



Engineering and
Physical Sciences
Research Council

EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Quantum Technology Call for Quantum Sensors for Environmental Sciences
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>This call aims to establish the UK at the forefront of world-leading collaborative ventures in key emerging areas of Quantum Technology by through research projects using Quantum Sensors to transform Environmental Science</p> <p>£3,000,000 is available to fund research projects of between 18- and 36-months' duration.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Alignment with National Quantum Technology Programme strategy, consultation within the EPSRC Quantum Technology team, consultation with the NQTP Strategic Advisory Board, consultation with NERC Digital Environment team, research community from UK QT Sensors and Timing Hub and British Geological Survey.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	EPSRC Quantum Technology research community and NERC Environmental research community.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>There will be normal reporting requirements as on standard EPSRC proposals. There are no plans for specific follow-on funding after this call, but the theme strategy may evolve in response to developments in the QT landscape (either as a result of this call or due to circumstances outside of it).</p> <p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed.</p>

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. 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. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.

- All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#).
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
- Support and encourage panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.
- Support flexible working of stakeholders.
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavor to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes 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	Potential Negative Impact	<p>For applicants – all information provided is in a written format.</p> <p>International travel can represent a barrier for those with disabilities.</p> <p>There may be differences in accessibility standards and provision in international countries.</p>	<p>Application form produced in black and white and in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to take advantage of available software to facilitate virtual networking, workshops and visits. Part-time network coordinators can be costed towards the grant to further enable this.</p> <p>Highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.</p>
Gender reassignment	Potential negative impact	Gender specific language within communications.	Gender neutral language will be used throughout call documentation.

		Depending on the country there may be travel restrictions for transgender travellers.	We will encourage applicant to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested. There are no requirements within the call to collaborate with researchers in particular countries.
Marriage or civil partnership	No known positive or negative impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative impact	<p>Typically, international collaboration requires investigators and staff to travel nationally and internationally, this may impact investigators or staff members who are pregnant or on parental leave.</p> <p>Pregnant women are unable to travel by aeroplane during latter stages of pregnancy.</p> <p>Additional requirements for those with caring responsibilities or pregnancy for application/ peer review/ panel meetings.</p>	<p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>Highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.</p> <p>EPSRC have considered the time frames for this activity and it will remain open for the longest time possible. The call must be conducted in this time. A pre-announcement a few weeks ahead of the call opening will allow even more time for preparation for those who have</p>

			<p>additional caring responsibilities. Additional care requirements could occur if individuals are required to participate in panel meetings on what would normally be a non-working day or work extended hours on a normal working day. It is an individual's responsibility to check with EPSRC and confirm what costs can be reimbursed prior to attendance at a panel. Further details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with caring responsibilities can be found here.</p>
Race	No known positive or negative impact.		
Religion or belief	Potentially negative impact	Participation could be affected by coincidence with religious holidays	<p>EPSRC endeavours to select meeting dates that are cognisant of major holidays. Furthermore, a pre-announcement a few weeks ahead of the call opening will allow even more time for preparation for those who might be affected due to religious observance.</p>
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative impact	Depending on the country there may be travel restrictions for LGBTQ+ people.	<p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be</p>

			requested. There are no requirements within the call to collaborate with researchers in particular countries
Sex (gender)	No known positive or negative impact		
Age	No known positive or negative impact		
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	COVID 19 Pandemic Call opening date	Potential applicants may be limited by other factors, including but not limited to caring responsibilities, quarantining or isolation and shielding, which may limit the time they have to respond to this call The call is scheduled to open in August when many people take leave, especially those caring responsibilities.	A pre-announcement a few weeks ahead of the call opening will allow even more time for preparation for those who might be affected by the pandemic. A pre-announcement released before schools are expected to break for the summer.

Additional comment: EPSRC recognises that we are in an unprecedented situation as a result of COVID-19. There is awareness that this situation is rapidly evolving, and we will do our best to accommodate any changes as they occur.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Several risks have been identified that could potentially have a negative impact on the applicants, however, the proposed mitigating actions have sought to address these to minimise any unfair disadvantage.	
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	✓	Possible risks and biases associated with the call have been identified and mitigation has been put in place. ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the lifetime of the scheme and this EIA will be reviewed accordingly. Proposed mitigating actions have sought to minimise and remove bias 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:	14/06/2022
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Adam Oliver	When published	1	
Adam Oliver	23/06/2022	2	Wording amended to account to make mention of funding opportunity being open for extended period.