



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>Call for Participants for a Sandpit on novel sensing for UK defence and security, followed by funding of projects. The Sandpit will be held over five days, with some days being in-person, and other days being virtual.</p>
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>The broad aims of the sandpit are to generate research proposals which can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form new collaborations between researchers and innovators in diverse research areas; • Create new and innovative research ideas to challenges; • Allow researchers to pitch projects for seed funding to test ideas; • Address the key research challenges that are identified; • Consider co-design with end-users; • Address the current issues around scale up and adoption
<p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</p>	<p>Consultation has taken place across UKRI with EPSRC discussing the remit of the sandpit with other research councils within UKRI and the academic community. Government input has been provided and facilitated by NSTIx, with discussion into other Government- funded bodies such as Dstl. Academics and industrialists have been approached for input via various EPSRC Strategic Advisory Teams and utilising portfolio manager knowledge and suggestions of relevant community members. Further input has been and will continue to be sought through the Sandpit director and mentors.</p>
<p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>UK HEIs; o Admin Staff o Academics (social scientists, physical scientists, materials scientists/engineers, engineers, computer scientists and innovators) EPSRC staff</p>
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>A Call for participant Expression of Interest (Eoi) for the sandpit will be open via Smart Survey, available on UKRI website and available to all interested parties to support their applications.</p>

	<p>Contact details will be provided alongside the information relevant to the sandpit to support queries related to the call.</p> <p>We will ensure that we publish the call as soon as possible to ensure that academics have time to apply to attend the sandpit and we will advertise the sandpit widely.</p> <p>The assessment process, of both the sandpit member selection and the peer review of the proposed projects, will be designed to ensure any unconscious bias will be identified, challenged and managed. All EPSRC staff involved in the call have received unconscious bias training. We will share Unconscious Bias briefing information with peer reviewers.</p> <p>We will include wording in the funding opportunity to encourage applications from those from diverse backgrounds.</p>
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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 endeavour 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)
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Disability	Potentially negative	<p>People with visual disabilities may find it difficult to access and view the online materials.</p> <p>People with physical disabilities may find it difficult to attend in person, especially if poor transport links.</p>	<p>The virtual element of the sandpit will contain appropriate breaks. We will ensure that it is possible to print the online documents and they are in a form that text can be enlarged, and any information displayed by screen sharing can be zoomed as needed. Where possible, consideration will be given to the use of weblinks and acronyms (such as in the Call Document) as this information is not readily compatible with text readers. For the in-person days, EPSRC will select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation. EPSRC can offer support for people with caring responsibilities as per UKRI policy. It is an individual's responsibility to check with EPSRC and confirm what costs can be reimbursed prior to attendance at an event. Further details here. We have welcomed applications and enquiries from individuals with additional needs for whom specific</p>
	Positive	<p>Access to events for applicants could have a negative impact on participation, dependent on individual circumstances.</p>	

			provisions may need to be made.
Gender reassignment	No known negative impacts		
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impacts		
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	<p>Participation in the sandpit may be negatively affected, if potential applicants or peer reviewers are unavailable at key stages.</p> <p>Inability to attend due to childcare commitments may affect who can participate.</p> <p>Dietary restrictions related to pregnancy.</p>	<p>Full timeline provided of all key milestones, allowing early engagement with EPSRC on specific mitigations. EPSRC will do its best to accommodate adjustments. EPSRC offers support available for people with caring responsibilities. Individuals should get in contact with EPSRC if they have any queries. Sandpits are intense with a high cognitive load. Sufficient rest time will be allocated to the sandpit agenda, and any specific requirements for rest can be taken into consideration by EPSRC.</p>
Race	No known negative impacts		We will include wording in the funding opportunity to encourage applications from those from diverse backgrounds.
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	Participation in call may be affected, if potential applicants or peer reviewers are unavailable at key assessment stages.	EPSRC will ensure that religious observances are taken into account during the event. A full timeline will be provided of all key milestones, allowing

		(Activities could coincide with religious holidays, for example).	early engagement with EPSRC on specific mitigations. EPSRC will do its best to accommodate adjustments.
Sexual orientation	No known negative impacts		
Sex (gender)	No known negative impacts		We will include wording in the funding opportunity to encourage applications from those from diverse backgrounds. In line with EPSRC policy we will aim for a 30% representation of the underrepresented gender for the panel members (mentors) at the sandpit. We will ensure a gender mix in the Mentor selection.
Age	No known negative impacts		We will include wording in the funding opportunity to encourage applications from those from diverse backgrounds.
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	People with caring responsibilities	Dependent on individual circumstances	EPSRC offers support available for people with caring responsibilities. Individuals should get in contact with EPSRC if they have any queries.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could	A number of risks have been identified and actively considered as part of the sandpit call design and

discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	internal management processes for call delivery. These 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 .		
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	Risks that have been identified have actions in place to mitigate them. Further risks that are brought to the attention of EPSRC as the process proceeds will be addressed and this policy updated.
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:	28/07/2023.
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
	When published	1	