



Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	UKRI Trustworthy Autonomous Systems (TAS) Programme – Responsibility Call
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>The AI and Robotics Theme, led by EPSRC as part of UKRI, would like to commit up to £3 million (at 80% FEC) to support research into Responsible Autonomous Systems. This funding is part of the Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF).</p> <p>This specific call aims to support creative, multi- and inter-disciplinary research which focuses on the challenging questions of how autonomous systems can be designed and developed to be responsible.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>The UKRI Trustworthy Autonomous Systems (TAS) Programme – Responsibility Call was developed following consultation with a varied range of stakeholders. This was then further developed with advice from the TAS Programme Strategic Advisory Board.</p> <p>The broader TAS programme was developed following a Town Hall meeting, held in October 2019, to raise awareness of the programme and upcoming funding opportunity, help facilitate engagement and broker new collaborations to ensure that multidisciplinary condition of the project is met. This included academics from different institutions, leading figures within the AI community and other disciplines.</p> <p>The workshop was also attended by representatives from industry and government. Two webinars were held on the 20th November 2019 and 2020 in which potential applicants were able to ask questions about TAS programme.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	UK's research community and industrial sector concerned with all aspects of responsible autonomous systems; government representatives; UKRI staff.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>The call will be open to all, and applications will be welcome from any eligible UK-based research team.</p> <p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed.</p>

	<p>All panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing. UKRI will pay special attention to applicants that can demonstrate multi-disciplinary and collaborative teams and approaches.</p> <p>The activity will be monitored by the AI and Robotics Theme in EPSRC in conjunction with the TAS Programme Board.</p>
--	--

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan to outline our collective aspirations for working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

- Select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation.
- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#)
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities
- Ensure attendees have an opportunity to raise any specific requirements in advance e.g. cover letter and joining instructions
- Support flexible working of stakeholders
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Ensure EPSRC staff receive tailored unconscious Bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors to reduce the effects of unconscious bias in panel meetings
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018

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)
Disability	Both potentially negative and positive	As the panel will be held virtually, the accessibility of a venue may have a positive impact. However, this may also have a negative impact on those with dyslexia or hearing impairments.	<p>Panel will be held virtually. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that any circumstances which could affect the participation can be accommodated wherever possible.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings</p>

			and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
Gender reassignment	None identified		
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative on those with caring responsibilities		Support will be offered for people with caring responsibilities, and reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible.
Race	Potentially negative	Racial bias may be perceived.	Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
Religion or belief	Potentially negative		We have tried to avoid major religious holidays when setting dates. All panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that may affect their ability to participate and how this can be accommodated.
Sexual orientation	None identified		
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative	Gender bias may be perceived.	In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will be mixed gender.
Age	Potentially negative	Racial bias may be perceived.	Unconscious bias briefing will be given

			as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	None identified		

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	A number of risks and potential negative impacts have been identified and considered as part of the call design. Reasonable adjustments will be made and by adhering to the standard peer review principles and the risks have been mitigated as far as possible.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .		
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias	x	Possible risks and bias associated with this activity have been identified and activities adapted accordingly. ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the activity and EPSRC will review this EIA accordingly. Reasonable adjustments will also be made wherever possible.
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 proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour		

some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		
---	--	--

Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	14/01/2020
Review date (if applicable):	N/A

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Danielle Lloyd	When published	1	Final version created