

UK Research and Innovation

EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Building Collaboration at the Physics of Life Interface
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	The Building Collaboration at the Physics of Life Interface Call will provide up to £15 million for funding awards of capital and majority resource to enable interdisciplinary physics of life research. The grants supported will be of 36 month duration with expenditure between April 2019 and March 2022, with fixed resource and capital expenditure to be met each year.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	EPSRC is running this call on behalf of UKRI and has consulted at length with senior colleagues at BBSRC and MRC over the scope and timelines for this call. The case for this funding call relied upon significant engagement with the Physics of Life community to determine its scope and best mechanisms for delivery. We have also set up an external expert advisory committee to provide direction on the scope, call mechanism and process to ensure the call is fit for purpose and to obtain community buy-in.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Researchers working at, or who are interested in working at the interface of the physics and life sciences who are eligible to apply are affected by this funding activity. Public Sector Research Establishment staff are also eligible to apply and are therefore stakeholders.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	A programme management board for this investment, comprised of UKRI participants will oversee the delivery of the call and all monitoring activities. We have also put in place an external advisory committee comprised of stakeholders from across the physics, health and life sciences to monitor and review the impact of this activity and to provide direction for any future activities.

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious [RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) to outline our collective aspirations for working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. 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.

- Offer support available for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#)
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities
- Ensure attendees have an opportunity to raise any specific requirements in advance
- Support flexible working of stakeholders
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Provide unconscious Bias training for EPSRC staff 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	Impact on individuals with learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia) due to the speed at which the call must be delivered and the short deadlines for reviewing materials related to the call.	The length of time that the call is open for applicants to apply has been increased to 9 weeks, which is above the recommended duration. This has been maximised despite our condensed timelines for delivering this call to ensure applicants have as long as possible to review the call document and plan their submission. Internal timelines have been reduced to ensure the applicants have more time to apply.
Gender reassignment	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative impact	Individuals on parental leave whilst the call is open and in the duration of the grant	The funding will be made as personal awards to teams of individuals. Individuals on parental leave may not have the opportunity to apply. We envisage that proposals will each have a number of investigators and so we encourage applicants to involve colleagues who are not available during the application window, but can participate in the later years of the work plan. Grant recipients will be encouraged to dedicate some time within the project to encouraging new collaborations beyond the grant, which may be

			of benefit to individuals who were not available during the application window.
Race	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A
Religion or belief	Potentially negative impact	The call coincides with a religious holiday	The application window has been increased by three weeks since it will be open over the Christmas holidays.
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A
Sex (gender)	No known negative impact	N/A	Care has been taken to ensure that the language used within the call document is inclusive.
Age	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	Potentially negative impacts	Individuals with caring responsibilities, part time working patterns as well as all potential applicants. Grants funded under this call may only be extended under exceptional circumstances (e.g. parental leave) since there is a fixed window for expenditure.	EPSRC recognises that this call is being delivered at short notice and is opening over the Christmas holidays and so efforts have been taken to minimise the impact on potential applicants to this call as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced notification of the call on the EPSRC, BBSRC and MRC websites • Since there is no right to reply nor postal peer review stage due to the short timescales for the delivery of this call, applicants will receive feedback on their proposal from the expert peer review panel • Inclusion of joint co-Principle Investigators which will minimise the burden of workload on one individual • Provision of additional EPSRC resource to answer queries from potential applicants • Reduction of internal timescales and service level agreements to ensure the call is open for as long as possible to benefit applicants

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Mitigations have been put in place to limit the impact of the call opening over Christmas on all applicants. Suitable applicants may be on maternity, paternity or pregnancy-related or religious leave during the call period. Applicants are encouraged to involve colleagues who are not available during the application window, but can participate in the later years of the workplan.	
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	✓	Changes have been made to the process and delivery of the call as stated above, therefore the call is ready to proceed.
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
Date completed:	4/12/2018
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Kate Bowman and Luke Boldock	25/11/2018	1.0	Creation of document
Kate Bowman and Luke Boldock	4/12/2018	1.1	Feedback incorporated from the Equality and Diversity team