

Equality Impact Assessment: 2022 artificial intelligence in the biosciences community network funding opportunity

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>2022 artificial intelligence in the biosciences community network funding opportunity</p>
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>The aim of the funding opportunity is to establish an interdisciplinary community network in support of researchers working in the fields of artificial intelligence and bioscience. The network is expected to facilitate collaborations across disciplines, increase awareness and understanding of the potential of the AI/bioscience cross-section, and create a stronger community profile for this emerging field.</p> <p>The call has an indicative budget of £1 million, and it is anticipated that 1 award will be made.</p> <p>The commissioning approach is via an open community network event combined with a call. The process consists of three stages - a virtual webinar, a community workshop and an application stage (complete with interview).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The virtual webinar will highlight funding opportunity to relevant stakeholders, outlining and informing the following stages of the process as relevant. • The open community workshop will be used to bring relevant community representatives together to start shaping one bid / a small number of bids and agree on the best leadership team(s). • Full applications will be peer reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel, including an invitation to interview for the proposed network leadership team. Panel members use their own knowledge and experience to evaluate the proposal against set assessment criteria <p>This EIA covers the engagement, application and assessment process for this funding opportunity.</p>
<p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with a member of UKRI-BBSRC's Equality and Inclusion Policy Group to review the process • Consultation with UKRI-BBSRC Heads of Sectors to gain advice, assess and agree the scheme and associated guidance • Consultation with attendees to understand potential barriers and take action, where possible, to enable attendance and participation • Learning from good practice in objective decision making and interview processes from across UKRI, supported by external independent advice.

4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Attendees of the virtual webinar and the open community workshop, applicants to the network call, panel members, and UKRI-BBSRC employees who are taking part in the assessment process.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>UKRI-BBSRC monitors, analyses and publishes data to better understand the diversity of our applicant and assessor community.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC is proactive in increasing the diversity of our panel members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion.</p> <p>Panel members are asked to inform UKRI-BBSRC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation, and reasonable adjustments will be pursued where possible.</p> <p>Further information: https://www.ukri.org/our-work/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/</p>

There are two aspects to this equality impact assessment:

- Ensuring that the engagement, submission and awarding processes are free from unintentional bias.
- Identifying any potential barriers to attendance and participation in the call and its associated activities.

UKRI-BBSRC is committed to ensuring that the processes for the network funding are open and inclusive. Those engaged in the processes endeavor to conduct each stage in a fair manner and without prejudice or bias.

In line with this we adopt the following principles:

For applicants:

- The call and its associated activities are advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience within the relevant communities
- Participation in the webinar and workshop will be strongly encouraged but not made mandatory, to ensure participation in the funding opportunity is not limited by applicant availability on specific days
- The call text and guidance clearly state the eligibility and assessment criteria and the key dates for applications and panel assessment
- The UKRI-BBSRC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page
- UKRI-BBSRC provides support and advice to applicants both before and after submission, to assist them in the application and assessment process

For assessors (panel members):

- UKRI-BBSRC ensures that the membership of the panel is diverse and is representative of relevant stakeholders and regions
- Everyone involved in the decision-making process will receive training in Unconscious Bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact on their decision-making

- UKRI-BBSRC provides briefing to panel members throughout the assessment process about good practice in objective and safeguarding decision making
- UKRI-BBSRC ensures that the format, duration and location of the assessment meeting and the venue itself (if face-to-face) are conducive to participation by a diverse range of people
- Virtual meetings are arranged using an appropriate platform that can be accessed by all panel members (Teams, Zoom)
- UKRI-BBSRC is committed to enabling participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours
- Panel members are asked to inform UKRI-BBSRC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation

UKRI-BBSRC provides regular training and guidance on new or revised ways of working, such as webinars, induction training, one-to-one training, Zoom/Teams functionality

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	<p>UKRI-BBSRC recognise the broad spectrum of disability and as such appreciate that not every barrier can be anticipated. Some specific examples of barriers and adjustments are provided below.</p> <p>Venues insufficiently catering to the needs of those with physical disabilities.</p> <p>Neurodivergent participants may experience difficulties with concentration or when accessing electronic documentation.</p>	<p>We strongly encourage individuals to communicate their needs and endeavour to make reasonable adjustments on a case-by-case basis where possible.</p> <p>Ensure that venues are chosen with accessibility needs in mind and consider the use of a virtual format for the community workshop and the panel meeting.</p> <p>Ensure all activities including provision of documentation are arranged with accessibility considerations in mind.</p>

Gender reassignment	No known negative impact		
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		
Pregnancy and parental / caring responsibilities	Potential for negative impact	Panel members and interview candidates who are pregnant/ on parental leave or have child or other caring responsibilities may be discouraged from participating	<p>UKRI-BBSRC consults with all participants to understand and cater for their requirements for participation.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are taken into account where possible when timetabling the activities for this call.</p> <p>Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any parental / caring responsibilities.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional childcare / caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business.</p> <p>Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours.</p> <p>The use of a virtual workshop and panel meeting will be considered. In the event of a physical workshop/panel meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a general principle, venues are easily accessible to main rail/air links and easy to move around. • Meeting rooms are comfortable, and meetings are timetabled to allow for adequate breaks.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UKRI-BBSRC aims to ensure that the venue provides childcare services if requested.
		Career breaks in applicant track records due to parental leave or caring responsibilities may be seen as negative by the panel	Guidance is provided to the panel to ensure appropriate assessment of applicant track record without bias against career breaks due to parental leave/caring responsibilities.
Race	No known negative impact		
Religion or belief	Potential for negative impact	There is potential for overlap of activity dates with religious observances.	<p>UKRI-BBSRC ensures that religious observances are taken into account as much as possible when timetabling major activities.</p> <p>When applicable, UKRI-BBSRC ensures that the venue caters for all dietary requirements.</p>
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact		
Sex/gender	No known negative impact		
Age	No known negative impact		

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	<p>Potential for discrimination or negative impact has been assessed and actions to address negative impacts are being implemented</p> <p>The call assessment and monitoring processes will be managed in strict accordance with UKRI's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.</p>	
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	X	Possible barriers have been identified and activities have been adapted as far as possible. BBSRC welcome engagement from the affected community to understand further barriers and will make reasonable adjustments where possible.
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/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	15 August 2022
Review date (if applicable):	n/a

Version history

Name	Version	Date	Change
Daniela Hensen	1.0	15 August 2022	