

## Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Engineering Biology Mission Hubs and Mission Awards
2. Council/department/project team	This opportunity is being delivered by BBSRC, on behalf of UKRI partners (BBSRC, EPSRC, NERC, MRC and Innovate UK).
3. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p><b>Deploy two funding calls concurrently, the Engineering Biology Mission Hubs and Mission Awards, totalling ~£73m.</b></p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>UKRI recognises the importance of Engineering Biology as a strategic priority for the UK and the need for a variety of interventions to support discovery research, national capability, commercialisation, industry adoption and private investment. Continued investment is required for transformative underpinning research and technology development, in order to stimulate innovation to tackle major challenges such as climate change, health and energy.</p> <p><b>Aims</b></p> <p>This investment is anticipated to play an important part in delivering against the below aims for engineering biology in the UK, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generate new knowledge from research and innovation activities</li> <li>• stimulate growth of multi and interdisciplinary communities to support the future exploitation of engineering biology: increase the interdisciplinary collaborations that are fundamental to the development of new technological solutions, and to the adoption and exploitation of existing technological solutions into new sectors and markets</li> <li>• increase investment and engagement with business, and increase productivity in the UK to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o improve academic and business collaboration in the UK</li> <li>o increase inward investment from manufacturers and companies</li> </ul> </li> <li>• increase job and company creation. Increase business growth and employment</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• translate fundamental research and innovation for the benefit of the UK, enabling the faster development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o effective materials</li> <li>o food</li> <li>o chemicals</li> <li>o energy carriers</li> <li>o medicines</li> <li>o therapies</li> <li>o remediated environments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• deliver infrastructure benefits: Improve the capability of research and development (R&amp;D) infrastructure, unlocking any benefits associated with this novel R&amp;D</li> <li>• enhance the UK's research standing internationally, increasing the number of highly trained researchers attracted and retained in the UK</li> <li>• deliver enhanced equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) cultural benefits to UK: introduce positive changes in EDI in research, improving the reputation of the UK and attract new talent nationally and internationally</li> </ul> <p><b>Mission Approach</b></p> <p>To achieve these aims we will develop foundational capability in the UK's world class Engineering Biology research base which can be exploited by UK industry to accelerate the commercialisation and deployment of world leading technology. A missions-based approach will unlock the full potential of Engineering Biology in four priority areas selected through extensive stakeholder consultation as part of the National Engineering Biology Programme, which will set inspiring and stretching targets which focus the efforts of academia, industry and other partners, on complex problems which require a coordinated approach for successful delivery</p>
<p><b>4. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?</b> (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)  Provide a brief summary of the consultation, methods and outcomes. Detailed Outcomes for each group can be detailed in under the protected characteristic table.</p>	<p>This activity was developed building on community (academia, industry, policy makers, government) engagement since 2020 and further builds on the UKRI vision for the National Engineering Biology Programme.</p> <p>The mission focus of this opportunity has been developed based on the input and involvement of UK engineering biology community stakeholders, shaping the vision for Engineering Biology for the UK.</p> <p>A Steering Group comprised of UKRI and Dstl representatives have sought to ensure that this funding opportunity meets strategic needs of the UK, supports the strategic focus of the UK government, and is inclusive of the breadth of UKRI's remit.</p>

<p><b>5. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p>	<p>Short term - Panel members, reviewers and applicants to the funding calls. UKRI staff and communities.</p> <p>Long-term – Public, Business, UKRI staff and communities, UK government</p>
<p><b>6. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p>	<p>The investments funded through this opportunity will be monitored at a call level individually and at a programme level, spanning all three technology missions, Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Technologies and Engineering Biology.</p> <p>The Hubs will have requirements to report annually on their activity and performance against objectives, as well as via mid-term review and final report. Both the Hubs and Awards will have to report research outcomes via ResearchFish. Further monitoring and evaluation processes may be implemented.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC is dedicated to ensuring that our processes are open and inclusive. Those engaged in these processes endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner and without prejudice or bias. In line with this we adopt the following principles:</p> <p>For applicants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opportunity is advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience</li> <li>• The opportunity call text and guidance clearly state the eligibility and assessment criteria</li> <li>• The UKRI-BBSRC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page</li> <li>• UKRI-BBSRC supports applicants as much as possible, both before and after submission, to assist them in the application and assessment process.</li> </ul> <p>For assessors: reviewers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewers are drawn from as wide a pool as possible</li> <li>• The guidance clearly states the expectations of reviewers</li> <li>• UKRI-BBSRC provides support to reviewers as much as possible, to assist them in the assessment process.</li> </ul> <p>For assessors: Panel</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone involved in the decision-making process has had training in Unconscious Bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact on their decision-making</li> <li>• UKRI-BBSRC is committed to enabling participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours</li> <li>• UKRI-BBSRC provides a geographic spread of meeting locations as much as possible when face-to-face meetings are held, rather than virtual meetings</li> <li>• Committee members are asked to inform UKRI-BBSRC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation</li> <li>• UKRI-BBSRC is proactive in increasing the diversity of our reviewers and committee members. The committee membership is published on the UKRI-BBSRC website. Further information: <a href="https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/equality-diversity">https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/equality-diversity</a></li> </ul>
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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)
<b>Disability</b>	Potential for negative impact	<p>Applicants, reviewers and panel members with neurodisabilities may find it difficult to access and view electronic documentation/experience difficulties with concentration</p> <p>Panel members and interviewees with physical disabilities may find it difficult to access a physical meeting venue and / or participate in the meeting if the assessment venue cannot cater for their needs.</p> <p>When considering the neurodiversity of</p>	<p>UKRI-BBSRC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the use of a virtual meeting format, where possible, as well as the use of online discussion boards.</li> <li>• Respond to individual support needs on a case-by-case basis</li> <li>• Ensure that electronic information is accessible</li> <li>• Gather information from meeting participants (including panellists and office staff) about any additional requirements that they might need to fully participate</li> </ul>

		<p>participants, it is recognised that some people may feel more comfortable engaging in different ways or with an adjusted environment.</p> <p>Individuals with visual disabilities may find it difficult to access and view electronic documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that there are plenty of breaks build into meeting agenda</li><li>• Allow for the potential use of screen readers for participants who are visually impaired</li><li>• Ensure that colours chosen, and other visual stimuli do not trigger migraines or affect those with colour blindness</li><li>• Ensure that, at physical meetings, those with hearing impairments are placed where their hearing will not be interfered with</li><li>• Ensure that there is functionality for automated live captions in virtual meetings for those with hearing impairments</li><li>• Ensure adjustments are made throughout the assessment process where appropriate, for example regarding interview attendance to assist individual applicants. This may include the use of video conferencing.</li><li>• Ensure that locations and venues for interviews are accessible and adapted for those with limited mobility and are supportive of individuals with cognitive impairment.</li><li>• ensure as a general principle, that venues are easily accessible from the main public transport and rail/air links.</li></ul>
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<b>Gender reassignment (Trans identity)</b>	Neutral	Neutral	N/A
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	Neutral	Neutral	N/A
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Potential for negative impact	Panel members and interview candidates who are pregnant, on maternity, or have child or other caring responsibilities may be discouraged from participating in panel meetings Career breaks in applicant track records due to parental leave or caring responsibilities may be seen as negative by the panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the use of virtual meetings to facilitate participation around personal commitments</li> <li>• Gather information from meeting participants (including panellists and office staff) about any additional requirements that they might need to fully participate</li> <li>• As a general principal, venues are easily accessible to main rail/air links and easy to move around.</li> <li>• Meeting rooms are comfortable, and meeting are timetabled to allow for adequate breaks</li> <li>• Aim to ensure that the venue is able to provide childcare/babysitting services if requested.</li> <li>• UKRI-BBSRC allows committee members to claim expenses for reasonable childcare costs during the panel meeting</li> <li>• Applicants are being asked to provide a narrative resume to demonstrate relevance or the consortia applying, and as such weighting of individual career breaks is hopefully mitigated. Regardless, guidance will be</li> </ul>

			provided to panellists to ensure appropriate assessment of applicant track record without bias against career breaks due to parental leave/caring responsibilities and others
<b>Race</b>	Potential for negative impact	It is important that selection of panel members is from a diverse community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of panel members to ensure representation of the community and diversity of opinion, while maintaining necessary scientific expertise</li> <li>• Panel members are required to follow procedures in line with BBSRC annual unintentional bias training</li> </ul>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Potential for negative impact	Panellists may be unable to participate in meetings due to religious observances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKRI-BBSRC ensure that religious observances are considered as much as possible when time tabling major activities.</li> <li>• When applicable, ensures that the venue caters for all dietary requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Neutral	Neutral	N/A
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Potential for negative impact	There is an uneven gender split in the community of applicants and the Pool of Experts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of panel members to ensure representation of the community and diversity of opinion, while maintaining necessary scientific expertise</li> <li>• To avoid potential unconscious bias, first names and titles of applicants will not be used during virtual meeting discussions</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling discussion boards and virtual meetings.</li></ul>
<b>Age</b>	Neutral	Neutral	N/A



**Evaluation:**

Question	Explanation / justification	
<p>Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?</p>	<p>The funding opportunity has been coordinated so that applicants do not have to develop and submit their applications during the summer holidays, however this will likely result in elements of the peer review and assessment process occurring during the summer holidays.</p> <p>Potential for discrimination or negative impact has been assessed and actions to address negative impacts are being implemented</p>	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required. (See Annex 1 for template action plan)
<p>1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will <b>proceed</b>.</p>	<p>✓</p>	
<p>2. You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups</p>		
<p>3. You can <b>adapt or change</b> the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias</p>		

<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 <b>proceed with caution</b> 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><b>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required</b>  (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p><b>Date signed off by owner:</b></p>	<p><b>24/05/2023</b></p>
<p><b>Review date</b> (if applicable):</p>	<p><b>30/06/2023</b></p>

