

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Future funding for 2 flagship transdisciplinary programmes in systems approaches for Net Zero.  This activity is an open outline call followed by invited full proposal to the successful outline bids.  There will be a workshop for the successful applicants to answer questions on the full call, give feedback to the applicants and allow networking with stakeholders and users.  The full proposals will be assessed by an expert interview panel.  This call was scoped following community roundtable meetings in October 2023. |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | To fund the 2 flagship research programmes for the next 4 to 5 years to accelerate the transition to net zero using a systems approach. The funding is £10,000,000 including indexation from the Building a Green Future UKRI priority and is being led by EPSRC on behalf of UKRI. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g., with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | This call was scoped following roundtable community meetings in October 2023 and following feedback from UKRI colleagues and the BAGF advisory board members.  The importance of the area 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. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | The UK systems for Net Zero research community as well as UKRI staff in the BAGF priority area. |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | UKRI will engage with the programmes to monitor and evaluate. Attendance at advisory board meetings and annual reporting will capture the impacts of the funding.  The programmes will establish Independent Advisory Bodies and will report into BAGF programme. |

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](https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/actionplan2016-pdf/) 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](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/).
* 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.

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| **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 | The process has an outline stage but applicants can add new members at the full proposal stage.  The attendance at the workshop will be invite only to representatives of the invited full programme bids.  The process requires interview attendance by the leadership team who could represent a colleague on maternity or paternity leave. | Timetable of key dates has been made available to applicants and will be made available to panellists in advance as early possible. Panel will be virtual to avoid travelling. Date of the workshop in June will be added to the call as early as possible.  EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these.  Applicants are not asked to disclose pregnancy |
| **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 | Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen.  Avoid setting dates that coincide with religious festivals.  Applicants are not asked to disclose their religious beliefs |
| **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 members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of gender. | Applicants are not asked to disclose their 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:**

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| **Question** | **Explanation / justification** | |
| Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | 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**. |  |  |
| 1. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups |  |  |
| 1. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias | X | Possible risks and bias associated with this activity have been identified and activities adapted accordingly. ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the activity and will be reviewed accordingly. Reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible and appropriate. Religious observances, pregnancy and caring mitigations are taken into account when meeting dates and venues are chosen. |
| 1. 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. |  |  |

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| **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:** | **19/12/2023** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
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