**Towards a circular bioeconomy for technology-relevant metals and textiles**

**Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | ***Towards a circular bioeconomy for technology-relevant metals and textiles***  **A combined call of the following:**   * **Textile manufacturing and recycling** * **Recovery of technology relevant metals** |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | **Textile manufacturing and recycling**  We are interested in applications that use biotechnological approaches to develop:   * novel, sustainable, and renewable textile polymers and fibres * sustainable approaches to textile dyeing and finishing * routes to recycle end of life textiles.   **Recovery of technology relevant metals**  We are interested in applications that utilise biotechnology to:   * develop and/or improve precious, base, and rare earth metal recovery from e-waste, mining, battery, and other industrial wastes * enable the development of sustainable routes to produce high value products from recovered metals of significant industrial potential using industrial biotechnology, biorefining, and engineering biology. For example, biometallic catalysts for industrial application. * explore the feasibility of economic scales of operation and understand biogenic metal recycling’s role in the circular economy, including life-cycle assessment consideration.   The call will be launched using the UKRI Je-S, funding application system.  As part of this call, potential applicants will have an opportunity to attend online webinars.  All of these events will be open to all, and all information on the call will be recorded to ensure that nobody is disadvantaged by not being able to attend at specific times.  The assessment and decision-making will be via a panel meeting. We will take steps to ensure this process is fair and robust and that the decisions taken are criterion led.  Panel members and UKRI office staff will be fully briefed on their roles and responsibilities. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | AHRC, EPSRC, NERC, and InnovateUK have been consulted, confirming that the proposed work has been judged as interesting and complementary to theirs, and no overlapping areas were identified. These consultations have highlighted opportunities of future cross-council collaboration. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | Research community, stakeholders, UKRI employees, panel members. |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | The impact of the call and engagement events is the generation of high quality research proposals within the scope of the call. These will be assessed by an independent expert panel.  outcomes of the research will be monitored by biannual reports and via annual science meetings where all the funded projects would meet alongside other funded groups from the wider interdisciplinary research community interested in this area. |

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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** | Potential for negative impact | **For attendees to Panel meetings (if they are in person)**  Attendees with physical disabilities may have difficulties attending where travel is required. Venues may not cater for the needs of disabilities. Attendees with neuro- disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration during long panel assessments. Some may feel excluded as workshops are based on in-person social interactions.  There is always the possibility of unconscious bias in assessment of applications.  **For attendees to Panel meetings and engagement events (virtual)**  Attendees with neuro- disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration during long panel assessments and engagement events. | Information about attendees additional requirements will be collected prior to panel meetings.  **In-person meeting:**  Panel meetings will be held over 2 days to allow for more breaks and less intensive sessions. Also to allow for travel time if meetings held in person.  The venues for panel meetings if in person will be easily accessible from major rail/air links, as well as providing accessibility throughout the venue. We will secure rooms with sufficient space and facilities to make the meeting environment as comfortable as possible. The agendas will have sufficient breaks. A quiet room will be provided for committee members who wish to use this during breaks.  **Virtual meeting:**  Panel meetings will be held over 2 days to allow for more breaks and less intensive sessions.  The agendas will have sufficient breaks to allow for Zoom fatigue and regular breaks from screen time.  The panel will be made aware of Zoom fatigue and tireness at the beginning of the meeting and will be reminded to inform the office if breaks are needed to aid concentration.  We will ensure that all information is available to everyone who may need it, so that those unable to attend events are not disadvantaged.  We will ensure that the selection criteria used are objective, transparent and robust. We will remind all assessors about not bringing in personal biases, and provide briefing in objective decision making. |
| **Gender reassignment** | Neutral |  |  |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | Neutral |  |  |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potential for negative impact | Travel to the panel meetings (if they are in person) may exclude those who have childcare responsibilities or pregnant women who might require additional care. | The panel meetings will have adequate breaks built into the agenda. Rooms will be made as comfortable as possible for pregnant attendees.  All engagement events/ activities will be made available to allow access to fit around people’s caring responsibilities.  Venues for panel meetings (if in person) will be looked for which have access to and provide childcare services, if requested. We will offer to reimburse any additional childcare costs incurred for panel members.  Individuals will be encouraged to contact staff to discuss the support available prior to panels. |
| **Race** | Potential for negative impact | Risk of unconscious biases in selection of participants.  Participants for whom English is their second language may be negatively impacted. | We will ensure that the selection criteria used are objective, transparent and robust. We will remind all assessors about not bringing in personal biases, and provide briefing in objective decision making.  The presentation materials, funding call, eligibility criteria, call guidance and assessment process will be written to minimise subjectivity using the principles of plain English.  Presentations will all come with transcripts and will be available to watch back.  During the panel meeting, applications will be referred to by number rather than by title and surname to reduce unconscious bias. |
| **Religion or belief** | Potential for negative impact | Specific dietary preferences and requirement for time and space to pray.  Organising meetings and events that take place during religious observances may prevent participation. | These would be catered for as required.  Religious observances will be taken into account when timetabling activities. A quiet room will be made available for prayer. |
| **Sexual orientation** | Neutral |  |  |
| **Sex (gender)** | Potential for negative impact | Risk of unconscious biases in selection of participants for the assessment process.  Women are more likely to have childcare or other caring responsibilities than men, and therefore may not be able to travel to attend panel meetings. | We will ensure that the selection criteria used are robust and minimise subjectivity. We will remind all members of the selection panel about unconscious bias and provide training as required, to ensure they make a conscious effort to remove bias from their decision making.  We will ensure that the Panel is gender balanced.  We will ensure all panel members have the opportunity to contribute equally through effective meeting management.  Any venues for in-person meetings will be easily accessible to main rail/air links.  BBSRC will pay the cost of  additional caring responsibilities  incurred while on -BBSRC  business.  We will ensure the Secretariat briefs the Chairing team so they can facilitate discussions around these differences in order to maintain a calm and safe environment within which panel members can confidently contribute their views and/or concerns. |
| **Age** | Potential for negative impact | Older researchers are those most likely to hold senior positions with pre-established industrial/ civil society/ government links. | Applications are encouraged from applicants from diverse backgrounds and all career stages.  The panel and the webinars will be open to all. |

**Evaluation:**

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| **Question** | **Explanation / justification** | |
| Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | While the funding opportunity has been designed within given confines to maximise the application period, there is a there is a risk that individuals with caring responsibilities could experience differential pressures for submitting applications due to a small overlap with school summer holidays.  Risk that individuals with caring responsibilities could experience differential pressures for preparing for the panel, considering the overlap with school summer holidays. | |
| **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** | This activity will include mitigating actions to attempt to eliminate bias. |

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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:** | **April 2022** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

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| **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
| 26th May 2022 | 1 |  |