**Partnerships for crop pest and diseases**

**Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Partnerships for Crop Pest and Diseases  (Launch webinar, application process and peer review panel) |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | This proposal presents a £2m BBSRC-led Strategic CR&D investment to address research questions about crop pests and diseases that have been identified by farmers and growers as a significant threat to UK production. The scope of the proposed initiative and a list of pest and disease species were developed in consultation with industry. The initiative is structured to enable a rapid response to urgent industry need, either to address crop pests and diseases that are causing problems this season, or to species which farmers and growers consider to be highly-likely to emerge as a threat soon, and where there is subsequently an urgent need to initiate research, so that sustainable control options are available in a timely manner. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | BBSRC has undertaken a number of assurance processes to ensure relevance to the community.  A pilot scheme was run in 2019 to test an approach to initiating early-stage activity that would catalyse research and innovation for crop pests and diseases that present a significant and immediate threat to UK crop production. The pilot scheme was well-received by the community and generated positive feedback.  The BBSRC-supported Plant Science Strategy (March 2021) strongly endorsed increasing support for this strategic area as part of the ten-year roadmap for UK plant science (2021-2031).  Interviews were undertaken in March 2022 to explore the options analysis and the details of the preferred option. All stakeholders consulted were provided with a copy of the scope, including the pest and disease targets, for comment.  Consultation with the BBSRC EDI team to identify barriers to participation. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | Short term - Panel members and applicants to the funding call, reviewers, BBSRC/UKRI staff.  Long-term – Public, Businesses, Policymakers, NGOs, farmers, project staff and students. |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | Research outcomes and impacts will be collected through ResearchFish and gathered by the CP&D co-ordination team within BBSRC.  An independent evaluation of the initiative may be commissioned after all awards are completed  The protected characteristics voluntarily submitted by applicants during the submission process will be monitored. |

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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 | 1. (Launch event) potential difficulties understanding discussion for those with hearing/visual impairment.   2. (Panel/comms) potential difficulties with concentration for attendees with neuro-disabilities. | All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support. BBSRC will make reasonable adjustments, where possible, to support individual needs.  We recognise that disability has a diverse spectrum, and provide the following as examples of reasonable adjustments that can be made.  1. Meeting will be held online via Zoom (limiting venue-based accessibility issues.) 2. Closed captioning (cc) can be arranged for hearing impaired panel members. Additional support can be provided to visually impaired panel members upon request – including appropriate use of colour/text size in all guidance documents/ presentations. 3. BBSRC will ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the any proposed activity, including the launch event, collaboration event and panel meetings. Supporting communications will be recorded and/or shared online, with capacity to share modified versions for specific needs at request (cc/changed colour/text size)  4. Alternatively, BBSRC will provide a printed version of documentation/ guidance to anyone who is unable to view/complete it online. |
| **Gender reassignment** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Pregnancy, maternity/paternity, parenting and childcare responsibilities** | Potentially negative | 1. (Launch event) potential difficulties attending launch event  2. (Panel) potential difficulties in managing early childcare responsibilities during October Panel meeting. School half term falls 24th – 28th October  3. (Applicants) potential difficulties in preparing application within the eight-week application period The call closes on August 3rd – 3 working days into national school summer holidays.  4. Applicants may feel uncomfortable applying knowing that they are going on parental leave soon. | 1. Launch event will be held online via Zoom (limiting venue-based accessibility issues.)  2.a We will ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the launch event and panel meetings, and can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to childcare responsibilities.  2.b Financial support will be available to support childcare costs on the day of the panel meeting upon request  3. Within the confines of the budget spend requirements, the funding opportunity has been designed to allow the maximum possible time application window.  4. UKRI policy ensures that grant extensions, and movement of start dates are available to individuals who have been on and/or are going on maternity/parental leave. |
| **Race** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Religion or belief** | Potentially negative | Key dates for the call coincide with some religious (and public) holidays.  The following holidays/observances fall whilst the call is open:  6 Jun, Monday  Whit Monday  Observance, Christian  12 Jun, Sunday  Trinity Sunday  Observance, Christian  16 Jun, Thursday  Corpus Christi  Observance, Christian  9-13Jul,  Eid al-Adha,  Muslim  12 Jul, Tuesday  Battle of the Boyne  Local Bank Holiday  NIR  29 Jul – 28 Aug,  Muharram/Islamic New Year  Muslim    1 Aug, Monday  Summer Bank Holiday  Common Local Holiday  Scotland  The following religious holidays/observances fall during the period when assessment panels are due to be held:  1 Nov Tuesday  All Saints' Day  Observance, Christian  2 Nov Wednesday  All Souls' Day  Observance, Christian | Care has been taken to avoid cultural and religious holidays as best as possible,with sufficient time being given around these dates where they cannot be avoided. |
| **Sexual orientation** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Sex (gender)** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Age** | No known negative impact |  |  |

**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? | Some groups may be disadvantaged but mitigations have been put in place. Support will be provided to individuals where they are identified. | |
| **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. We have also discussed the potential barriers with Equality, Diversity and Inclusions teams within BBSRC to understand potential barriers before designing the processes. |

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

**Change log**

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