



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Leader for research in digital twinning for decarbonising transport
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	The objective is to fund one digital twinning leader for the decarbonisation and improved integration of the UK transport systems, with a total available funding of up to £500,000 for a period of 6 months. The leader is expected to network across all sectors and build an interdisciplinary consortium, who will apply for the upcoming funding opportunity for a new research hub. The leader will establish and lead the new research hub for the Decarbonisation and Integration of the UK Transport Systems if the consortium proposal is successful.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>EPSRC has consulted with government, academia, industry and cross-URKI stakeholders throughout the development of this programme, including BEIS and DfT.</p> <p>EPSRC will continue to join up this programme with other relevant investments and planned activities.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals eligible to apply for EPSRC funding are scientific professionals who may be employed using funding awarded as a result of this call. • Research office/institutions and staff • Research councils and staff • External panel members (prioritisation panel and interview panel) • Early and mid-career academic researchers are most likely to be involved as a co-leader. • There will be significant interaction with government, industry and the wider innovation landscape.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed. All panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing.

	<p>The activity will be monitored by the Digital Security and Resilience Theme in EPSRC.</p> <p>Research outcomes are collected through Researchfish and additional data through an annual data return.</p> <p>The impact of this call will be monitored and reviewed at the conclusion of the grant (6 months).</p>
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As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious [RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) to outline our collective aspirations for working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. 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	The assessment process involves an interview which may lead to challenges in accessibility and increases the risk of unconscious bias.	All applicants invited to interview will be asked to inform EPSRC if they have specific requirements and reasonable adjustments will be

	Potentially positive	There is scope and proven ability to hold interview in a virtual setting if necessary.	made (e.g. additional time) Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC's presence at the prioritisation panel meeting and during interviews will act as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment.
	Negative	Funding opportunity document and assessment materials may be difficult for visually impaired applicants or panel members to read. Also, applicants or panel members with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration.	Ensure all documents are suited for users who have accessibility modifications to their computing system. Also, provide documents in a different format (e.g. larger or different font) if requested.
Gender reassignment	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals who have undergone gender reassignment or whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth, if an applicant's possession of such protected characteristics is known to the panel. Interview locations may not have gender neutral facilities available.	Applicants are not asked to disclose whether they have undergone gender reassignment. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. Where possible, EPSRC will select venues with gender neutral facilities but this cannot be guaranteed.

Marriage or civil partnership	None identified.		Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative	A researcher on parental leave during the open call maybe unable to apply. Also, the assessment process requires interview attendance.	<p>Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance, as early as possible. All applicants invited to interview will be asked to inform EPSRC if they have specific requirements and reasonable adjustments will be made (e.g. additional time).</p> <p>EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these.</p>
	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias by panel members may disadvantage pregnant people, if this status is known to the panel.	Applicants are not asked to disclose pregnancy. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process.
	Potentially positive	There is scope and proven ability to hold interviews virtually, where it would be less likely that the panel will be aware that the applicant is pregnant.	Where applicants would prefer a virtual interview, this should be raised with EPSRC as soon as possible.
Race	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may	Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC

	Potentially negative	<p>disadvantage specific racial or ethnic groups, where applicant ethnicity is known to the panel.</p> <p>Individuals for whom English is their second language could be negatively impacted.</p>	<p>policies will be followed at all stages of the process.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation.</p> <p>EPSRC presence at the prioritisation panel meeting and during interviews will act as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment.</p> <p>Ensure all information within issued documents are clear and provide opportunities to request clarifications or ask questions from EPSRC.</p>
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	<p>Key dates (call opening and closing dates and panel dates) coinciding with specific religious festivals/events could disadvantage specific religious groups</p>	<p>Key dates will be reviewed and chosen to avoid clashes with major religious events where possible. Also, keep the call open for as long as possible.</p> <p>Applicants are not asked to disclose their religious beliefs. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process.</p> <p>All panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that may affect their ability to participate and how</p>

			this can be accommodated.
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias by panel members could disadvantage individuals of specific sexual orientations, if this is known to the panel.	Applicants are not asked to disclose their sexual orientation. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process.
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias by panel members could disadvantage individuals on the basis of gender.	Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. In line with EPSRC policies, the prioritisation panel meeting will be mixed gender.
Age	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias by the panel members may disadvantage applicants from specific age groups.	Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and presentation. EPSRC's presence at the prioritisation panel meeting and during interviews will act as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment.
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	None identified.		

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Potential negative impacts and barriers have been identified but all actions to address negative impacts have been highlighted above and all alternative options have been carefully considered	
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		
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.	X	Barriers have been identified but all actions to address negative impact have been highlighted above and all alternative options have been carefully considered. Possible risks and bias associated with this activity have been identified, particularly for the interviews, and activities adapted accordingly. ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the activity and EPSRC will review this EIA accordingly. Reasonable adjustments will also be made wherever possible.

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:	25/10/2022
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Allison Bryan	When published	1	