

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | ED&I in the Energy Research Community NetworkPlus |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | The objective is to fund 1 project with RC contribution not exceeding £1 million. The call is focussed on promoting and supporting EDI work in the Energy space. The process comprises the submission of a full proposals. Proposals will then be anonymised and separated from trach record information. The anonymised proposals will be sent to an expert panel to review, following return of notes track records will be reviewed by the panel. All applicants will then be invited for interview. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | This call is the culmination of 6 months of meetings with the EPSRC Energy research community on the topic of EDI in the Energy research space. This is added to the known issues relating to both engineering and physical science communities more broadly and published reports on gender and race in the UKRI and EPSRC portfolios. |
| 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 Energy and EDI-related 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. Grant holders will be required to report annually to EPSRC on a range of topics that would include impact related criteria. |

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 | 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 initial review of the proposal will be used to reduce 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. | The call is set to be open for 15.5 weeks to enable the longest possible window for applications to be made. In order for this to be done within the allocated funding period, the applications will be reviewed by expert 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. 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 initial review of the proposal will be used to reduce 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 initial review of the proposal will be used to reduce 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 initial review of the proposal will be used to reduce 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 initial review of the proposal will be used to reduce 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 initial review of the proposal will be used to reduce 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 | Some of the time for the call being open will be in the summer holidays. | The call opens during the Summer Holidays, however, it will close in November to mitigate this fact. It was felt that opening earlier would give maximum notice and planning time. |

**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? | It is possible as noted above, core drivers for this are: caring or parental responsibilities that prevent individuals from applying, disability that effects ability to perform in expected ways at interview, unconscious biases of panel towards the range of protected and unprotected characteristics. | |
| **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. | X | We have taken steps to mitigate the barriers we have identified, but there is no way to mitigate further given the funding time constraints. |

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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:** | **23/06/2021** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

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