' project and any comments recorded on the application (URN Number: 544530) under EOP</li><li>2. Any document that shows the scores of the other applicants under this round of EOP</li></ol>
Date of release	03/03/2014
Requester type	Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot Round 2 applicant

**Information released:**

**1. The score sheet for the Skills Pathway 'Made in Oxfordshire' project and any comments recorded on the application (URN Number: 544530) under EOP**

Please find attached a spreadsheet containing the information requested. *[To obtain a copy of this information, please contact [Catherine.hodgkinson@ukces.org.uk](mailto:Catherine.hodgkinson@ukces.org.uk)]*

A table describing the contents of this spreadsheet is provided below to aid you in interpreting the information released. This table also sets out the exemptions that have been engaged in responding to this request.

Worksheet tab	Contents	Assessment Stage	Redactions applied
1a	Worksheet containing Assessors' scores and comments pertaining to the project.	Initial Sift: Assessor and Lead Assessor scoring	s.40(2) personal information redacted
1b	Worksheet containing scores and comments following moderation between the Assessor and Lead Assessor	Initial Sift: In-Team Moderation	
2a	Worksheet containing Lead Assessor's and Assessor's scores and comments pertaining to the project.	Main Assessment: Assessor and Lead Assessor scoring	s.40(2) personal information redacted
2b	Worksheet containing economist's scores and comments	Main Assessment: Review of Monetised Benefit Scores and Value for Money Assessment	
2c	Worksheet containing scores and comments following moderation between the Assessor and Lead Assessor.	Main Assessment: In-Team Moderation	
2d	Worksheet containing final scores	Main Assessment: Shortlisting Panel	

**Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot Round 2: Assessment Process**

Rather than one single score sheet, the recorded information held on the scores and comments on the Skills Pathway 'Made in Oxfordshire' project takes the form of a number of assessment documents completed during spring 2013, reflecting the fact that the assessment process comprised several stages. Each worksheet tab contains information held on each stage of the assessment process.

It may therefore be helpful to provide some contextual and background information on the Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot (EOP) Round 2. To this end, Annex 1 summarises the assessment process in relation to the bid in question. To provide additional assistance, please also see the attached document,

which outlines the 'Assessment Framework and Assessor's Guidance' for EOP Round 2 and which will further your understanding of both the assessment process, assessment criteria and scoring that the assessors applied. Please see in particular sections H, I, J, K and S, which set out the stages of the assessment process and the scoring framework for Outline Applications.

#### *Section 40 exemption- Personal Information*

You will note that personal data of Assessors and administrators of the EOP Round 2 process has been redacted from the supplied documents.

As this information relates to identifiable individuals it constitutes their 'personal data'. We consider that the disclosure of this personal data is subject to the exemption at s40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (by virtue of s40 (3) (a) (i)). The disclosure of this personal data would contravene the first data protection principle contained within the Data Protection Act 1998. In considering this exemption, we reflected on whether disclosing personal information of any individuals named within this document would be fair and lawful. We took into account factors such as: the role of the individuals, what they had been told in relation to their personal information and their reasonable expectations. We concluded by recognising a legitimate expectation by these individuals that this information would remain confidential.

To also assist you, we attach a copy of the letter sent to the UK Atomic Energy Authority in July 2013 confirming the outcome of the Authority's application.

#### **Summary of information released**

- Scores and comments recorded on Skills Pathway 'Made in Oxfordshire' project (file 'A').
- Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot Round 2: Assessment Framework and Assessor's Guidance - EOP2 Outline and Full Applications (file 'B').
- Letter confirming outcome of bid submitted by the UK Atomic Energy Authority (file 'C').

*[To obtain a copy of this information, please contact [Catherine.hodgkinson@ukces.org.uk](mailto:Catherine.hodgkinson@ukces.org.uk)]*

#### **2. Any document that shows the scores of the other applicants under this round of EOP**

I can confirm that the UK Commission holds this information, however, we consider it to be exempt from disclosure in accordance with section 43(2) and 29(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act:

#### *Section 43(2) – Commercial interests*

*Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). NB – A person may be an individual, a company, or any other legal entity.*

The reason that Section 43(2) is engaged relates both to the commercial interests of the organisations which submitted bids under Round 2 of the Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot and to those of the UK Commission itself.

Its disclosure would prejudice the commercial interests of certain bidding organisations because it would reveal sensitive information with the potential to damage business reputation, or the

confidence that customers, suppliers or investors may have in these organisations. As such, disclosure is likely to weaken the position of bidding organisations in this competitive environment.

In addition, placing in the public domain information which, in some instances, may be deemed as being critical of aspects of a bid (in that they were ascribed a low score) may create tensions in any future relationships between the UK Commission and a bidding organisation.

*Section 29(1)(a) – The Economy*

*Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice – (a) the economic interests of the United Kingdom or of any part of the United Kingdom.*

Through its investment funding and skills competitions, the UK Commission seeks to co- invest in employer-led solutions that have the potential to raise skill levels to drive enterprise and economic growth. Publishing commercially damaging scores about bids now may serve as a distinctive to potential bidders in the future, who would be unwilling to jeopardise their own commercial interests through the disclosure of prejudicial information. The consequence of this would be lower engagement with our investment work and a decrease in high-quality bids that raise skills, create jobs, and fuel enterprise and economic growth.

We have weighed the prejudice caused by possible disclosure against the likely benefit to the wider public. We recognise that it is in the public interest to allow scrutiny of a process of assessing applications for public funding and acknowledge the need for the UK Commission to be accountable and transparent in its role in administering EOP Round 2. However, we also recognise that there is a public interest in growing a healthy and thriving economy. Any prejudice to investment projects seeking to nurture economic growth may impact on the taxpayers who fund them. We have concluded, therefore, that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled, you can request a review by writing to Secretariat Services at the following address:

UK Commission for Employment and Skills  
Renaissance House  
Adwick Park  
Wath upon Dearne  
South Yorkshire  
S63 6DT

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have a right of appeal to the Information Commission at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. Or telephone, 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45 or visit the ICO website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

## **Annex 1: Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot Round 2: Assessment of the Skills Pathway ‘Made in Oxfordshire’ project (URN: 544530)**

### **The eligibility sift**

Prior to the start of assessment all applications underwent an eligibility check. This involved checking the application had been submitted by a lead employer and confirmed that the applications exceeded the minimum thresholds set out in the prospectus.

### **Initial Sift**

At initial sift stage Assessors scored applications against the Employer Ownership and Impact criteria. For both Initial Sift and Main Assessment, Assessors provided a score against sub-criterion on a scale of 1 to 8. This scale is divided into four broad categories with 1 being the weakest and 8 the strongest. This scale was divided into four broad categories: Inadequate (Score 1-2); Partially Meets (Score 3-4); Adequately Meets (Score 5-6); Fully meets (Score 7-8).

### **Main assessment**

- The aim of the main assessment was firstly to assess applications passing the initial sift against the remaining criteria and secondly to identify a shortlist of applications to be recommended to an Investment Sub-Board.
- Assessors worked in teams of 2 with one Assessor acting as Lead Assessor. Both Assessors in a team independently assessed the same set of applications.
- At the **Main Assessment stage** Assessors scored applications against Innovation, Quality & Rigour, Feasibility, Future Prospects and Value for Money criteria.
- Also at this stage, economists ensured that the **Monetised Benefits Score** was an accurate indicator of the value for money and subjected the infrastructure elements of applications to a **value for money assessment**.
- Once both Assessors in a team had independently assessed a batch of applications and had received the economist’s corresponding scores, they then met to moderate scores and comments, in an **In-Team Moderation Meeting**. In the case of the application submitted by the UK Atomic Energy Authority, this moderation activity concluded that the project did not meet the required scoring criteria of 4 or above for all of the sub criterion. Because it had scored ‘3’ on both the ‘Quality of underpinning arrangements’ and ‘Managing Innovation’ sub criterion, it was agreed that this project should be considered by the Cross-Team Moderation Meeting, described below.
- Following In-Team Moderation meetings, Lead Assessors met at a **Cross-Team Moderation Meeting** to review the list of applications being put forward. The role of this Panel was to check that scoring across the teams was consistent and to agree an indicative list of recommendations being progressed to the Shortlisting Panel. At this meeting, the rationale of scores were tested and in some instances adjusted to ensure that consistency was applied across the assessment teams to ensure consistency across teams. The scores of the ‘Made in Oxfordshire’ project was once such project.
- A **Short-listing Panel** then met to review the outcome of the Cross team Moderation Meetings.
- As a consequence of these activities, the recommendation for the ‘Made in Oxfordshire’ project was ‘Do Not Invest/ Progress’.
- These assessment activities provided the Investment Board with the information needed to identify those innovative employer-led applications that are most likely to have a major impact

on enterprise, jobs and growth. The recommendations emerging from these meetings thus formed part of a package of Board Papers used by the Investment Board and Sub-Board to make recommendations to the Minister.