EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

	Question	Response
1.	**Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed**	EPSRC ICT Funding Opportunity - *Semiconductor technology research and innovation hubs for ICT*
2.	**Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event**	The funding activity is looking to establish up to two Innovation and Knowledge Centres (IKCs) in novel and emerging semiconductors technologies within ICT. The aim is to create early-stage critical mass and drive emergent ICT-led semiconductor technology towards market via the development of prototypes and demonstrators through co-creation with business and industry.
3.	**What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)*	The funding activity was created following discussions with the ICT research and innovation community, specifically those working with semiconductors related to ICT. Further scoping was undertaken with the EPSRC ICT strategic advisory team, Innovate UK and the Semiconductors team at DCMS. Other themes consulted at EPSRC include the Impact, Advanced Materials, and Manufacturing and the Circular Economy teams. A roundtable was held on 12th January 2023 to scope the opportunity, including identifying key features of any investment and any strategic focuses. The roundtable was attended by prominent academics, industrialists, industry networks and policy makers.
4.	**Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?**	Academics and industrialists working in the ICT-related semiconductor community, as well as policy makers (through alignment to the Semiconductor strategy). Applicants, reviewers and panel members.
5.	**What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?**	Feedback has been sought from those involved in the process and as the funding opportunity was created. Standard review and eligibility requirements have been adopted for the funding opportunity (outline and expert interview panel). This includes a briefing on unconscious bias. The funding opportunity also includes additional requirements around EDI, including the appointment of an EDI lead within the IKC and requires an EDI plan. Standard reporting and monitoring conditions will be applied on any awards, and are outlined as an

	additional grant condition. This will include mid-term reviews due to the level of funding.

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

*You are looking for a **possible and probable impact**, either positive or negative, from the activity you are planning and how you are delivering it upon those protected characteristic listed below.*

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	Negative	The funding opportunity is hosted on the UKRI website, Je-S and Siebel (or the new funding service TFS), applicants may have accessibility requirements that are not currently supported by these systems.	Applicants should seek support from their RO's research support office and let EPSRC know as soon as possible if they have any accessibility requirements that we can support. Adjustments are made to enable attendances at

		The assessment process also includes an interview which may lead to accessibility challenges and increased risk of unconscious bias.	interviews (both in person or online). Unconscious bias briefings are provided at multiple stages throughout the review process.
Gender reassignment	Potentially negative	UKRI records may show incorrect or out-of-date gender. Persons who are transitioning may be absent from work as a consequence of transition. The assessment process also includes an interview which may lead to challenges around attendance and increased risk of unconscious bias.	UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and include absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the RO's sick policy and encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other sick absence. Consideration must to be given at UKRI level to ensure all records are up to date and adjusted accordingly. Unconscious bias briefings are provided at multiple stages throughout the review process.
Marriage or civil partnership	No known impact	No disclosure of marital status required at any stage and membership will be selected irrespective of this.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative	The timescales of the call could impact those currently on parental leave or those who are soon to be going onto maternity leave. This impact could be by falling within the leave period or by reducing the time available to prepare an application on their return. The assessment process also includes an interview which may lead to challenges around attendance due to caring responsibilities and increased risk of unconscious bias.	Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave, and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions. The call timeline will be designed to try and mitigate these issues as best as possible. Support will be offered to those with caring responsibilities, and reasonable adjustments made wherever possible. Unconscious bias briefings are provided at multiple stages throughout the review process.
Race	Potentially negative	There could be potential discrimination due to somebody knowing	Peer reviewers and panel members are appointed based on expertise, but we will aim to

		whether someone has a particular race (this can apply to any of a peer reviewer, panel member, a research applicant)	appoint a diverse reviewer pool and panel membership. Peer review process and guidance for applicants/reviewers/panel members aims to prevent bias against protected characteristics. This opportunity is open to all academics equally so long as they are eligible for funding with the relevant expertise, regardless of their race. Unconscious bias briefings are provided at multiple stages throughout the review process.
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	There could be potential discrimination due to somebody knowing whether someone has a particular religious belief (this can apply to any of a peer reviewer, panel member, a research applicant)	Peer review process and guidance for reviewers/panel members aims to prevent bias against protected characteristics. Panels will be organised with understanding and empathy of periods of religious holidays. This opportunity is open to all academics equally so long as they are eligible for funding with the relevant expertise, regardless of their religious beliefs. Unconscious bias briefings are provided at multiple stages throughout the review process.
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	There could be potential discrimination due to somebody knowing whether someone has a particular sexual orientation (this can apply to any of a peer reviewer, panel member, a research applicant)	Peer reviewers and panel members are appointed based on expertise, but we will aim to appoint a diverse reviewer pool and panel membership. Peer review process and guidance for reviewers/panel members aims to prevent bias against protected characteristics. This opportunity is open to all academics equally so long as they are eligible for funding with the relevant expertise, regardless of their sexual orientation. Unconscious bias briefings are provided at multiple stages throughout the review process.
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative	There is a gender imbalance across many of	This opportunity is open to all academics equally so long as

		the areas of relevance to this funding opportunity. There is a possibility that there will be an imbalance in the consortia and applicants for the proposals, as well as the make up of the panels.	they are eligible for funding with the relevant expertise, regardless of their sex (gender). Peer reviewers and panel members are appointed based on expertise, but we will aim to appoint a diverse reviewer pool and panel membership. Peer review process and guidance for reviewers/panel members aims to prevent bias against protected characteristics.
Age	Potentially Negative	Track record section is required as part of the proposal. This may disadvantage early career researchers due to their relative degree of expertise and amount of experience. More established researchers may already have a wider network than early career researchers which would advantage them for putting together broad-ranging consortia.	This opportunity is open and equally available to any researchers eligible for funding with the relevant expertise regardless of their age or career stage. Peer review process and guidance for reviewers/panel members aims to prevent bias against protected characteristics.
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	None	None	None

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification
Is it possible the new/proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate against or unfairly disadvantage people?	Yes, due to the interview there is potential that issues around unconscious bias may be higher when compared with other funding opportunities. All panels are briefed on unconscious bias and the situations in which bias can become more prevalent, this is especially focused on at interview.
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.	X	We are mindful that there are lots of potential barriers that could impact the outcomes of the funding opportunity. We are implementing what we reasonably can to mitigate any of these negative impacts through the above implementations. If this is found to be insufficient and the correct outputs are not obtained, we will tweak and adapt these so that we get suitable outputs. See the mitigations and actions above that justify this choice.
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.		

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:	**21/03/2023**
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Jennifer Wilkinson	*21/03/2023*	V1.0	

Jennifer
Wilkinson   *21/03/2023*   V1.0

Annex 1: Definitions of each protected characteristics and points to consider when undertaking your EIA with regard to each Protected Characteristic[i]

Although the definitions of the Equality Act 2010* are set out in the table bellow, at UKRI we recognise all gender identities and sexualities including asexual and intersex people.

*The definition of gender reassignment was extended in September 2020 to include people who identify as non-binary or gender fluid – recognising that gender is a spectrum.

Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff.

Points to consider:
- Reasonable steps can be taken to accommodate the disabled persons requirements, these may include:
    - Physical access- e.g. lifts, ramps, location, seating arrangements, level of physical activity required in a session, accessibility of toilets, induction loop system
    - Format of information (both written and spoken) e.g. handouts, call documents, posters, slides. Consider readability, use of colour (colour blind), flashing images and the use of language
    - Time of interview or event, for potentially extended travel times and avoiding peak times
    - Personal assistance e.g. carer, interpreter or note taker
    - Sharing content of interview or course content etc. on request
    - Highlight the T&S policy
- The level of physical activity required in a workshop or event

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Gender reassignment

A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. Gender reassignment also includes a person who identifies as non-binary or gender fluid.

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff irrespective of whether they are male or female, Trans or 'cis' or 'whether they identify with the gender they were assigned at birth'.

Points to consider:
- Facilities that may be gendered e.g. toilets
- The use of gender neutral language both written and spoken
- For further information please see the resources at https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/workplace-resources
- If you are running an international call there maybe travel restrictions for transgender travellers. Further information can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice and Stonewall also provides further guidance and items to consider here: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/safe_travels_guide_2017.pdf

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Marriage or civil partnership

A person who is married or in a civil partnership.

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff irrespective of whether they are single, divorced, separated, living together, married or in a civil partnership.

Points to consider:
- Potential conflicts of interest due to undisclosed personal relationships

Pregnancy and maternity

A woman protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. Also, it is unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place.

These considerations can be extended to parental leave (paternal, shared parental and adoption leave)

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff for those who are pregnant, on maternity leave or breast feeding.

Points to consider:
- The level of physical activity required in a workshop or event
- Accommodating requests to nominate a representative to send in their place, or provide support (accommodation, T&S of carer) when individuals need to be accompanied, more information can be found here https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/
- The implication of international travel on those who are pregnant such as travel limitations and risk of disease, eg Zika, further information can be found in the FCO travel guidance https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Race

A group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ,ethnic or national origins.

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff, irrespective of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origins.

Points to consider:
- Format of information (both written and spoken) and the use of language particularly jargon or colloquialisms etc.
- The diversity of the ethnicity and race of panels/speakers at conferences/workshops
- The terminology used to describe race, there is further information found here http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/race-and-ethnicity-terminology-002.docx

Religion or belief

A group of people defined by their religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally a belief should affect an individual's life choices or the way in which they live.

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff, irrespective of their religious or philosophical beliefs.

Points to consider:
- Access to prayer facilities
- Dietary requirements and the opportunity to raise them in advance
- The dates of major religious events in the planning of calls and events

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Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards to people of the same gender, people of a different gender, or to more than one gender (whether someone is heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual).

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Points to consider:
- For further information please see the resources at https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/workplace-resources
- If you are running an international call or there is international travel required in projects by LGBTQ+ people there may be travel restrictions, further information can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice and Stonewall also provides further guidance and items to consider here: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/safe_travels_guide_2017.pdf

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Sex (gender)

A man or a woman

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff, regardless of their gender.

Points to consider:
- The use of gender neutral language
- The of gender diversity of panels and advisory board membership, speakers/attendees at conferences/workshops
- For international calls further information can be found in the FCO travel guidance https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Age
A person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or a range of ages (e.g., 18-30 year olds)

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff, irrespective of their age.

Points to consider:
- Opportunities should be provided, regardless of age, on the basis of eligibility, position or experience
- Avoid equating age and experience, focus on required competencies

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Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)
e.g. People with caring responsibilities

The aim is for equality in access and opportunities for applicants, panel members, advisory body members, event attendees and staff.

Points to consider:
- Reasonable steps that can be taken to accommodate a carer's requirements, such as time of meetings or interviews, flexible working on grants
- Cognitive load of information, the amount of work and allowed time to complete
- The method providing information such as different formats to suit a diverse audience

Annex 2: Examples of recently completed EIA templates

Council	Activity
EPSRC	Inclusion Matters Call
EPSRC	New Investigator Awards
EPSRC	Policy change: Limit to the number of applications at a standard panel
BBSRC	BBSRC Future Leader Fellowships (FLF) Scheme
BBSRC	BBSRC/STFC/Innovate UK Biofilms programme
EPSRC	CDT Call
EPSRC	Connected Nation Pioneers
EPSRC	Manufacturing the Future Retreat 2018
EPSRC	Manufacturing Fellows Event
EPSRC	Global Grand Challenges Retreat 2020
EPSRC	Hardware for Efficient Computing

i https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/Library/Equality_diversity/2015/Equality_impact_assessment_toolkit.pdf