



**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

Question	Response
<p><b>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</b></p>	<p>Software for Research Communities Call. This activity is a call for proposals.</p>
<p><b>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</b></p>	<p>EPSRC call to allocate up to £4.5million (at 80% FEC) to support projects that adapt and maintain software that underpins research within the remit of EPSRC. The aim of this call is to invest in software projects where there is evidence that the software in question is beneficial to specific communities of practice that conduct research within UKRI-EPSRC's remit. Maintenance and/or developmental funding may be requested in order to advance the sustainability of research software, as well as to enhance or extend the utility of software to support the workflows of researchers.</p> <p>The call includes an intent to submit stage to enable EPSRC to have a view on the demand for this call. The call open time has been extended to 15 weeks with the intent to submit running concurrently. The intent to submit deadline is 11 weeks following the call opening date.</p>
<p><b>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</b></p>	<p>Consultation with the e-infrastructure SAT, Society of Research Software Engineers and individual RSE's has taken place to understand the current landscape of research software needs. Consultation across other EPSRC themes has taken place to garner support across the wider EPSRC remit for a more coordinated approach to Software funding. Discussions have also been undertaken with other Councils BBSRC, ESRC to explore cross council involvement</p>
<p><b>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK's research community who require high quality software to achieve their research aims.</li> <li>• Developers of software</li> <li>• Panel members</li> <li>• UKRI staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p>	<p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed. Proposals will be assessed at the most appropriate</p>

	<p>thematic panel. All panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing.</p> <p>The activity will be monitored by the Research Infrastructure Theme in EPSRC</p>
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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 endeavour 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	Potential for both	As the panel will be held virtually, the issue of selecting an accessible 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 participation can be accommodated wherever possible.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel</p>

			presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	no known negative impact	Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings and within reviewer comments.	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	no known negative impact	No disclosure of marital status required for any stage of the process.	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Potentially negative on those with caring responsibilities	Availability to apply for call – pregnancy and maternity leave may be over duration call is open	Support will be offered for people with caring responsibilities, and reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible.
<b>Race</b>	Potentially negative	Potential risk –lack of diversity of ethnicity and race of panel members and/or applicants	Diversity will be taken into consideration when drawing up the panel membership Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
<b>Religion or belief</b>	no known negative impact		Major religious holidays will be taken into consideration when setting panel 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.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	no known negative impact		
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	no known negative impact		Diversity will be taken into consideration when drawing up the panel membership Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings and within reviewer comments.
<b>Age</b>	Potentially negative		Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
<b>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</b>	Potential for both	Impact of Covid -19 Remote working  The call will be open during school summer holidays (June for Scotland and July for the rest of the UK). Those with caring responsibilities may be impacted.	Following feedback on timescales for EPSRC calls the call opening time has been extended to 15 weeks to enable as wide a participation as possible. As such the deadline of the call was extended to avoid closing during UK school summer holidays.

**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 <b>proceed</b> .		
2. You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can <b>adapt or change</b> the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the 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 <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	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.

<b>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required</b> (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>26/05/2021</b>
<b>Review date</b> (if applicable):	

**Change log**

Name	Date	Version	Change
Sarah King	26/05/2021	1	