

Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>Transforming land use for net zero, nature, and people programme. The programme consists of two components - (1) The Coordination and Translation Hub and (2) Research Projects. The breath of activities under this programme include - call launch, virtual call launch community webinar, community building workshops, application process, assessment process: interview panel for Hub, peer review panel for strategic research projects, monitoring and evaluation throughout the programme.</p>
<p>2. Council/department/project team</p>	<p>A UKRI Building a Green Future call delivered by BBSRC (Bioscience for Sustainable Agriculture Food (SAF) team) on behalf of co-funders UKRI, Defra, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. and partners Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Welsh Government and Scottish Government.</p>
<p>3. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>The overall objective of the Transforming land use for net zero, nature and people programme is to deliver transdisciplinary, high impact cutting edge research into transforming UK land use, soil health and agriculture for reducing and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. The goal is to achieve net zero targets, whilst contributing to other societal benefits and environmental commitments of the UK government and Devolved Administrations. In doing so the programme will seek to fast-track the outputs of research back into policy.</p>
<p>4. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders) <i>Provide a brief summary of the consultation, methods and outcomes. Detailed Outcomes for each group can be detailed in under the protected characteristic table.</i></p>	<p>To develop the programme scope a workshop of officials including BBSRC, NERC, Defra, ESRC and DAERA was held on 23rd June 2022, and another held 14th December 2022 (BBSRC, DEFRA, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero). At these workshops guidance was given on the policy questions for; soil health and soil carbon dynamics, land use and land use change and reducing farming emissions and the overall programme aims and objectives.</p> <p>The programme scope has been shaped by information gathered from NERC rotators.</p> <p>Nov 2022 BBSRC Bioscience for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Strategic advisory panel (SAF SAP): the programme was presented to the panel, who were asked for</p>

	<p>guidance on programme development and implementation, including how to ensure the programme would be inclusive towards a wide range of stakeholders including policy makers and practitioners. Relevant advice from the panel included inviting stakeholders to assist with reviewing, assisting researchers to co-design their proposals with policy makers and engaging regional policy makers.</p> <p>We have consulted recent equality impact assessments conducted for relevant UKRI calls and schemes. We have consulted with members of the BBSRC team who manage equality, diversity and include (EDI) for their perspective on potential barriers to inclusion.</p>
<p>5. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>Short term - applicants (academics and policy makers), panel members, reviewers, co-funders (UKRI and Defra) and partners (DAERA, Scottish Government, BEIS).</p> <p>Long term – project staff and students, academia, public, government, businesses and policy makers, as well as people user communities and stakeholders (e.g. farmers, and land-owners/managers).</p>
<p>6. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>UKRI will review this equality impact assessment should there be additional calls.</p> <p>The programme will be monitored and reviewed by the programme co-funders and partners through the Programme Executive Board (PEB) to assess progress towards achieving outcomes. Successful applicants (hub and strategic projects) will be required to give a regular report of project progress to the SRO, portfolio manager and project officers who manage the reporting process. At the end of the programme, the co-funders and partners endeavour to evaluate the outcomes and impacts of individual projects as well as the success of the overall programme in terms of achieving objectives.</p> <p>The programme coordination Hub and strategic projects will be assessed, monitored and reviewed for their ensuring that EDI principles and practices are embedded throughout.</p>

		<p>Feedback This is the first time UKRI has run a scheme with such high involvement of policy makers. Wherever possible, UKRI will endeavour to request and assess feedback from applicants, panel members, co-funders and UKRI staff.</p> <p>UKRI will encourage those engaged with the call to communicate foreseen barriers, and UKRI will endeavour to make associated reasonable adjustments where possible.</p> <p>Voluntary disclosure of diversity data is requested from applicants. These data are used to inform UKRI on the inclusivity of our processes and indicate where improvements could be made.</p>	
Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Potential for negative impact	<p>UKRI recognises that disability has a diverse spectrum. Specific examples of barriers are provided below but are not intended to cover this spectrum in its entirety.</p> <p>Difficulties attending community workshop or panel meetings.</p> <p>Individuals who have hearing impairments may find it difficult to access the community launch webinar/meetings/panels.</p> <p>Individuals who have a visual disability may find it difficult to access and view the electronic adverts, attend the webinar/meetings/panels, view online</p>	<p>We encourage individuals to communicate their needs and will make reasonable adjustments where possible.</p> <p>We will ensure assessment panel venues are accessible. UKRI will encourage those engaged with the call to communicate foreseen barriers, and UKRI will endeavour to make associated reasonable adjustments where possible. If travel/physical attendance is a barrier, options will be made available to join panel/interview meetings virtually where possible.</p> <p>Arrangement of closed captioning (cc) for those with hearing impairments at virtual meetings/events.</p>

		<p>documentation, and/or complete the online application form.</p> <p>Recognising a range of neurodiversity, we understand that some individuals may experience difficulties with concentration.</p>	<p>Arrangement of appropriate colour/text will be arranged for those with visual impairments. Alternatively, UKRI will provide a printed version of documentation/ guidance to anyone who is unable to view/complete it online. Where appropriate, the communications (e.g. from the launch webinar) will be recorded and shared online and modified versions can be shared upon request (cc, alternative font, font size, font colour).</p> <p>UKRI will ensure that plenty of breaks are built into each activity (e.g. comfort breaks and a substantial lunch break). Further adjustments can be made on request.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment (Trans identity)</p>	<p>Potentially negative</p>	<p>Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition and UKRI records may show the wrong gender.</p>	<p>Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's sick policy and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other health related absence.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.</p>

Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative	<p>Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>People may be absent from work due to parental leave. Childcare and other factors may need to be considered, for applicants and panellists to be able to attend the panel meetings.</p> <p>Difficulties physically attending the webinar/meetings/panels.</p> <p>Requirement for regular breaks.</p> <p>Applicants may feel uncomfortable applying knowing that they are going on parental leave soon.</p>	<p>Wherever possible, options will be made available to join panel/interview meetings virtually if travel/physical attendance is a barrier.</p> <p>UKRI will ensure that plenty of breaks are built into each activity (e.g. comfort breaks and a substantial lunch break). Applicants/panel members/staff are encouraged to request and take comfort breaks as required.</p> <p>UKRI policy ensures that grant extensions, and movement of start dates are available to individuals who have been on and/or are going on maternity/parental leave.</p> <p>We should ensure the use of gender-neutral language – parental leave, irrespective of sexual orientation.</p>
Race	Potentially negative	See below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	See below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias).

			Restate considerations of unconscious bias by briefing the panel at the start of the meeting.
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	Key dates for the call could coincide with some religious festivals.	Care has been taken to ensure that key call dates, including workshops and panel meetings do not fall on cultural and religious festivals where possible. Easter, Ramadan and Eid occur between the call opening and expression of interest stage of submission, which may be a potential barrier for applicants. We have ensured the outline stage is open for sufficient duration around these festivals.
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative	Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Use of language can present a barrier to participation and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.	Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc. UKRI will endeavour to ensure that the panel has balanced gender and other protected characteristics representation.
Age	No known negative impact		

Additional diversity characteristics	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
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Geographical location (consider UK and international offices)			
Socio-economic status			
Education background			
Parent/guardian responsibilities			
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	Potentially negative	<p>Childcare management during webinar/meetings/panels, application writing, and preparation for panels.</p> <p>Potential difficulties with application preparation, meeting/panel preparation/attendance, completion of peer review activities, due to school holidays and childcare management.</p>	<p>Where possible meetings are scheduled within the times of a normal working day and outside of school holidays. Time schedules at meetings will be strictly adhered to.</p> <p>Additionally, where reasonable the cost of additional caring responsibilities while on UKRI business can be reclaimed on request.</p> <p>Within the confines of the budget spend requirements, the funding opportunity has been designed to allow the maximum possible time during each stage of the call (expression of interest and full proposal application windows, peer review stage, and interview/peer review panels). Whilst safeguarding robust and transparent peer review.</p> <p>School summer holidays may present a barrier for some applicants at the full proposal stage due to childcare arrangements. Care has been taken to</p>

			ensure that the call timelines are sufficient around this holiday
Political opinion (Northern Ireland)			

GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

Call eligibility and criteria

Both the coordination Hub and strategic research project calls are open to organisations eligible for UKRI funding. Other types of organisations can be involved in collaborative bids led by eligible organisations.

Timeline

The calls have been designed taking into account academic holidays and religious holidays ensuring that they are open for an acceptable number of weeks around the seasonal breaks. The coordination Hub call has been designed in two phases to support research teams to engage effectively with a diverse range of stakeholders including policymakers.

Communication

- Ensuring we utilise the communications function within UKRI effectively to reach potential applicants through the funding and social medial channels.
- Utilising our own stakeholder engagement channels to reach beyond UKRI's core audience.
- Using multiple forms of communication to capture wider audiences including collaborating with high interest organisations to reach a more diverse audience.

- Funders will hold a launch webinar for potential applicants. This will be in an online format allowing for virtual attending and recording. Live transcription will be enabled. Those who are unable to attend can request to be sent the webinar materials and/or recording by email after the event.

Standard Grant Terms and Conditions

- UKRI standard Grant Terms and Conditions comply with UK equality legislation and include provisions designed to mitigate against potential negative impacts (e.g. sick pay, parental and adoption leave, the possibility of part-time and flexible working, and grant extensions).
- Research Organisations are subject to equality legislation and have a duty to comply with it. RGC 8 states that ‘The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.’ Research Organisations are therefore required to make reasonable adjustments as required to support their staff.

Panel recruitment

- We will aim to ensure that the composition of the coordination Hub and strategic research project review panels are diverse.
- Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. Final decisions will take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions. We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates.

Panel member responsibilities

- It is the role of panel members to moderate and assess the quality of peer review and to agree final scores for each proposal.
- All panel members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.
- Panel members will be encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. The Panel Chairs and Panel Secretaries play a particularly important role in this respect.
- An implementation intention statement will be read out at the beginning of panel meetings which sets the tone for discussions and requires that panel members pay close attention to the scoring criteria and definitions.
- Peer reviewers are required to evidence their views and scores. UKRI staff conduct usability checks on all peer review comments and where there is evidence of bias or a reviewer has failed to provide evidence for their scores the review will be marked as ‘unusable’.

Panel meeting

- Wherever possible, options will be made available to join panel/interview meetings virtually on request, if travel/physical attendance is raised as a barrier.
- We will follow the developing guidance to virtual panel meetings and take the mitigating actions below to support participation by all panel members.

Co-ordination Hub

- The programme coordination Hub will be assessed, monitored and reviewed for their ensuring that EDI principles and practices are embedded throughout the programme.
- Funding will be subject to the UKRI terms and conditions [RCG 3.4](#) which states that: “You are expected to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is considered and supported at all stages throughout the performance of the Project, in alignment with Our policies and principles at: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/> for equality, diversity and inclusion. The Hub approach to supporting equality, diversity and inclusion is expected to exceed all relevant legal obligations, including but not limited those of the Equality Act 2010.
- The coordination Hub will be required to regularly report implementation of their EDI plan to the programme co-funders, who will maintain the ability to shape the priorities of the Hub as adaptive management is required to cover emerging evidence needs.

UKRI reserves the right to modify the assessment process as needed, any adjustments will be considered in the context of the equality impact assessment which will be updated if required

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required. (See Annex 1 for template action plan)
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	X	Some barriers have been identified alongside proposed mitigating actions. We appreciate further unanticipated barriers may arise and are prepared to make further reasonable adjustments.

<p>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.</p>		
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<p>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events. Consider whether data might need to be redacted before publication)</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Person completing EIA</p>	<p>Katie Tomlinson</p>
<p>Responsible owner (e.g. project board, committee):</p>	<p>Harriet Trewin</p>
<p>Date signed off by owner:</p>	<p>27/03/23</p>
<p>Review date (if applicable): (An EIA is a live document and should regularly be reviewed throughout the life cycle of an activity)</p>	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
	When published	1	