

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Adventurous Energy Research for a Sustainable Net Zero Future call |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | The objective is to fund (approximately 8) projects with a combined RC contribution of up to £2M, with the RC contribution to each individual project not exceeding £250k. The call is focussed on adventurous research to enable a sustainable Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions scenario. The process comprises an anonymous outline stage, followed by an interview stage. Projects recommended for funding following interview will then be asked to submit a fully-costed proposal. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | This call follows the example of the ‘Adventurous Manufacturing Round 2’ call run in 2020. The idea of the call has been discussed with various members of the Energy Scientific Advisory Council, as well as with representatives of various themes across EPSRC. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | Individuals eligible to apply for EPSRC funding and scientific professionals who may be employed using funding awarded as a result of this call. It is expected that applicants to this call will comprise both existing members of the Energy research community and individuals working in other Engineering and Physical Sciences disciplines. |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | The result of this call will be reviewed within the team and the UKRI Energy Programme SAC. Researchfish and other outputs could also be used for an impact study if appropriate. Many impacts are likely to be long-term in nature, and the realisation of significant impact may therefore be reliant upon further funding. |

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. 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. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.
* All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
* Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/).
* Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
* Support and encourage 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.
* Support flexible working of stakeholders.
* Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavor to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.
* Abide by the principles of peer review
* Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors.
* 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** | Potentially negative | An applicant’s disability may impact their ability to perform at interview | All applicants invited to interview will be asked to inform EPSRC if they have specific requirements and reasonable adjustments will be made (e.g. additional time) |
| **Gender reassignment** | Potentially negative | Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals who have undergone gender reassignment or whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth, if an applicant’s possession of such protected characteristics is known to the panel. | Applicants are not asked to disclose whether they have undergone gender reassignment. An anonymous first stage will be used to counter any unconscious biases. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | None identified. |  | Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potentially negative | A researcher on parental leave during the open call maybe unable to apply.  Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage pregnant people, if this status is known to the panel. | All applicants invited to interview will be asked to inform EPSRC if they have specific requirements and reasonable adjustments will be made (e.g. additional time)  Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible.  EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these.  Applicants are not asked to disclose pregnancy. An anonymous first stage will be used to counter any unconscious biases. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. |
| **Race** | Potentially negative | Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage specific racial or ethnic groups, where applicant ethnicity is known to the panel. | An anonymous first stage will be used to counter any unconscious biases. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. |
| **Religion or belief** | Potentially negative | Key dates (open call closing, interview) coinciding with specific religious festivals/ events could disadvantage specific religious groups.  Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage specific religious groups, if applicants’ religious affiliation/ belief is known to the panel. | Key dates will be checked and chosen to avoid clashes with major religious events wherever possible.  Applicants are not asked to disclose their religious beliefs. An anonymous first stage will be used to counter any unconscious biases. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. |
| **Sexual orientation** | Potentially negative | Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals of specific sexual orientations, if this is known to the panel. | Applicants are not asked to disclose their sexual orientation. An anonymous first stage will be used to counter any unconscious biases. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. |
| **Sex (gender)** | Potentially negative | Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of gender. | An anonymous first stage will be used to counter any unconscious biases. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. |
| **Age** | Potentially negative | Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants from specific age groups. | An anonymous first stage will be used to counter any unconscious biases. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** | Parental responsibilities  Institution | Some of the time for the call being open will be in the summer holidays.  Due to expected levels of interest, a demand management process has been put in place. | The call opens after schools reopen for the Summer Term (after Easter break), and closes approximately two weeks prior to the Summer break starting in England, so the impact on applicants with childcare responsibilities is mitigated as much as is feasible. Scottish schools’ Summer break does overlap with the open call period by approx. 2 weeks. Most of the open period falls within term time.  The demand management strategy (number of applications permitted per institution) is based on the total investigator time on EPSRC Energy grants at each institution, active as of 01/01/2021. However, the range of allocations has been ‘flattened’ such that no institutional allocation exceeds 6 submissions, and all institutions eligible for EPSRC funding are permitted a minimum of 1 submission. This system has been designed to be as fair as possible, whilst limiting the number of possible applications to a number manageable for EPSRC processes.  It is likely that some institutions will be internally oversubscribed for this call, and may therefore need to implement their own demand management/ selection processes, with their own possible EDI implications. In order to minimise any equality impacts at the pre-submission stage, institutions that have been internally oversubscribed, should ensure that any selection process employed is, as far as is feasible, anonymous. To evidence this, a cover letter should be provided by the institution containing, among other information (see call document), the details of any selection process used. |

**Evaluation:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Explanation / justification** | |
| Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? |  | |
| **Final Decision:** | **Tick the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will **proceed**. |  |  |
| 1. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups |  |  |
| 1. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias |  |  |
| 1. 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: |  |
| **Date completed:** |  |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | When published | 1 |  |