



**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

| Question                                                                                                                                  | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <p><b>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</b></p>                                                                     | <p>Early Career Researcher Collaboration Grants for International Development</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</b></p>                                                      | <p>This funding opportunity aims to support early career investigators to initiate or develop new international partnerships to tackle the challenges faced by developing countries.</p> <p>Proposed collaborations may involve international research partners from one or more lower middle income, low income or least developed countries on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Research projects can cover any research area within EPSRC remit. Although the majority of the application should lie within EPSRC remit, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborations with international partners are welcomed.</p> <p>Proposals can request funding to support any EPSRC eligible international collaborative activities, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joint research activities – scoping, feasibility or proof of concept studies.</li> <li>- Travel and networking.</li> <li>- Exchange visits or staff secondments.</li> <li>- Impact-specific activities.</li> </ul> <p>The peer review process involves an intent to submit (via Smart Survey) stage, to check eligibility, ODA compliance and fit to call scope, followed by an expert panel where there will be a right to reply stage. £5 M is available for this funding opportunity.</p> |
| <p><b>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</b></p> | <p>Alignment with EPSRC International Strategy to enable UK researchers to play a significant role in contributing to solving major global challenges and to provide support and facilitation for early career researchers to respond to our strategy.</p> <p>This funding opportunity has been developed with involvement from and in consultation with EPSRC Senior Leadership Board, EPSRC Peer Review Policy Team and EPSRC themes. The EDI and People Team</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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|                                                                                                                                 | <p>were consulted with respect to the New Investigator Award scheme edibility and policy. There has been feedback from various themes SATs and ECFs that this call is of significant interest to the research community.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p>                                                          | <p>This funding opportunity is open to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria of EPSRC New Investigator Award (NIA) scheme. The outcome of the application will not affect the applicants eligibility to apply for the NIA scheme. Co-Is and PDRAs are permitted.</p> <p>Overseas partners at universities, public sector research organisations or publicly funded research institutes can be based in any country outside the UK and are an essential part of the application.</p>                                                                                     |
| <p><b>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p> | <p>Research outcomes will be collected via ResearchFish.</p> <p>Once projects are more established, we will seek feedback from funding recipients on successes and barriers to the activity. We will analyse the call applicant diversity to inform future activities.</p> <p>Applicants will be required to provide a gender equality statement as part of their full proposal submission, along with a management plan that consider the risks around safeguarding.</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)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| <b>Disability</b>              | 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. EPSRC will also be sharing guidance on the call and answering questions in a webinar.</p> <p>Funding opportunity information will highlight that applicants can request resources to enable different approaches to building and sustaining collaborations which reduce the need to travel.</p> <p>UKRI guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling is highlighted in funding opportunity text.</p> |
| <b>Gender reassignment</b>     | Potential negative impact                             | <p>Gender specific language within communications.</p> <p>Depending on the country there may be travel restrictions for transgender travellers</p>                                                                                                             | <p>Gender neutral language will be used throughout call documentation.</p> <p>We will encourage applicant to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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|                                      |                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>There are no requirements within the call to collaborate with researchers in particular countries.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> | No known positive or negative impact |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>       | Potential negative impact            | <p>Travelling nationally or internationally 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/ 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.</p> <p>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</p> |

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|                                                                       |                                       |                                                                                                                                                                            | details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with caring responsibilities can be found <a href="#">here</a> .                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Race</b>                                                           | No known positive or negative impact. |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Religion or belief</b>                                             | Potentially negative impact           | Participation could be affected by coincidence with religious holidays                                                                                                     | EPSRC endeavours to select meeting dates that are cognisant of major holidays.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Sexual orientation</b>                                             | Potential negative impact             | Depending on the country there may be travel restrictions for LGBTQ+ people.                                                                                               | Funding opportunity information will highlight that applicants can request resources to enable different approaches to building and sustaining collaborations which reduce the need to travel.<br>There are no requirements within the funding opportunity to collaborate with researchers in particular countries. |
| <b>Sex (gender)</b>                                                   | No known positive or negative impact  |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Age</b>                                                            | No known positive or negative impact  |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</b> | COVID 19 Pandemic                     | Although we are no longer in lockdowns in the UK, we recognise the impact of the pandemic is being felt differently in other countries, for example travel restrictions or | Funding opportunity information will highlight that applicants can request resources to enable different approaches to building and                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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|  |  | quarantine requirements may be in place. | sustaining collaborations which reduce the need to travel.<br>There are no requirements within the funding opportunity to collaborate with researchers in particular countries. |
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**Evaluation:**

| Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Explanation / justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| 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 address these such that the call is not expected to unfairly disadvantage any applicants.<br>This is also dependent on the focus of the individual activities contained within proposals received. The call document states that applicants should consider both potential positive and negative impacts as required by ODA funding provided by UKRI. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Final Decision:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Tick the relevant box                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Include any explanation / justification required                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will <b>proceed</b> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2. You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 3. You can <b>adapt or change</b> 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.<br>The nature of this funding opportunity means it requires engagement with developing countries, which presents additional barriers that are not within the control of EPSRC. Guidance, monitoring/reporting strategies and additional grant conditions have been included in the call to mitigate against issues arising. |
| 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 <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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| Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required | Yes |
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| (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events: |                   |
| <b>Date completed:</b>                                                                   | <b>26/09/2022</b> |
| <b>Review date (if applicable):</b>                                                      |                   |

#### Change log

| Name        | Date       | Version | Change |
|-------------|------------|---------|--------|
| Ellen Guest | 26/09/2022 | 1       |        |