Frequently Asked Questions – Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Caucus Call

Introduction

This document contains responses to questions about the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Caucus call that were submitted during an applicant webinar held on 4th July 2022 and via the mailbox for this opportunity. Please note that we have grouped questions by theme rather than listed them in the order in which we they were received. We have also paraphrased some questions in instances where we received multiple questions on precisely the same topic, to remove personal information, and to aid clarity for readers.

Themes

Leadership team requirements

Q: Can you offer any guidance on the size of the leadership team we should be aiming for?

A: We recognise that there are multiple ways applicants may want to structure the leadership team. We want to give principal investigators (or co-principal investigators) as much flexibility as possible in deciding how they will fulfil the aims of the call, so we have not issued guidance on the size of the leadership team.

Q. Can we trial different management structures or joint leadership arrangements in this initiative?

A: Yes. Each bid needs a named principal investigator (or two co-principal investigators working on a job-share basis). But applicants have the flexibility to decide how they want to structure the leadership team and manage the wider network of Caucus members. Applicants should set out how their proposed approach meets the requirements of the call in their case for support.

Q: Can you have more than two co-principal investigators? What is the intended division of roles between co-principal investigators and other co-investigators?

A: Each bid requires one named principal investigator or two co-principal investigators that work together in a job-share arrangement. There is no cap on the number of co-investigators. Applicants can decide how they want to structure and run the leadership team. The case for support should set out the roles of different leadership team members. The division of roles is a decision for applicants and should be set out in the case for support.

Q: Would it be appropriate and acceptable for a blend of named and unnamed members to be outlined in the application since an open recruitment process would be more in line with equal opportunities?

A: Yes. While principal investigators and co-investigators should be named in bids, applicants are welcome to request additional funding for posts that will be recruited for once the grant commences. For example, this could include post-doctoral research positions and the project manager role.

Q: Is there a minimum time commitment expected of the principal investigators and co-investigators?

A: There is no minimum time commitment in the call specification. However, applicants must demonstrate that they can fulfil the aims of the call. This is a major grant, and we would expect applicants to devote sufficient time to deliver the activities set out in their bids.

Q: Should applications be submitted from one institution or multiple institutions?

A: A single research organisation must act as the lead for the purposes of submitting and administering the grant. But we welcome applications from leadership teams that include researchers and practitioners from multiple institutions. Applicants need to ensure the composition of the leadership team meets the requirements set out in the call specification.

Q: Not all UKRI research councils are listed as funders for this call. Does this have any implications in terms of what is required, such as the disciplines covered in the leadership team or the research projects the Caucus pursues?

A: While we have brought together a consortium of funders to enable this initiative, the EDI Caucus is intended for the benefit of the whole research and innovation system. The leadership team should be willing and able to draw on relevant research from a broad range of research fields, regardless of what organisation has funded it, and work across disciplines to promote and facilitate interdisciplinary approaches to research on EDI. The skills and expertise expected of the leadership team are set out in the call and there are no requirements for specific disciplines to be represented. Equally there are no requirements for specific research projects or priorities to be pursued. These can be discussed with funders in the co-design phase.

Q: The call allows for postdoctoral research assistance. Can we budget for more than one postdoctoral researcher? If so, can they be at different organisations? Does funding for postdoctoral research assistance need to come from the flexible fund?

A: There is no restriction, beyond available funds, on the number of postdoctoral researchers that can be included in applications and these roles can be hosted at different organisations. Funding for postdoctoral research assistance should be costed separately to the flexible commissioning fund. The flexible commissioning fund is to be used for commissioning research from the wider network of

Caucus members (see the 'flexible commissioning fund' section later in this document for more details).

Q: Can we request funding for administrative support beyond the project manager role?

A: Yes. Applicants can budget for administrative support. Please make sure that you have provided justification for any additional roles or administrative support in the Justification of Resources document.

Q: If co-principal investigators are from different institutions, how does this affect the allocation of funding for administration?

A: Applicants should decide how they will structure their leadership team and which institution(s) will host administrative support roles. Your research office should be able to provide advice on costings.

Q: The potential brief is extremely wide, covering many different aspects of research processes across many types of organisations. Are you looking to fund a single leadership team that can cover all areas, or multiple leadership teams that each tackle specialised processes/institutions?

A: This research call is for a single leadership team, although the precise composition and structure of that team is a matter for applicants. The leadership team is also able to recruit a diverse range of researchers and practitioners as Caucus members that can contribute to the work of the Caucus and bring diverse insights and experiences. We ask that applicants set out in their bids which key topics and priority evidence gaps could be areas of potential focus in year one. We would not expect the programme of work pursued by the Caucus to cover the full breadth of EDI issues across the research and innovation landscape. Prioritisation will be necessary.

Q: Will the funders be comfortable with Early Career Researchers leading the EDI Caucus?

A: Yes. We welcome applications from Early Career Researchers applying in a principal investigator or co-principal investigator capacity. Applicants will need to demonstrate how they and their wider team meet the leadership team requirements set out in the call.

Q: Are you looking for a leadership team with substantial lived experience, or whose research focus is on EDI generally or EDI in Higher Education?

A: The call specification sets out the requirements for the leadership team. This includes having the skills and expertise to conduct EDI research across the research and innovation system. This could be evidenced in a number of ways. For example, applicants might want to discuss how their research on EDI is relevant to the research and innovation system or applicants might want to highlight relevant research they have conducted on EDI issues in the research and innovation system. While lived experience is not an assessed criteria, we welcome bids from leadership teams that have substantial lived experience and/or can demonstrate how they will meaningfully bring people with lived experience into their programme of work.

Q: If the Innovate UK-ESRC Innovation Caucus work is undertaken by a network of social scientists, is it assumed that the EDI Caucus is similarly a network of social scientists? Is this exclusively a social science project? Or are projects with a wide range of disciplines represented preferred?

A: The EDI Caucus is an interdisciplinary opportunity that should bring together research and researchers from a broad range of disciplines. This funding opportunity is not restricted to social scientists. The Innovation Caucus has a different set of aims and objectives and applicants should refer to the leadership team requirements set out in the EDI Caucus call specification.

Q: How do you intend to address issues of identity taxation for marginalised groups? Do you anticipate that this initiative will provide significant career development opportunities and/or benefits for the leadership team? Might you consider a non-academic lead to minimise the impact of leading this work on the academic careers of researchers in marginalised groups? Would you fund a senior project manager within the leadership team, as well as more junior administrative/comms support?

A: We require applicants to submit a two-page EDI plan that addresses how they will ensure EDI is considered in all aspects of how the caucus operates. This includes the career development of any staff associated with the leadership team to ensure the initiative is career enhancing. We will be looking for evidence of a strong commitment to supporting the development of leadership team members. The funding available allows for applicants to employ support staff. We invite applicants to consider what operational and administrative support they need and include these costs in their applications. Applicants can appoint a senior-level project manager – the call specification places no restrictions on their grade. We require the principal investigator (or one co-principal investigator) to be employed at an institution eligible for UKRI funding. But there is flexibility to have co-investigators and/or one co-principal investigator come from other sectors.

Wider Caucus membership

Q: At what stage should the leadership team recruit the wider network of Caucus members? How many researchers and practitioners should be recruited? What details should be included in the application?

The funded three-month co-design phase for the successful applicant will allow the leadership team time to develop and agree a programme of work with funders and make necessary preparations to recruit the wider network of Caucus members. Decisions on the precise number of network members and the timing of recruitment will be a matter for the leadership team. However, please note that we require applicants to submit an EDI plan that considers how they will recruit Caucus members. This should include a consideration of how to make the process fair, open, and transparent. Applicants are not required to undertake any recruitment activity at the application stage.

Q: Do you anticipate the network of practitioners and researchers being comprised of people whose professional focus is EDI, or of researchers who have deep knowledge of these issues through their personal experience and service work? If the latter, will you fund expenses and time for their participation?

A: The leadership team is required to recruit a network of practitioners and researchers from a range of sectors and disciplines that will enable the Caucus to achieve its aims. The leadership team will need to consider the composition of skills and personal experience needed to achieve this. The leadership team will design and manage the recruitment process and is asked to consider in their bids how they will enable members to play an active role in shaping the programme of work. At least £750,000 must be set aside for projects that enable members to contribute to the work of the Caucus. The leadership team is also able to set aside budget for activities such as meetings and events held with Caucus members, including funding to enable members' participation.

Q: Can the funding cover pay and remuneration for Caucus members' time (e.g. participation in meetings, forums, discussion groups)? I'm thinking of a situation where a Caucus member doesn't do any research but instead has another role/capacity in discussion and shaping the direction of what the Caucus does.

A: The leadership team will manage a flexible commissioning fund to support projects undertaken by Caucus members. These funded projects can cover participants' costs. The leadership team can also consider how they will support Caucus members to contribute to research activities that the leadership team conducts.

Flexible Commissioning Fund

Q: Is the £750,000 we need to budget for the flexible commissioning fund per annum or for the whole three years of the programme?

A: The specified minimum of £750,000 for the flexible commissioning fund covers the entire three years of the research grant. It is not an annual figure.

Q: Is there an upper limit on the flexible commissioning fund (except the overall grant size)?

A: No. There is no upper limit beyond the overall grant size.

Q: Should projects awarded by the flexible commissioning fund be funded at 80% full economic cost like other eligible costs or funded at 100% as an exception? Can a Caucus member's time be bought out to carry out the research?

A: Funding for the flexible commissioning fund should follow UKRI's funding rules and be made at 80% full economic cost. The Research Organisation in receipt of this devolved funding must make

up the remaining 20%. It is not the responsibility of the Research Organisation leading the Caucus to make up the 20% contribution for the commissioning fund. Where non-academic or international organisations are the recipients of a flexible commissioning fund grant, they are eligible for funding at 100% full economic cost. However, the combined costs for applicants eligible for 100% full economic cost should not exceed 30% of the full economic cost of the grant. UKRI funding rules allow for those bidding to undertake projects to cost for their time.

Q: Can we include funds for research projects led by leadership team over and above the £750,000 specified for the flexible fund?

A: Yes. Applicants can set aside budget for research projects that the leadership team will directly undertake. The flexible commissioning fund should be managed separately and awarded to Caucus members for projects that are typically less than £100,000.

Q: Can those named as investigators in the application also apply for funds from the flexible fund?

A: No. The caucus leadership team should manage and use the flexible fund to commission research activities that address priority evidence gaps. It would constitute a conflict of interest for those managing the commissioning fund to also receive awards from it. Applicants are invited to separately include a budget for research activity that the leadership team (including all named investigators) will undertake.

Q: Is there any guidance on the balance between the proportion of the funds for research that can be allocated for the leadership team as opposed to devolved to members?

A: This is a decision for applicants. Applicants can set aside a budget for research projects that the leadership team will directly undertake. These should be separate to the flexible commissioning fund, which should be used to support projects undertaken by network members.

Q. Can you offer guidance on inclusion and diversity within the flexible commissioning fund? How does the setup of the fund embody EDI best practice and aim to reduce the impacts of power/privilege dynamics? Is there scope for this fund to include researchers from non-UK based organisations?

A: The flexible commissioning fund will be managed by the leadership team. Applicants are required to submit an EDI Plan as part of their application, which sets out how they will include equality, diversity and inclusion considerations in all aspects of how the Caucus operates. We will be looking for evidence of a strong commitment to EDI in the design and management of the fund. There is scope to involve community groups, grass roots organisations, and overseas-based researchers in projects supported by the fund.

Q: Is research within the flexible fund expected to cover all protected characteristics equally? If not, will the funders provide any guidance to the Caucus leadership team on how they should prioritise this?

A: The call specification does not specify any topics that the Caucus should address via the flexible commissioning fund. Given the breadth of EDI issues that could be in scope, applicants are asked to identify key topics that could be areas of potential focus for the Caucus in year one. These topics can be discussed with funders during the co-design phase.

Research focus

Q: Who are the intended evidence users?

A: Depending on the topics prioritised by the Caucus, this could include, but is not limited to, practitioners working in research and innovation funding bodies (including the consortium of funders supporting this grant), the innovation-focused business community, higher education institutions, national academies, policymakers, and research and innovation communities overseas.

Q: Can you expand on what you consider to be within the scope of the research and innovation system?

A: It can include any individual, group or institution involved in the funding or delivery of research and innovation. This includes funders (e.g. research councils, foundations, national academies), professional bodies, innovative businesses, higher education institutions, public sector research establishments, and researchers and innovators themselves. While the entire sector is in scope, applicants are invited to suggest areas of focus that they will prioritise in the first year of the grant.

Q: Is the research to be conducted specific to EDI approaches within the UK context or is there scope to extend this research to a global level?

A: We hope that the Caucus will draw on evidence from a wide variety of geographical contexts, both across the UK and overseas. We welcome bids that include international co-investigators, although this is not a requirement. While UKRI and the British Academy are UK-based national funding agencies, we operate within a global research and innovation system that includes collaboration with overseas research and innovation agencies, international funding partnerships, and running international offices.

Q: This call seems to be very much about EDI as linked to the statutory duty/compliance. Is there scope for bringing in thinking about EDI and how it intersects with inequalities?

A: The call specification does not specify any topics of research focus relating to EDI in the research and innovation system. Applicants are invited to set out topics and priority evidence gaps that could be areas of focus in year one.

Q: Is this Caucus limited to EDI issues linked to research communities alone, or can it also include diversity and inclusion considerations of the outputs of research too?

A: The call specification does not specify any topics of research focus. Applicants are invited to propose topics that relate to any aspect of EDI in the research and innovation system.

Q: In terms of what works, surely the only way to find out what works is by making some changes and monitoring their effects, rather than more evidence gathering? Is a methodology of trialling approaches to meaningful and systemic change allowed within this call?

A: The goal is for the EDI Caucus's work to inform actions and influence policymaking. The call specification specifically requires impact evaluation expertise to support the trialling of changes to existing practices and robust impact measurement. We hope applicants will see this call as an exciting opportunity to work directly with funders in trialling changes in how we operate that could improve EDI outcomes. This commitment to experimenting and developing new approaches, and monitoring and evaluating to learn from them, is also embedded in the UKRI draft EDI strategy (please see: https://www.ukri.org/publications/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-draft-for-consultation/ukri-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-draft-for-consultation/). The leadership team also has an important role in effective knowledge exchange. We welcome applications where applicants have considered how they will work with practitioners in the research and innovation system to encourage the take up of evidence on effective practice.

Q: To what extent would funders be willing to make changes to their practices based on Caucus research as a test bed for interventions?

A: We are seeking a leadership team that is willing to collaborate with funders and support the adoption of evidence-based changes to policies and practice. This includes supporting the testing and evaluation of new approaches and translating existing evidence into accessible, actionable guidance.

Q: Is UKRI diversifying its own EDI management team and can the Caucus study this?

A: UKRI's EDI strategy focuses on the organisation's role as a leader, funder, and employer. This includes doing more to attract, support and develop the diversity of people working within the organisation at all levels and across all roles. Depending on the interests of the leadership team, we would welcome opportunities to engage the Caucus in our improvement plans.

Q: Can you please advise on the balance between looking at new evidence collection versus looking at research that already exists to make change?

A: We expect to see a blend of undertaking new research to fill evidence gaps and drawing on existing evidence and making it accessible to practitioners in the research and innovation system to act on. The precise balance is a question for applicants and the focus of the programme of work they propose pursuing. Potential for impact is part of the assessment criteria.

Q: Some of the biggest EDI issues are around access to funding - e.g. the near-lack of UKRI funding awarded to Black researchers. There is evidence from the UK and overseas to indicate that positive action and lottery schemes are effective at overcoming these EDI issues. What are the routes for implementing these kinds of evidenced actions via the Caucus?

A: We hope applicants will see the Caucus as a unique opportunity for researchers and practitioners to support the funders and the wider sector in making changes at every stage of the funding cycle to widen participation. We invite applicants to set out in their bids how they plan to engage core audiences, including funders and the wider research and innovation sector, and the priority areas that could be the focus of activity in the first year of the programme. Potential for impact is part of the assessment criteria.

Q: There is a substantial body of research already on barriers to EDI within the research ecosystem, including many recommendations. Would you welcome a bid focussing on high-TRL/SRL research through implementation, practice, and evaluation rather than basic research?

A: Applicants are invited to consider the balance of activities they wish to pursue to optimise impact. We are also inviting applicants to suggest topics that could be the focus of the EDI Caucus' programme of work in year one. Applicants are welcome to put forward any topic that they consider important to helping achieve the aims of this call.

Q: Some of the critical diversity literature suggests measurement itself can be an EDI issue. Is there scope to be critical of forms of measurement and evaluation that challenge the methodologies and theorisation in EDI research and praxis, for example?

A: We are inviting applicants to suggest topics that could be the focus of the EDI Caucus' programme of work in year one. Applicants are welcome to put forward any topic that they consider important to helping achieve the aims of this call.

Q: The Natural Environment Research Council has recently funded "Making environmental science equal, diverse and inclusive" projects that required actions and reports evidencing their effectiveness. Does the fact that they are not contributing to this Caucus affect implementation of these evidenced actions via the Caucus?

A: We hope the Caucus will draw on and encourage the adoption of relevant research findings from a broad range of sources, regardless of who funded that research.

Q: Does the absence of the Natural Environment Research Council and Medical Research Council say anything about the "research and innovation system" to which we should be speaking?

A: While we have brought together a consortium of funders to enable this initiative, the EDI Caucus is intended for the benefit of the whole research and innovation system. The leadership team should

be willing and able to draw on relevant research from a broad range of research fields, regardless of what organisation has funded it, and work across disciplines to promote and facilitate interdisciplinary approaches to research on EDI. We hope that the Natural Environment Research Council and the Medical Research Council, as well as other parts of UKRI and other funding bodies, will be able to draw on the outputs from the Caucus.

Q: Is three years long enough to set up a trial of new approaches?

A: Applicants are invited to design a programme of activity that is compatible with the timelines of the grant. During the course of the grant, applicants may also pursue additional sources of funding that enable longer-term activity.

Application materials

Q: Why is a workplan being requested at the application stage, if the details of the programme are established during the three-month co-design phase? Is this not something that could be submitted by the successful team as part of the condition of funding?

A: We have asked for a one-page (A4) workplan. This gives applicants an opportunity to indicate their proposed approach to the co-design phase of this grant. For example, applicants may wish to include details of how they will work with funders and understand their evidence needs; what stakeholder engagement they plan to undertake; and their recruitment plans. Applicants are also welcome to include activities they propose undertaking later on in the grant, should they wish.

Q: Can you provide any guidance on producing a narrative CV?

A: UKRI is currently piloting the use of narrative CVs and applicants are welcome to submit narrative CV as an alternative to submitting a traditional CV, should they wish. The narrative CV format enables applicants to evidence a wider range of activities and contributions. The Royal Society has developed a Résumé for Researchers template, which applicants can use as a guide. It includes the following key sections: (1) Personal details; (2) How have you contributed to the generation of knowledge? (3) How have you contributed to the development of individuals? (4) How have you contributed to the wider research community? (5) How have you contributed to broader society? Please see: https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/research-culture/tools-for-support/resume-for-researchers/. An adapted version of the Résumé for Researchers has also been developed by EPSRC: https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/EPSRC-14102021-OpenFellowshipNarrativeCVAndTrackrecord.pdf. Further information on UKRI's piloting of the narrative CV format can be found here: https://www.ukri.org/news/ukri-launches-new-resume-for-research-and-innovation/ and https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-were-improving-your-funding-experience/introducing-a-better-way-for-you-to-evidence-your-contributions

To be consistent with guidance produced by the Royal Society and EPSRC, we will allow a maximum of 4 pages for both narrative CVs and traditional CVs. We will update the call specification to reflect this change.

Q: The call specification asks for key performance indicators (KPIs) and success measures while also requiring co-creation of activities with communities? Can you advise applicants on how to address this requirement?

A: We have asked applicants to put forward initial suggestions for KPIs and success measures. This could relate to their vision for the Caucus, how it will operate, and/or priority topics for the Caucus to address in year one. Once appointed, funders will work with the leadership team to put in place more precise key performance indicators and a methodology for evaluating and tracking impact over time.

Q: Key performance indicators (KPIs) on the Caucus are mentioned, though impact in relation to research funding will depend on funders' implementation of the Caucus' recommendations. Will UKRI and the British Academy also therefore be responsible for delivering some of the KPIs?

A: UKRI and the British Academy will support the leadership team in achieving the aims of the call, including on the delivery of KPIs where funder actions are relevant.

Q: How much detail is needed in the case for support regarding how the research will be conducted? Does the research method for obtaining evidence for all separate areas of the work need to be stated?

A: The call specification asks for applicants to identify key topics and priority evidence gaps that could be areas of potential focus in year one. A more detailed work programme can be developed at the start of the grant when the leadership team has funding for a three-month co-design phase.

Assessment process

Q: How many applications in total will be funded?

A: One. However, for applicants that are not successful in the first phase (leadership team application), there will be a second opportunity for researchers and practitioners to apply to join the wider network of members who will make up the Caucus. This opportunity will be advertised next year, led by the leadership team.

Q: Are evaluation criteria pretty much as they would be for responsive mode grants?

A: The criteria that will be used to assess applications is published in the call specification. Please refer to the 'how we will assess your application' section to access full details.

Q: Who will be interviewed? The entire team, or just the (co-) investigators?

A: We will invite the Principal Investigator (or co-Principal Investigators) to the interview and share guidance on the number of additional leadership team members or partners they may wish to invite. Not all co-investigators have to be available for the interview.

Q: How has the assessment process been designed in terms of ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion?

A: The assessment process is designed with EDI considerations as a top priority. This includes ensuring a diverse panel in terms of characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, career stage, geography, and institutions. Panel members will be offered a financial stipend in addition to expenses to ensure financial constraints are not a barrier to participation. All members of the panel will be offered the same stipend. In addition, panel members and shortlisted applicants can claim for costs to cover additional care requirements (e.g. additional hours of childcare due to a meeting taking place outside a panel members' normal working hours). The team administering the EDI Caucus call will liaise with panel members and shortlisted applicants to ascertain whether any adjustments are needed to enable them to participate in the assessment process. Depending on the needs identified, this could include changing the time of a meeting to accommodate working patterns or increasing the number of scheduled breaks to accommodate medical conditions.

Q: In your peer review panel, do you have plans to mandate EDI by having multiple Black people (academic and non-academic) on the panel? Similarly, for marginalised groups - LGBTQ representation?

Diverse panel membership is a priority, particularly ensuring there is strong representation from under-represented and marginalised groups. While we do not collect information on all characteristics, this does include ensuring diversity in terms of ethnicity (including Black panel members) and gender as well as members at different career stages and from different institutions and parts of the UK. It also includes having academic and non-academic experts and evidence users as panel members. Please see the response to the previous question for more information on how EDI is being embedded into the assessment process.

Q: What are your plans to avoid conflicts of interest? Can members of your peer review panel also submit proposals for consideration?

A: Members of the panel cannot be named principal investigators or co-investigators on bids to avoid conflicts of interest. In addition, panel members must declare any potential conflicts of interest. The team administering this research call will use published conflict of interest guidance for peer reviewers (https://www.ukri.org/publications/conflicts-of-interest-guidance-for-esrc-peer-reviewers/) when handling and assessing these declarations.

Q. We understand that the leadership team investigators and staff cannot apply to the flexible commissioning fund as this would constitute a conflict of interest. Can others based at the same organisations, who are not part of the leadership team, apply or would that be considered a conflict of interest too?

A: Funders will be able to provide the leadership team with support and guidance on managing potential or perceived conflicts of interest in cases where bids to the flexible commissioning fund are received from applicants employed at the same institution as a member of the leadership team. Employment at the same institution as a leadership team member would not exclude any potential applicant from applying to the fund, but measures will need to be put in place to ensure the decision-

making process is fair and transparent. This would likely include finding alternative assessors to consider applications and ensuring that conflicted leadership team members are not involved in decision making.

Q: What framework is in place to ensure that the EDI Caucus leadership team are diverse and representative in the first place?

A: Applications will be assessed against the criteria set out in the call specification. This includes a requirement for applicants to set out 'plans to ensure EDI is considered in all aspects of how the caucus operates'. EDI plans should take account of how the leadership team functions as well as the recruitment process for Caucus members.

Q: There is often a tension between the teams that have credibility with funders and teams that have credibility with the underserved communities that such initiatives need to co-create with in order to be successful. How is UKRI seeking to achieve balance in this regard?

A: Applications will be assessed against the criteria set out in the call specification. This includes a requirement for applicants to set out 'plans to ensure EDI is considered in all aspects of how the caucus operates'. Applicants must submit an EDI plan as part of their bid, which details their approach. It will be essential for the leadership team to demonstrate how underserved communities will be fully engaged in the design and delivery of their programme of work. The assessment process will also involve a diverse panel that includes representation from underserved communities.

Q: Will teams be assessed on their lived experience of barriers and exclusion, as well as insights on how these can be addressed?

A: The call specification sets out the criteria which will be used to assess applications. Lived experience is not a formal part of the assessment criteria, but we welcome applicants setting out how they will make use of their own lived experience or bring lived experience into their programme of work. The call specification invites applicants to suggest key topics they could address in the first year of the programme.

Q: What might be considered as over-ambitious? Will the 3-month co-design phase be part of the reshaping of / whittling down of the ambitions and design?

A: Applicants should consider issues of feasibility when preparing bids. The three-month co-design period at the start of the grant can be used by the leadership team to refine and develop their programme of work.

Q: In the call there is emphasis on policy making, will the importance of pathways into international, national and organisational policy making as well as funder policy making be recognised?

A: Applicants should set out in their applications how they will engage with core audiences and stakeholders with the aim of influencing policy and practice. Potential for impact is part of the assessment criteria.

About the opportunity - miscellaneous

Q: Is the three-month co-design period part of the overall three-year duration, or is it in addition to it?

A: The initial co-design period is part of the three-year grant. It is not in addition to it.

Q. What do the funders think has worked particularly well about the Innovation Caucus as a model, and why has a Caucus approach been deemed the best approach here, compared to a Network Plus or a Centre?

A: The Innovation Caucus has enabled a broad range of practitioners from different institutions all over the UK and internationally to collaborate. This broad reach is particularly important for an EDI-related initiative as we want a model that is as inclusive as possible and allows a diversity of expertise and insights to be brought together. The Innovation Caucus has also been successful in understanding how to design projects that match the expert capabilities of the Caucus members to policy makers' priorities.

Q: The Innovation Caucus (investment currently funded by Innovate UK and ESRC) is led by a single institution. How does the EDI Caucus intend to be inclusive to all institutions?

A: The Innovation Caucus, funded by Innovate UK and ESRC, is delivered through a broad network of researchers and practitioners. The Innovation Caucus' leadership team has evolved over time, with different configurations of institutions involved at different stages. The larger grant size available for the EDI Caucus gives greater flexibility as to how applicants wish to structure their leadership team and run the Caucus. The EDI Caucus has different aims and objectives to the Innovation Caucus and we would encourage applicants to pay close attention to the requirements of the EDI Caucus call specification. In particular, applicants are required to submit an EDI Plan as part of their bids. This plan should consider how inclusivity (as well as equality and diversity considerations) are factored into all aspects of how the Caucus operates. The assessment criteria includes: 'plans to ensure EDI is considered in all aspects of how the caucus operates'.

Q: Are you expecting universities and partners to also invest in applications with match funding?

A: This research grant is subject to UKRI funding rules, which require research organisations eligible for UKRI funding to contribute 20% of the full economic cost of the grant. There is no requirement for match funding beyond these rules.

Q: Will UKRI be creating any opportunities for interested parties to meet, interact, and build new and diverse teams?

A: We see two aspects to this question. The first is pre-application. We are happy to facilitate connections between interested parties by enabling potential applicants to opt in to having their contact information and interests shared with other interested applicants. For data protection reasons, we can only do this on an opt-in basis. We will email everyone who registered for the webinar or requested webinar materials to offer this opportunity. You can also request to be included

on this list by emailing EDI-caucus@esrc.ukri.org. The second is post-application. After the leadership team is appointed and begins their grant, they will need to run a process to recruit a diverse network of researchers and practitioners to join the Caucus. There are a range of outreach activities that they may want to undertake as part of this process. The funders will be on hand to advise and support.

Q: As part of the co-design phase, will UKRI and the British Academy look to introduce ideas pulled together from unsuccessful bids?

A: We hope that unsuccessful applicants would consider sharing their ideas with the leadership team by applying to be part of the Caucus membership and contributing to the Caucus' programme of work. The leadership team's approach to engaging Caucus members and wider stakeholders is something we ask applicants to address in their EDI plan. For data protection reasons, UKRI is not able to pass on details of unsuccessful bids to the appointed leadership team.

Q: Collaboration, participation and co-design are very valuable processes. Is three months long enough? In my experience these processes take longer if done well.

A: The co-design period is intended to provide funding that supports the leadership team in getting set up and developing their programme of work for the first year of the grant in consultation with a variety of stakeholders. There is no time limit to this engagement and co-design and stakeholder engagement should be a continual feature of the team's work programme throughout the three-year grant.

Q: Can the leadership team create a different name for the Caucus or should the 'EDI Caucus' be maintained throughout the lifetime of this grant?

A: We have used the name 'Caucus' to denote an investment model that is also used in other parts of UKRI. However, the successful leadership team is welcome to discuss alternative names with the funders.

Q: Can you provide any more background on how this call relates to other calls and projects awarded by funders in the EDI space?

A: This investment is designed to help the research and innovation system by providing a robust assessment of the existing evidence base on EDI practice and the gaps that need addressing. We have provided links in the 'additional info' section of the call specification to current activities and work on EDI being undertaken by each funder. We do not want to duplicate previous grants but hope that when the programme of work gets underway, research projects funded by other calls – where relevant – will form sources of evidence that the Caucus draws on in its synthesis activity.

Q: Will the Caucus be encouraged to use available mechanisms to address inequalities such as positive action in how they award opportunities? Will UKRI be using any positive action in its own practice for running the call?

A: Applicants are required to submit a two-page EDI plan that addresses how they will embed EDI considerations in all aspects of how the Caucus operates. In running the call, funders have taken positive actions such as explicitly welcoming applications from academics who work part-time, in a job-share, or have flexible working patterns; welcomed co-principal investigator (job-share) arrangements; and sought strong representation from under-represented communities on the assessment panel.

Q: How does the Caucus approach fit into other initiatives particularly the government's People and Culture Strategy, or fit the draft UKRI EDI strategy that was recently published?

A: The government's Research and Development People and Culture Strategy 2021 sets out the importance of growing and diversifying the research and development workforce to achieve the UK's target of spending 2.4% of GDP on R&D by 2027. This involves recruiting and retaining talent of all backgrounds, ages, and career stages. Offering an inclusive and welcoming research culture is an essential part of this, ensuring that a diversity of people and ideas can thrive in a dynamic, productive and sustainable research and innovation system. The Caucus is intended to support these goals, providing evidence and enabling individuals and organisations in the research and innovation sector to act on that evidence.

The UKRI EDI strategy provides a framework underpinning the EDI plans being developed by each research council within UKRI. A cornerstone of the UKRI EDI strategy is to ensure that the changes that UKRI makes are informed by evidence and data. The EDI Caucus is a core part of the EDI plans that AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, and Innovate UK are due to publish later this year. The Caucus is intended to inform the work of funders, including the British Academy. But we also hope it will benefit other parts of UKRI (corporate centre and other councils), and other funding bodies and institutions in the wider research and innovation sector.

Q: What is the rationale for allowing indirect/estates costs?

A: This grant is subject to standard UKRI full economic costing rules, which allow applicants to include estate and indirect costs.

Q: In designing this call, what learning (e.g. strengths and weaknesses) has there been from how the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) Inclusion Matters projects ran and interacted with EPSRC?

A: The Inclusion Matters programme, run by EPSRC, has been invaluable in providing a breadth of knowledge to shape the development of EDI activities within EPSRC as well as informing the development of EPSRC's EDI strategy. Inclusion Matters is a collection of research grants so has a different emphasis to the EDI Caucus, but there are important areas of overlap, such as co-creation with the community. Learnings from the Inclusion Matters call have been shared with colleagues involved in the EDI Caucus call. EPSRC plans to share outputs from the Inclusion Matters call later this year.

Delivery phase/Future of EDI Caucus

Q: As this is part of the funders' portfolio of research investments, will it be managed by research funding teams or EDI teams? If the research teams, then how will the EDI teams engage?

A: The Caucus will be jointly managed by staff in research and EDI roles.

Q: On governance, the call sets out that funders will be involved in the management and co-design of the programme of work. What will UKRI and British Academy's objectives be in this engagement? How do you plan to ensure the integrity of research, when holding simultaneously the roles of research subject, user, designer, funder, and manager?

A: As funders, we have a track record of commissioning investments where we also expect to use research findings to inform the design of our strategies and practice. We will put clear governance and investment management processes in place to manage the grant, administered by investment managers. There will also be opportunities for the leadership team to work with UKRI and British Academy staff holding EDI and strategic research roles and collaborate on projects. Precise ways of working, roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined at the outset of any such activity. There may also likely be a broad range of projects that the leadership team wish to pursue in which the funders are not involved.

Q: Given there are six funders, each of which is interested in evidence gaps in their own areas, how will tensions be managed?

A: The funders look forward to engaging the successful leadership team in establishing their programme of work. The peer review assessment panel will have selected the leadership team in part because of their suggested areas of focus and approach to engaging core audiences. The funders expect to be guided by the leadership team, while also contributing ideas and providing support. The leadership team will also be supported by an advisory group made of academics, practitioners and representatives from the research and innovation sector. There are a vast array of EDI issues that are relevant to all funders. We also recognise that there are some evidence gaps that will be more important to some funders or other institutions and practitioners in the research and innovation system. Funders will operate on a majority vote basis when making decisions if necessary.

Q: The briefings and information developed by the Caucus is likely to include information about UKRI and the British Academy, some of which may be negative. Will UKRI or British Academy place any restrictions on the Caucus' ability to share its findings and briefings publicly? To what extent will the Non-Disclosure Agreement for data and meetings mentioned in the background information section impinge on the Caucus' ability to be transparent?

A: All research supported by this investment will be subject to the usual UKRI terms and conditions for research grants with respect to intellectual property and publication. Please see: https://www.ukri.org/publications/terms-and-conditions-for-research-grants/. This investment is being funded to build the evidence base on the effectiveness of different approaches to supporting equality, diversity, and inclusion, and to enable practitioners in the research and innovation system to act on that evidence. We strongly support the publication of research findings that shed light on ineffective practice in order to catalyse change. There could be collaborative projects involving the funders and leadership team where a non-disclosure agreement is needed to enable access to sensitive information, such as data held by the funders. This can be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Q: How will the funders ensure that the Caucus will work as conduits rather than gatekeepers of the wider research ecosystem, particularly of marginalised voices?

A: Applicants should set out in their case for support how they will engage core audiences; enable a diverse network of researchers and practitioners to engage in the Caucus' programme of work; and inform policy and practice in the research and innovation system through proactive engagement. This is part of the assessment criteria.

Q: In my experience of working on UK-funded EDI related studies/research, references to concepts such as critical race theory, decolonialisation, and anti-racism has been watered-down due to political tensions. Will there be safeguards in place to ensure that these themes can be explored without vested interests from higher powers watering down these concepts?

A: All research supported by this investment will be subject to the usual UKRI terms and conditions for research grants with respect to intellectual property and publication. Please see: https://www.ukri.org/publications/terms-and-conditions-for-research-grants/.

Q: Where do the funders want the Caucus to be in 10 years?

A: We hope that the outputs from the Caucus will be integrated into standard practice across the sector. We hope that as funders we will have a sound body of evidence at our disposal on the effectiveness – and ineffectiveness – of different approaches to supporting equality, diversity, and inclusion. We hope that the Caucus will ensure the trialling and evaluation of new EDI-improvement practices becomes routine among major public funders of research and innovation. And above all

else, we hope the practices that the Caucus will have informed and helped the sector to adopt will have led to a more welcoming, diverse and inclusive research and innovation system – where a diversity of ideas thrive and where we see dramatically reduced inequalities and improved outcomes for people from all backgrounds, at all career stages, and in all locations around the country.

Q: Will funding for the EDI Caucus be renewed or what is envisaged going forward?

A: The funders will work with the leadership team to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this investment model in supporting EDI research and improvements in practice. No decisions on future funding have been made at this stage.