



Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Responsible and Trustworthy AI
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>This investment aims to advance the development and deployment of responsible and trustworthy AI technologies to maximise societal and economic benefit.</p> <p>This investment seeks to support the creation of one cross-disciplinary, cross sector investment.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>This investment builds on the work and extensive community consultation that was undertaken for the UKRI publication "AI Review: Transforming our world with AI". UKRI has continued to engage with the community on its strategy for AI through collaboration and discussion with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current relevant grant holders • UKRI AI Steering Group • The Alan Turing Institute • Turing AI fellows • Contacts at universities and Institutes • EPSRC Advisory Groups • Community engagement workshop attended by academics from different institutions and leading figures within the AI community. Including a US/UK AI workshop held in May 2022 sponsored by the NSF and EPSRC.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>UK's research community and industrial sector concerned with the areas of responsible and trustworthy AI; government representatives; UKRI staff.</p> <p>Applicants, reviewers, panel members.</p> <p>The successful applicant and associated team.</p>
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>Feedback is sought from those involved in the process and considered when creating the funding activity.</p> <p>Standard eligibility rules apply. Applications will be welcome from any eligible UK-based research team.</p>

	<p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed. All panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing. UKRI will pay special attention to applicants that can demonstrate multi-disciplinary and collaborative teams and approaches. The activity will be monitored by the AI and Robotics Theme in EPSRC.</p> <p>To avoid bias, reviewers/panellists will be drawn from a broad range of institution and disciplines, considering career stage and geography as well as protected characteristics below.</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	All applicants invited to interview will be asked to inform EPSRC

	Potentially positive	<p>lead to challenges in accessibility and increases the risk of unconscious bias.</p> <p>There is potential and proven ability to hold interviews in a virtual setting if necessary.</p>	<p>if they have specific requirements and reasonable adjustments will be made (e.g. additional time)</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing are given to panel members at multiple stages in interview process.</p> <p>EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.</p>
Gender reassignment	Potentially negative	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		<p>Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative	<p>A researcher on parental leave during the open call may be unable to apply.</p>	<p>All applicants invited to interview will be asked to inform EPSRC if they have specific requirements and reasonable adjustments will be</p>

			guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment.
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	<p>Key dates (open call closing, interview) coinciding with specific religious festivals/ events could disadvantage specific religious groups.</p> <p>Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage specific religious groups, if applicants' religious affiliation/ belief is known to the panel.</p>	<p>Key dates will be checked and chosen to avoid clashes with major religious events wherever 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 this can be accommodated.</p>
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals of specific sexual orientations, if this is known to the panel.	<p>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. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.</p>
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants 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 assessment panel will be mixed gender.
Age	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of 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 panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts 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?	<p>A number of risks and potential negative impacts have been identified and considered as part of the call design. Reasonable adjustments will be made and by adhering to the standard peer review principles, the risks have been mitigated as far as possible.</p> <p>All panels to be briefed on unconscious bias and the situations in which bias can become more prevalent, this is especially focused on for the interview.</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		
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	Potential 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 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:	November 2022
Review date (if applicable):	n/a

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Anne Toft	November 2022	1	Document created