

## Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	UK-India Covid-19 Partnership Initiative
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>Through the UK-India Covid-19 Partnership Initiative, the funders aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support world-leading collaborative research teams focused on mitigating the severity of COVID-19 in South Asian populations in the UK and India.</li> <li>• Enhance existing partnerships and develop new partnerships between the UK and India in efforts to address COVID-19</li> <li>• Strengthen the strategic relationship between the UK and India.</li> </ul> <p>For UKRI, this activity reflects the prioritisation of research into understanding and addressing the unexplained increased Covid-19 mortality rates experienced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>The call documentation has been jointly agreed between UKRI and the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India (DBT).</p> <p>Within UKRI, both ESRC and MRC have worked together to develop the activity. Both councils have consulted within the relevant science, and international teams.</p> <p>The UKRI Fund for International Collaboration Board approved the original premise for the call.</p> <p>Noting that this was developed at speed, MRC consulted with a small number of relevant academics on the scope and the terminology used in the call documentation.</p> <p>Additionally, MRC has consulted the UKRI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team to consider the impacts of the call on particular groups.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants to the calls, reviewers and assessment panel members. UKRI employees

	involved in the commissioning, decision-making and monitoring activities.
<b>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b>	<p>Je-S will collect relevant applicant data.</p> <p>MRC/ESRC/DBT will deliver the assessment process, including attending the assessment panel meetings, to help ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>MRC/ESRC will strive to assemble an appropriately representative and diverse panel on the UK side. Our Indian funding partner will nominate expert panel members from India.</p>

### Summary in peer review

- We will be taking steps to mitigate disadvantaging particular groups in the decision-making through:
  - Abiding by the principles of peer review.
  - Providing clear assessment criteria
  - Reminding panel members at the meeting of the types and risks of unconscious bias, and their obligation to speak out if they observe it in others.
  - Supporting and encouraging panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.
  - All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
  - UKRI oversight of, and presence at, the panel assessment meeting will serve as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
  - It is recognised that owing to the rapid nature of this Covid-19 opportunity, there will be a reduced timeframe for people to apply, resulting in a potential negative impact on those with, for example, disabilities or caring responsibilities. However, the call will be open for the maximum time available to mitigate this (recognising its rapid nature).

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
<b>Disability</b>	Risk of negative impact is very low.	<p>Data is collected regarding disability at the application stage.</p> <p>Dependant on focus of individual activities within proposals, such as long distance travel and access to incountry locations served possibly by relatively limited infrastructure and services.</p>	<p><b><u>Applicant</u></b></p> <p>The application process does not entail needing to attend interviews.</p> <p>Applicants should consider mitigation measures within their proposals.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the employer to provide sufficient support, in partner countries this should conform to the local regulatory framework.</p> <p>UK Government travel advice should be consulted before travelling (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice</a>).</p> <p>MRC/ESRC/DBT will oversee the process throughout to ensure fairness.</p> <p><b><u>Panel member/assessor</u></b></p> <p>The panel meeting will take place virtually, and so will not require members to travel to a meeting. We will ensure that there are sufficient breaks built in to the meeting and ensure accessibility needs are met through activating the live transcript for those with hearing impairments</p>

<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Potentially positive or negative – dependent on cultural differences.	Dependant on focus of individual activities within proposals, such as relevant project participants travelling to partner countries, possibly with differing safeguarding concerns.	<p><b><u>Applicant</u></b></p> <p>Flexible terms and conditions are in place to appropriately support applicants who require time to attend psychiatrist/psychologist appointments or who are undergoing gender reassignment involving medical interventions.</p> <p>Applicants should check advice at;  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice</a></p> <p>It is a requirement for grant holders to adhere to all relevant safeguarding legislation and good practice.</p> <p><b><u>Panel member/assessor</u></b></p> <p>As there will not be a physical panel meeting (or interviews) there is no need to provide gender neutral toilets and facilities.</p>
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	Impact expected to be neutral.	Dependant on focus of individual activities within proposals, such as relevant project participants travelling to partner countries.	<p><b><u>Applicant</u></b></p> <p>Applicants should check advice here: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice</a></p>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Some potential for negative impact	<p>This information is not made available to the assessment panel members.</p> <p>Dependant on focus of individual activities within proposals, such as long distance travel and access to in-country locations served by relatively limited infrastructure and services.</p> <p>Those who are on maternity may not be able to apply for this opportunity.</p>	<p><b><u>Applicant</u></b></p> <p>Flexible terms and conditions are in place to support applicants appropriately without discrimination.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the employer to provide sufficient support, in partner countries this should conform to the local regulatory framework.</p> <p>UK Government travel advice should be consulted before travelling (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice</a>)</p>

			<p>MRC/ESRC/DBT have considered the time frames for this activity and due to its rapid nature whilst a maximum amount of time will be given, this may restrict this group.</p> <p><b><u>Panel member/assessor</u></b></p> <p>Panel members who are pregnant or have caring responsibilities may have additional requirements in order to take part. UKRI will support these as needed</p>
<b>Race</b>	<p>Potential for overall positive impact given the overarching focus of the call is upon addressing the severity of Covid-19 within groups of South Asian ethnicity.</p> <p>The impact on applicants is expected to be neutral.</p>	<p>Dependant on focus of individual activities within proposals.</p> <p>Data is collected regarding race at the application stage. This information is not made available to the assessment panel members throughout the peer review process.</p>	<p><b><u>Applicant</u></b></p> <p>UK Government travel advice should be consulted before travelling (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice</a>).</p> <p>MRC/ESRC/DBT will oversee the process throughout to ensure fairness.</p> <p><b><u>Panel member/assessor</u></b></p> <p>MRC/ESRC will strive to ensure a representative and diverse panel membership on the UK side. The panel members nominated by DBT will be based in India.</p>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<p>Potentially positive or negative</p>	<p>Dependant on focus of individual activities within proposals</p>	<p><b><u>Applicant</u></b></p> <p>UK Government travel advice should be consulted before travelling (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice</a>).</p> <p><b><u>Panel member/assessor</u></b></p> <p>The panel date will be set taking into account any religious</p>

			<p>observances to enable participation.</p> <p>Project participants encouraged to gain appreciation of cultural norms and temporary restrictions on activities within partner countries.</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Impact expected to be neutral.	Dependant on focus of individual activities within proposals	<p><b><u>Applicant</u></b></p> <p>Applicants should check advice at;  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice</a></p> <p>It is a requirement for grant holders to adhere to all relevant safeguarding legislation and good practice</p>
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Impact expected to be neutral.	Dependant on focus of individual activities within proposals	<p><b><u>Applicant</u></b></p> <p>UK Government travel advice should be consulted before travelling (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice</a>).</p> <p><b><u>Panel member/assessor</u></b></p> <p>Throughout the process panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions.</p> <p>Steps will be taken to ensure broad representation on the assessment panel to reduce the effect of any individual bias.</p> <p>For Panel Membership we will aim to achieve a target of 40% Panel Members from underrepresented gender.</p>
<b>Age</b>	Impact expected to be neutral.	Dependant on focus of individual activities within proposals	<p><b><u>Applicant</u></b></p> <p>UK Government travel advice should be consulted before travelling (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice</a>).</p>

**Evaluation:**

Question	Explanation / justification
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Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		Where a potential negative impact has been identified, actions will be carried out to reduce this impact as much as possible.
<b>Final Decision:</b>	<b>Tick the relevant box</b>	<b>Include any explanation / justification required</b>
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will <b>proceed</b> .		
2. You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can <b>adapt or change</b> the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	X	Where a potential negative impact has been identified, actions will be carried out to reduce this impact as much as possible, the activity will therefore proceed with these in place.

<b>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required</b> (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>20 October 2020</b>
<b>Review date</b> (if applicable):	

### Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Alex Harris	20/10/20	1	