

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Supergen Hubs 2023 Call |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | EPSRC are looking to fund the next phase of the Supergen Hubs with a specific focus on accelerating the impact of current generation offshore renewable energy (ORE), bioenergy and networks technologies and solutions to contribute to securing net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the UK by 2050 and to secure UK economic benefit. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | This is a strategic funding opportunity, as identified in the EPSRC delivery plan 2022-2025.  The current Supergen Hubs have been consulted.  Regular monitoring and annual reporting for the programme is carried out by the Supergen High Level Group (HLG), an independent board appointed by EPSRC. The HLG advised on the future of the Supergen programme. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | The Supergen Hub directors in ORE, bioenergy and networks, prospective co-investigators and their teams  The interdisciplinary community of stakeholders with direct relevance to ORE, bioenergy and networks in the UK. |
| 1. **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 document.  The activity and Hubs will be monitored by EPSRC and the HLG, including through the annual reporting of the investment assessed against published criteria |

As a funder of research, UKRI 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](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/).
* 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

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| **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  Potentially positive | An applicant’s disability may impact their ability to perform at or attend interview  There is potential and proven ability to hold interviews in a virtual setting if necessary. | 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)  The interview for this activity will be virtual, removing the need to travel to attend  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. |
| **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. | 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. |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | No known negative impact |  | Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potentially negative | The process requires interview attendance which may not be possible if an applicant is on parental leave  A fixed start date may result in the award starting whilst some staff are on maternity / paternity leave | Virtual interviews and consideration of applicant availability when setting interview dates will address this.  The fixed start date will be communicated well in advance to the directors, and the Hub may commence without all posts recruited, which enables staggered recruitment timescales |
| **Race** | Potentially negative | Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage specific racial or ethnic groups, where applicant ethnicity is known to the panel. | 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. |
| **Religion or belief** | Potentially negative | Aspects of the peer review process could coincide with key religious dates. | Working with applicants and panel member availability to set the dates for assessment. Pre- warning of the timeline so that issues can be raised and adjustments made. |
| **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. | 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. |
| **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 |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** | None identified |  |  |

**Evaluation:**

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| **Question** | **Explanation / justification** | |
| Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | 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. | |
| **Final Decision:** | **Tick the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will **proceed**. |  |  |
| 1. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups |  |  |
| 1. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias |  |  |
| 1. 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. | Y | 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. |

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| **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:** | **18/11/2022** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
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