



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>Research for a digitally enabled circular economy and more sustainable digital technologies</p>
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>The aim of this funding opportunity is to support collaborative research programmes which contribute to the development of a digitally enabled circular economy and more sustainable digital technologies, including software, hardware and combined technologies.</p> <p>This funding opportunity aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver world leading and impactful collaborative research which is co-created across the circular economy, materials, and ICT communities • build capacity and foster relationships at the interface between the circular economy, materials, and ICT communities, increasing understanding and consideration of circularity and sustainability in the ICT and materials communities • support the development of new circular ICT products, technologies and business opportunities which have a reduced environmental footprint and more resilient supply chains • support the acceleration of the transition to a circular economy through the development of digitally enabled circular technologies, products and systems • embed consideration of a circular economy into the sustainable development of future materials • support the longer-term uptake of circular economy and sustainability considerations and practices by industrial partners
<p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal – discussion with the Manufacturing and the Circular Economy theme, ICT theme, Advanced Materials, Business Improvement Team and Simple and Better Funding Team.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External – discussion/scoping with key stakeholders in the community (academic and industrial stakeholders) and a workshop held in February 2023.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with an interest in the role of engineering and physical sciences especially within ICT and Advance Materials areas in achieving a circular economy Research office/institutions and staff Research councils and staff Reviewers and panel members. PDRAs employed by the funded projects Support staff will also be employed on the grant. There will be significant interaction with industry and the wider innovation landscape. Students may be aligned to the funded projects, although not directly funded through the grants.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>Research outcomes are collected through Researchfish and additional data through an annual data return.</p> <p>Feedback is sought from those involved in the process and policies are considered in light of feedback received.</p>

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 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	<p>All information provided is in written format.</p> <p>Travel may be a barrier for any in-person panels.</p> <p>Potential for unconscious bias</p>	<p>Any reasonable adjustments for specific requirements will be made. Documents will be produced in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines. Panels are likely to be virtual.</p> <p>Where not fully virtual, the option to attend virtually will be available. Accessibility will be considered when choosing a physical venue.</p> <p>Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.</p>
Gender reassignment	Potentially Negative	Potential for unconscious bias	Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative	Participation in activity could be restricted by lack of availability due to	Accommodations will be made for individuals if required at all stages of the

		<p>parental leave/caring responsibilities/pregnancy</p> <p>Potential for unconscious bias</p>	<p>process. Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible.</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. Panellists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held virtually as far in advance as possible. If this happens, we reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks and technical issues.</p> <p>Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.</p>
Race	Potentially negative	Potential for unconscious bias	Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias

<p>Religion or belief</p>	<p>Potentially negative</p>	<p>Potential for unconscious bias.</p> <p>The full stage of the funding opportunity will be open over Christmas, which is a major religious holiday.</p>	<p>Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen, and where possible that there is a prayer room available.</p> <p>The full stage of this call will be open over the Christmas period and submission window has been extended to account for the Christmas break. All dates will be published ahead, and successful applicants will be informed immediately after the outline panel.</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>Potentially negative</p>	<p>Potential for unconscious bias</p>	<p>Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.</p>
<p>Sex (gender)</p>	<p>Potentially negative</p>	<p>Potential for unconscious bias</p>	<p>Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings. Efforts will be made to select gender diverse panellists and reviewers.</p> <p>Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.</p>

<p>Age</p>	<p>Potentially negative</p>	<p>Potential for unconscious bias</p>	<p>Evidence requirements for applicants are only about the suitability of their track record and expertise, and do not refer to years of experience.</p> <p>Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.</p>
<p>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</p>	<p>Caring responsibilities – Potentially negative</p>	<p>Applicants may have reduced availability</p> <p>Panellists and applicants may have reduced availability due to COVID-19 pandemic if they have to care for a vulnerable person or schools close as part of Government Guidelines</p>	<p>Outline stage will close over the summer holiday, but the call will be open for a long period (14 weeks). With approximately 8 weeks falling outside of holiday (this may vary slightly by devolved nation/county).</p> <p>Dates for panels will be outside of school holidays wherever possible. Panellists will be informed in advance if a panel meeting is to be held virtually. Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists as far in advance as possible.</p>
	<p>Zoom panel meetings – potentially negative</p>	<p>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic it may be necessary to hold panel meetings virtually (potentially switching from in person to virtual at</p>	<p>Guidance will be provided to panellists – best practice and tools that can be used such as the hand raising and mute functions. ‘Test runs’</p>

		short notice if government guidance changes).	will be offered to those who have not used Zoom before. Extra time will be allowed to assist with cognitive load and 'short term' technical difficulties Contingency plans will be put in place if Zoom cannot be used Learning from virtual panels held prior to this, will be incorporated to improve the process
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Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	No evidence has been found to show that this event would discriminate or unfairly disadvantage attendees.	
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	This activity needs to proceed at this time. Everything has been done to be as fair and flexible as possible to all applicants. We will promote and inform as early as possible, and take circumstances into due account when necessary.

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:	14/04/23
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Tochukwu Ajare	When published	1	N/A