

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed**
 | Digital Economy Call – Equitable Digital Society |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event**
 | Digital Economy theme aims to commit £5m at 80% FEC to support research projects addressing challenges involved in achieving an equitable digital society. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)*
 | The Equitable Digital Society priority area was developed based on consultation with a varied range of stakeholders, and further developed with advice from the Digital Economy Theme Programme Advisory Board. This call in particular has been developed in extended consulation with a range of stakeholders from the Programme Advisory Board and Digital Economy cross-council colleagues, as well as external academic stakeholders. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?**
 | The research community in the Digital Economy space.Related research users (e.g. industry, public and third sector organisations) who may be involved as Project Partners. |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?**
 | The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed. All panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing. The activity will be monitored by the Digital Economy Theme in EPSRC. Research outcomes will be collected via ResearchFish. |

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.

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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** | Potentially negative |  | **Every attempt will be made to accommodate panel members’ accessibility requirements ahead of and during the panels** |
| **Gender reassignment** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potentially negative |  | **The assessment panel will be held online to increase accessibility to panel members with mobility impairments or caring responsibilities; support is made available at EPSRC for those with caring responsibilities.** |
| **Race** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Religion or belief** | Potentially negative | The current closing date for full proposals is Tuesday 07 September 2021. We have tried to avoid religious holidays, however this date is Rosh Hashannah. | **Change the closing date to 14/09/21.****Timeline for proposal submission has been extended to 12 weeks to hep account for school summer holidays.** |
| **Sexual orientation** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Sex (gender)** | Potentially negative |  | **In line with EPSRC policy assessment panels will be mixed-gender, with a target of 30% for the underrepresented gender.** |
| **Age** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **All protected characteristics** | Potentially positive |  | **The call document expressly states a commitment to EDI and welcomes applicants from a diverse pool.****The call highlights EPSRC’s support for flexible working.****The call is specifically designed to support and promote research into equitability.** |

**Evaluation:**

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| **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 have been identified and actively considered as part of the call design. These 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**.
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| 1. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups
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| 1. 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. |
| 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.
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| **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:**  | **07/05/2021** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

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