



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Physical Sciences National Research Facilities Call 2021
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	This call combines two funding opportunities to run National Research Facilities (NRFs) for the UK on behalf of EPSRC, one is for a crystallography service, and the other for scanning transmission electron microscopy (STEM). The aim of these services is to provide access to a range of instruments, expertise, and techniques in crystallography and STEM respectively in order to support research spanning discipline boundaries.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	This funding opportunity follows an open call for statements of need for NRFs in 2020, and then a panel to evaluate these submissions and identify the need for the UK to have access to these facilities. A technical specification panel to set the technical requirements for each facility was then held.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Users and potential users of the current National Crystallography Service and SuperSTEM NRFs; applicants who may wish to apply to run such a facility; staff employed in the running of such a facility.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Research outcomes are collected through ResearchFish. EPSRC assigns a portfolio manager as a project officer who sits on the External Advisory Board (EAB) of each NRF. An annual report is produced with key performance indicators (KPIs) set by the Capital Infrastructure theme in consultation with their High Level Group (HLG). A mid-term review will be conducted by EPSRC, employing an independent peer review panel to determine whether the facility should continue to be funded for the full five years.

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](#).
- 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	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.	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.
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. We have written the specification around the applicants to focus on the team contributions, rather on a single Principle Investigator.
Age	Potentially negative to younger members of the community.		We have written the specification around the applicants to focus on the team contributions, rather on a single Principle Investigator.
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	Adaptions as outlined above have been made in order to reduce the chanced of 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 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:	15/06/2021
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Caitlin McAuley	When published	1	<i>Final version created</i>