**Transforming the UK food system for healthy people and a healthy environment Call 2 and Engagement Events**

**Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) Transforming the UK food system for healthy people & a healthy environment: Call 2 & engagement events |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | This funding call will support **high informed risk, high reward interdisciplinary** research, aiming to transform the UK Food System for healthier people and a healthy environment. Following analysis of the Programme’s existing research portfolio, three **thematic areas** have been identified in which we would like to see research proposals.  This opportunity is open to, and can be led by, **any discipline** across the breadth of the UKRI remit and proposals must represent high-quality **interdisciplinary** research and innovation, integrating social and natural sciences.  All proposals must demonstrate collaboration and co-design with at **least one stakeholder organisation** from civil society, relevant business or government (local/ devolved/ national).  The call will be launched using the UKRI Je-S, funding application system.  As part of this call, potential applicants will have an opportunity to sign up to an online networking platform, attend networking events, and view online webinars & presentations.  All of these events will be open to all, and all information on the call will be recorded to ensure that nobody is disadvantaged by not being able to attend at specific times. The online platform will try to ensure that people are able to network despite current Covid restrictions and caring/ other responsibilities.  The assessment and decision-making will be via peer review and panel meeting. We will take steps to ensure this process is fair and robust and that the decisions taken are criterion led.  Panel members and UKRI office staff will be fully briefed on their roles and responsibilities. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | The Transforming UK Food Systems has a programme board made up of representatives from BBSRC, NERC, FSA, DEFRA, ESRC, DHSC, MRC, Innovate UK & PHE who have all been consulted and have agreed on the Call application process and design of the launch networking and information dissemination events. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | Research community, stakeholders, staff from Gov departments, UKRI employees, panel members & peer reviewers |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | The impact of the call and engagement events is the generation of high quality research proposals within the scope of the call. These will be assessed by external reviewers as well as an independent assessement panel.  We will monitor successful proposals to identify if attendance at the call meeting has had a positive impact on success rates. |

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| **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** | Negative | **For attendees to Panel meetings (if they are in person)**  Attendees with physical disabilities may have difficulties attending where travel is required. Venues may not cater for the needs of disabilities. Attendees with neuro- disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration during long panel assessments. Some may feel excluded as workshops are based on in-person social interactions.  There is always the possibility of unconscious bias in assessment of applications.  **For attendees to Panel meetings and engagement events (virtual)**  Attendees with neuro- disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration during long panel assessments and engagement events. | Information about attendees additional requirements will be collected prior to panel meetings.  **In-person meeting:**  Panel meetings will be held over 2 days to allow for more breaks and less intensive sessions. Also to allow for travel time if meetings held in person.  The venues for panel meetings if in person will be easily accessible from major rail/air links, as well as providing accessibility throughout the venue. We will secure rooms with sufficient space and facilities to make the meeting environment as comfortable as possible. The agendas will have sufficient breaks.  **Virtual meeting:**  Panel meetings will be held over 2 days to allow for more breaks and less intensive sessions.  The agendas will have sufficient breaks to allow for Zoom fatigue and regular breaks from screen time.  The panel will be made aware of Zoom fatigue and tireness at the beginning of the meeting and will be reminded to inform the office if breaks are needed to aid concentration.  We will ensure that all information is available to everyone who may need it, so that those unable to attend events are not disadvantaged.  We will ensure that the selection criteria used are objective, transparent and robust. We will remind all assessors about not bringing in personal biases, and provide briefing in objective decision making. |
| **Gender reassignment** | No |  |  |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | No |  |  |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Negative | Travel to the panel meetings (if they are in person) may exclude those who have childcare responsibilities or pregnant women who might require additional care. | The panel meetings will have adequate breaks built into the agenda. Rooms will be made as comfortable as possible for pregnant attendees.  All engagement events/ activities will be made available to allow access to fit around people’s caring responsibilities.  Venues for panel meetings (if in person) will be looked for which have access to and provide childcare services, if requested. We will offer to reimburse any additional childcare costs incurred for panel members.  Individuals will be encouraged to contact staff to discuss the support available prior to panels. |
| **Race** | Negative | There is always the possibility of unconscious bias in selection of participants  Participants for whom English is their second language may be negatively impacted. | We will ensure that the selection criteria used are objective, transparent and robust. We will remind all assessors about not bringing in personal biases, and provide briefing in objective decision making.  The presentation materials, funding call, eligibility criteria, call guidance and assessment process will be written to minimise subjectivity using the principles of plain English.  Presentations will all come with transcripts and will be available to be watched back. |
| **Religion or belief** | Negative | Specific dietary preferences and requirement for time and space to pray.  Organising meetings and events that take place during religious observances may prevent participation | These would be catered for as required.  Religious observances will be taken into account. |
| **Sexual orientation** | No |  |  |
| **Sex (gender)** | Negative | There is always the possibility of unconscious bias in selection of participants for workshops and assessment process.  Women are more likely to have childcare or other caring responsibilities than men, and therefore may not be able to travel to workshops/ panels. | We will ensure that the selection criteria used are robust and minimise subjectivity. We will remind all members of the selection panel about unconscious bias and provide training as required, to ensure they make a conscious effort to remove bias from their decision making.  We will ensure that the Panel is gender balanced  We will ensure all panel members have the opportunity to contribute equally through effective meeting management.  Any venues of in-person meetigns will be easily accessible to main rail/air links.  Additional costs incurred by caring responsibilities can be claimed as set out in <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/documents/bbsrc-handbook>  As we are calling on expertise from various disciplines which may take different approaches and define gender differently in their respective fields, we will ensure the Secretariat briefs the Chairing team so they can facilitate discussions around these differences in order to maintain a calm and safe environment within which panel members can confidently contribute their views and/or concerns. |
| **Age** | Negative | Older researchers are those most likely to hold senior positions with pre-established industrial/ civil society/ government links. | The call is open to a range of sized awards, and proposals are encouraged from applicants from diverse backgrounds, lowering the emphasis on a long history of ‘food systems’ research.  Only one stakeholder partner needed on applications, lowering the barrier for earlier career researchers to lead on proposals.  Networking events and a networking platform will be provided to facilitate new contacts for earlier career researchers.  We will monitor the diversity stats for attendance, submission , assessment and award and compare these with the population.  **Panel meeting:**  The panel is open to a range of ages. If in person, the venue will have facilities accessible to all, with easy rail/transport links.  If virtual, training sessions and guidance documents/videos will be made available to those who might need them, as well as breaks throughout the day to aid concentration.  If technical difficulties do occur, the office will be on hand to aid any issues. |