



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>Future funding for UK Energy Research Centre. Whole energy System for net zero research and community engagement and networking. This activity is an invited call for proposals to the current Centre Director. This call was scoped following community meetings in April 2023 and using lessons learned from discussions with the centre and the recommendations from the mid term review of the current centre. The director was informed of the decision to allow an invited proposal in July 2023.</p>
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>To fund the centre for the next 4 to 5 years to accelerate the transition to net zero using a whole systems approach. The funding is £10,000,000 of funding at the 80% level from EPSRC.</p>
<p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g., with relevant groups and stakeholders)</p>	<p>This call was scoped following community meetings in April 2023 and using lessons learned from discussions with the centre and the recommendations from the mid term review of the current centre.</p> <p>The centre has been funded for 20 years.</p> <p>The importance of the has been shown by both the Net Zero Research and Innovation Framework (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-research-and-innovation-framework) and the Committee for Climate Change (https://www.theccc.org.uk/topic/low-carbon-energy/) as a key component of the UK's 2050 Net Zero target and has formed the backbone of EPSRC strategy in Energy & Decarbonisation for many years.</p>
<p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>The UK whole energy systems research community as well as EPSRC staff.</p>
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>EPSRC will engage with the centre to monitor and evaluate. Attendance at advisory board meetings,</p>

	annual reporting and a mid term review will capture the impacts of the funding. The centre will establish an Independent Advisory Body.
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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. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious [RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) to outline our collective aspirations for working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. 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)
Disability	None identified		Applicants are not asked to disclose whether they have a disability. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Gender reassignment	None identified		Applicants are not asked to disclose whether they have undergone gender reassignment.

Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative	<p>The process requires interview attendance by the leadership team who could represent a colleague on maternity or paternity leave.</p> <p>Also, a researcher on parental leave during the call will be able to be added to the proposal by the director.</p>	<p>Timetable of key dates have been made available to applicants and will be made available to 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.</p> <p>Applicants are not asked to disclose pregnancy</p>
Race	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals of specific race if this is known to the panel.	Applicants are not asked to disclose their ethnicities
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	Key dates (open call closing, interview) coinciding with specific religious festivals/ events could disadvantage specific religious groups	<p>Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen.</p> <p>Applicants are not asked to disclose their religious beliefs</p>
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals of specific sexual orientations if this is known to the panel.	Applicants are not asked to disclose their sexual orientation. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel	Applicants are not asked to disclose their

		members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of gender.	gender. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will be mixed gender.
Age	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants from specific age groups.	Applicants are not asked to disclose their age. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment.
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)			Care has been taken to avoid key dates that may disproportionately impact carers.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Yes, as part of the standard peer review process there is potential that issues around unconscious bias may influence outcomes. All postal peer review responses will be check by a portfolio manager for any inappropriate content. All panels are briefed on unconscious bias and the situations in which bias can become more prevalent.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .	Y	Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen.
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.		

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:	03/08/2023
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change