

EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

| Question | Response |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p> | <p>DHSC Vaccine Manufacturing Hubs call</p> |
| <p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p> | <p>Aim is to fund up to 4 large-scale research hubs to address challenges relating to vaccine delivery or manufacturing that focus primarily on the benefit to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), but also the UK. Majority of the funding is being provided by DHSC (total up to £18M at 100%FEC) with an additional £450K (80%FEC) being offered by EPSRC for a complementary aligned work package focussing on UK benefit.</p> <p>The objectives for the hub(s) are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create and deliver a coherent programme of high quality, multidisciplinary research that addresses the major long term challenges facing vaccine manufacturers, in particular ease, speed and cost of manufacture for vaccines used in LMICs • lead and support the development of major new disruptive technologies in the field of vaccine manufacturing for the benefit of LMICs • develop technologies and systems that allow for a rapid increase and scale-up of vaccines manufacturing in an epidemic or pandemic situation • demonstrate national and international leadership in this area of science, working closely and collaboratively with academic and industrial partners from the UK, other high-income countries and LMICs <p>The peer review stage includes an EOI (Smart survey) followed by full proposals (JeS). The full proposals will be assessed by postal peer review and then an interview panel.</p> |
| <p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</p> | <p>Call guidance including scope of the call, has been developed by EPSRC, with staff from Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and with input from EPSRC Senior Leadership Board (SLB), EPSRC Business Improvement team, EPSRC International team, UKRI grants teams, EPSRC Finance, and EPSRC Data teams.</p> <p>This is the second round of this call (the first having taken place in 2017) aligned to the previous Future Manufacturing Hubs calls and the current Manufacturing Research Hubs for a Sustainable Future call. These funding opportunities were developed in consultation with the Manufacturing the Future Strategic Advisory Team.</p> |
| <p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants to the call • Overseas partners • Research institution staff • Research council staff |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHSC staff • Peer reviewers (postal and panels) • Industry • People living in LMICs |
| 5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event? | <p>Research outcomes will be collected through ResearchFish. EPSRC Portfolio Managers are members of the Hub advisory boards. There will be additional ODA reporting requirements. Applicants will be required to provide a gender equality statement as part of their full proposal submission.</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 | Potentially negative | <p>All information provided is in written format.</p> <p>Travel may be a barrier for any in-person panels</p> | Any reasonable adjustments for specific requirements will be made. This may include the option to attend in person panels virtually, if needed. |

| | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|---|
| | | Potential for unconscious bias | Documents will be produced in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines. Accessibility will be considered when choosing a physical venue for panels. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| Gender reassignment | Potentially negative | Potential for unconscious bias | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| Marriage or civil partnership | None identified | | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. |
| Pregnancy and maternity | Potentially negative | Participation in activity could be restricted by lack of availability due to parental leave/caring responsibilities/ pregnancy Potential for unconscious bias | Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals if required at all stages of the process. Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible. EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these. Panellists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held virtually as far in advance as possible. If this happens, we reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks and technical issues. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | | panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| Race | Potentially negative | Potential for unconscious bias | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| Religion or belief | Potentially negative | | Dates for interviews will be checked and chosen to avoid clashes with major religious events where possible. Breaks can be scheduled to coincide with any prayer times. If panels are held in person, dietary requirements will be catered for and a prayer room available on request. |
| Sexual orientation | None identified | | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed |
| Sex (gender) | Potentially negative | Possibility for unconscious bias | Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings. Efforts will be made to select gender diverse panellists and reviewers. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| Age | Potentially negative | Potential for unconscious bias. | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic) | Caring responsibilities – potentially negative | Panellists and applicants may have reduced availability/flexibility to respond to the opportunity deadlines | Deadlines and dates for panels will be outside of school holidays wherever possible Panellists will be informed in advance if a panel meeting is to be held virtually. Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists as far in |

| | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|---|
| | People living in LMICs | As much of the research funded through this call is ODA-eligible, it will generate benefits for lower- and middle-income countries. | advance as possible. A pre-announcement was published in advance of the full funding opportunity to give additional time. |
|--|------------------------|---|---|

Evaluation:

| Question | Explanation / justification | |
|--|--|--|
| Is it possible the new/proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate against or unfairly disadvantage people? | There is a small potential that some individuals may be disadvantaged; however, mitigating steps will be taken to minimise any impact. With these mitigating steps in place, no significant barriers remain. | |
| 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/against one or more groups. | | |
| 3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias. | | |
| 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. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | There is a small potential that some individuals may be disadvantaged; however, mitigating steps will be taken to minimise any impact. With these mitigating steps in place, no significant barriers remain. |

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 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: | 7.11.2022 |
| Review date (if applicable): | n/a |

Change log

| Name | Date | Version | Change |
|------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|
| Laura Totterdell | 7.11.2022 | 1 | Document created |