# UK Research and Innovation

# Equality Impact Assessment

\*See guidance document for detailed support.

\* Delete the guidance text in the response when completing your EIA.

## Overview of activity

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|  | **Response** |
| Name of activity being assessed | Enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion in BBSRC-funded networks |
| Council/department/project team | Skills and Careers Unit, BBSRC |
| Aims and objectives of the activity | This funding opportunity is designed to encourage members of existing BBSRC funded networks that identify as being part of an underrepresented group to engage with their networks’ current activities.  Following analyses of BBSRC award data, HESA data and Census data, it is evident that there is a significant underrepresentation within the biosciences, particularly Black researchers, disabled researchers and women occupying more senior roles. Conversely there is an overrepresentation of White researchers across all career levels. The skills and careers unit consulted their dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Expert Advisory Group to determine how to best approach this issue.  One suggestion was to utilise existing investments in community networks to support broadening out their capacity-building activities into targeting under-representation and collaborating with learned societies in the biosciences and supporting their current activities in supporting diversity.  We are inviting our existing networks to engage with a pilot funding scheme and apply for small grants between £50,000 and £100,000 to encourage members of their existing community who identify as being a part of an under-represented group, to engage with their networks’ activities.  This funding could cover the costs of memberships, conference fees and travel, or for mentoring and awards (including summer research internships). Networks will specify how their awarded funds would be spent on EDI initiatives alongside justification based on data from both their existing network community and potential outreach. The funds will be allocated and distributed by the network managers who have a comprehensive understanding of their respective communities and demographics.  This EIA considers the application and assessment process for this funding opportunity. |
| Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event? | * UKRI-BBSRC employees working on the opportunity * The BBSRC funded networks applying to this call * Any project partners or collaborators who engage with this funding opportunity * The members of the BBSRC funded networks’ communities who will be in receipt of this funding through the network * The assessment panel of experts * Additional stakeholders such as the EDI Expert Advisory Group, BBSRCs Committee E and additional invited experts who will be invited to be members of the assessment panel |
| What data and consultation have you used to assess the equality impact of your activity? | The call has been developed as a result of extensive analyses of the BBSRC Awardee Data, HESA and Census data. The BBSRC EDI Expert Advisory Group (EAG) have requested that BBSRC increase engagement with under-represented groups within the biosciences and the development of this call has been supported by the BBSRC Director of Talent. The EDI EAG were also consulted at the most recent EDI EAG meeting which took place on the 13th November 2023 and they were invited to provide feedback on the call development and progression. The EDI EAG provided positive feedback and were supportive of the call design and scope.  Various sources of evidence alongside UKRI, HESA and Census data have been consulted to assess the impacts on specific personal characteristics and suggestions on how to mitigate these impacts.  Examples of additional sources of information:   * Gendered Intelligence- [Resources for Professionals | Gendered Intelligence](https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/professionals/resources.html) * Transgender Equality Network Ireland- [Supporting-Transgender-Inclusion-in-the-Workplace-Guidelines-for-Employers.pdf (teni.ie)](https://teni.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Supporting-Transgender-Inclusion-in-the-Workplace-Guidelines-for-Employers.pdf) * [Neuro-inclusive recruitment - Genius Within](https://geniuswithin.org/our-services/advisory-services/neuro-inclusive-recruitment/) * [How to Avoid Ageism (shrm.org)](https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/all-things-work/pages/how-to-avoid-ageism.aspx) * [The research and technical workforce in the UK (royalsociety.org)](https://royalsociety.org/-/media/policy/Publications/2021/2021-02-12-research-and-technical-workforce-in-the-uk.pdf) * [What is Stimming and Why Do Neurodivergent People Do It? - Spectrum Connections Therapy (spectrumconnecttherapy.com)](https://spectrumconnecttherapy.com/what-is-stimming-and-why-do-neurodivergent-people-do-it/) * [Race discrimination | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com)](https://equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/race-discrimination) * [UKRI diversity data for funding applicants and awardees](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/UKRI-151222-Main-report-UKRI-diversity-data-for-funding-applicants-and-awardees-2020-to-2021-update.pdf) |

## Analysing your impact

In addition to data gathering and consultation, the guidance on protected characteristics should be used to assist in identifying impacts on different groups. Where impact has not been identified in the checklists, general EDI considerations, or where there is impact pertinent to your opportunity or activity, it should be recorded here.

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| Are there **general or overarching impact on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact? | The funds awarded as part of this opportunity will be disseminated by the successful networks.  We have ensured that the applicants, in this case, BBSRCs funded networks, are encouraged to explore their own individual challenges within the EDI space and in order to do this, BBSRC has encouraged our networks to explore their EDI data and determine challenge or priority areas. The focus of the call is to encourage our networks to explore solutions to these challenges, which will be based on communication and consultation with their existing members with lived experience. BBSRC recognises the impacts that the application and consultation process may have on members of the networks, especially those who identify as being part of a minoritised or under-represented group. We have extended the application period to 10 weeks and included an optional expression of interest stage to assist in the development of collaborations where possible.  BBSRC staff will respond to individual requests for reasonable adjustments to the application or assessment process. BBSRC will also record the launch webinar to ensure prospective applicants who were unable to attend have the opportunity to view the presentation and see the Q&A session. The application and assessment process will be entirely virtual. |

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## Protected characteristics

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| **Protected characteristic** | **Positive impact or opportunity to benefit** | **Negative impact** | **Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used** | **Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.** |
| **Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown** | |
| Age |  |  | Potential for unintentional bias. | Career breaks, changes of career and other factors are considered throughout the process to ensure applicants are not penalised for following alternative career paths.  This call is open to all eligible applicants at any career stage. |
| Disability |  |  | The impact may vary depending on the type of disability, which may include neurological, visual, auditory, or other physical disability.  People with disabilities are under-represented in HESA academic staff (5%) compared to the general labour population (13%) and represent a smaller number of BBSRC grant applications. For BBSRC, UKRI diversity data suggests that applicants with known disabilities are no less likely than those without a disability to be awarded a grant as a PI, but slightly less likely as a Co-I.  An estimated 15-20% of the world’s population exhibits some form of neurodivergence, this includes those with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia and other learning disabilities. Individuals who are neurodivergent (ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia etc) may find standard recruitment calls inaccessible due to formatting of the application form and associated documents or due to the process overall.  Individuals who are neurodivergent may struggle with in-person meetings due to overwhelming or distracting stimuli or would feel more comfortable engaging in different ways or with an adjusted environment.  Panel members with physical disabilities may find it difficult to attend a physical panel meeting venue.  Individuals with disabilities may struggle to engage with online platforms and virtual assessments both as applicants and panel members. | BBSRC will use a virtual meeting format and discussion boards following UKRI’s virtual first policy. Panel members will be made aware of the meeting date in advance and the discussion board period will be 1-2 weeks to allow panel members to submit their comments when they feel it is appropriate.  BBSRC will respond to any requests for reasonable adjustments to the application or assessment process on a case-by-case basis.  Ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the panel meeting and launch webinar.  Make it clear that the networking session during the launch webinar is optional and other methods of networking post-meeting will be offered where possible.  Allow for potential use of screen readers for participants who are visually impaired to  make adjustments throughout the assessment process where appropriate, for example ensuring committee members who do not wish to use Zoom can use an alternative online platform.  If a person benefitting from the award is already employed at the organisation before working on the grant, if the individual has disability related support for their day-to-day activities, but this increases as a direct result of them working on the award, for example, having an assistant travel with them for fieldwork, then these additional costs can be charged to the project.  The BBSRC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page.  We will ensure that closed captions are available for virtual meetings. |
| Gender reassignment (Trans identity) |  |  | Based on the England and Wales census 2021 data, 262,000 people indicated that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth. Additionally, according to a YouGov (2021) survey of 410 trans employees across the UK, 65% said they have had to hide their trans status at work, 32% had experienced discrimination in the last 5 years and 43% had quit because their work environment was unwelcoming. | Ensure any transition or trans inclusive diversity policies are publicly promoted and visible on call text/website/media platforms/adverts. Gender neutral language will also be used throughout the application/call for members.  Ask ahead of the meeting whether there are any additional accessibility requests from attendees.  Panel members will be asked to display their preferred pronouns if they are comfortable to, minimising the risk of misgendering. No dress code will be requested for in-person meetings.  Gender neutral pronouns will be used when requested and all efforts will be made to avoid deadnaming individuals. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times between panel members or applicants and BBSRC staff, should individuals wish to disclose any information regarding their gender expression or identity. |
| Marriage or civil partnership |  |  |  |  |
| Pregnancy and maternity/paternity |  |  | Applicants may be on parental leave whilst the opportunity is open, potentially affecting their awareness of this opportunity and ability to participate.  individuals who are pregnant may have additional accessibility requests such as ground floor facilities, lifts or require more frequent breaks and additional dietary requirements. | Use a virtual meeting format and discussion boards in line with UKRIs Virtual-First Policy  Regular breaks will be scheduled throughout the panel assessment meeting and the launch webinar  This opportunity will be open for approximately 10 weeks and will be widely advertised on social media where possible to ensure those on parental leave may see the opportunity outside of work.  Specific requests for reasonable adjustments can be assessed on a case-by-case basis. |
| Race |  |  | UKRI award data and HESA data show that there is a significant underrepresentation of Black researchers within the biosciences. This data also shows a significant overrepresentation of White researchers.  Due to the significant underrepresentation, we may receive fewer applications from Black individuals.  It is important that selection of panel members and peer reviewers is from a diverse community which represents the community and UK as a whole. | Ensure that the application/call for members is widely advertised via social media and through our existing networks. BBSRC will engage with other existing networks associated with underrepresented groups where possible in order to circulate this opportunity to a wide audience.  UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of panel members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion. |
| Religion or belief |  |  | Data from the 2021 Census of England and Wales, showed that less than half of the population (46.2%) described themselves as Christian. This is still the largest religious group in England and Wales.  37.2% selected no religion. 6.5% were Muslim and 1.7% Hindu.  Call and assessment dates could coincide with religious holidays.  Participants may be unable to take part in committee meetings or interviews due to religious observances. | UKRI-BBSRC ensures that religious observances are considered as much as possible when timetabling major activities and major religious holidays were checked in the development of the call’s activities and timeline. |
| Sexual orientation |  |  | According to the CIPD (2021) Good Work Index Report, whilst 85% of heterosexual workers reported ‘somewhat’ to ‘very good’ working relationships, this dropped to 80% for LGB+ workers.  A higher proportion of LGB+ workers than heterosexual workers (16% vs 10%) reported feeling psychologically unsafe at work.  There are no UKRI data with which to assess this characteristic currently. | Ensure confidentiality and trust between applicants, panel members and BBSRC staff at all times. Use inclusive language during meetings and within the application/call text. Disclosure of any characteristics is voluntary. |
| Sex (gender) |  |  | Women are under-represented in HESA academic staff compared to the general labour market and also have lower application rates, according to UKRI diversity data, compared to the HESA baseline. This appears to particularly be the case for BBSRC awards where on average, 26% of applicants are women compared to the HESA benchmark of 40%. Despite this under-representation of women at the application stage, there appears to be no difference in the award rate (30%) between men and women.  Caring responsibilities fall disproportionately on women and therefore this is likely to impact women more. | UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling discussion boards and virtual meetings, since this can disproportionately affect participation of women.  Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities.  Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours.  UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business.  UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of panel members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion. |

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## Additional characteristics

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| **Additional characteristics** | **Positive impact or opportunity to benefit** | **Negative impact** | **Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used** | **Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible).** |
| **Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown** | |
| Geographical location and place (consider UK and international offices) |  |  | Bringing Panellists from a variety of geographical locations together or a physical meeting can represent a barrier to attendance.  The launch webinar and networking event may also bring together members of the community from across the UK and potentially internationally, which could represent a barrier to attendance.  Applicants and panel members may be living in areas of the UK with less efficient internet infrastructure (digital/bandwidth inequality), such as rural areas. This could affect their ability to engage virtually during meetings and with the application and assessment process | Use a virtual meeting format and discussion boards in line with UKRIs Virtual-First Policy  Ensure the application process and assessment process does not require any programmes or software that depend on fast broadband. |
| Socio-economic status |  |  | This may interact with geographic location, caring responsibilities and other protected characteristics. Socio-economic status may also affect their remote working abilities due to reliance on effective internet infrastructure | Ensure the application process does not require any programmes or software that depend on fast broadband. |
| Education background |  |  | Applicants and members of BBSRC funded networks may have varying education backgrounds. | BBSRC will avoid using unnecessary jargon and academic language within the application process. Application assessment will be based on experience, skills and knowledge, with no requirements for specific qualifications. |
| Parent/guardian responsibilities |  |  | People with parental responsibilities may have less time to prepare a proposal, participate in reviewing and/or attend a panel meeting. Caring responsibilities fall disproportionately on women and therefore this is likely to interact with gender. | UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling major activities as part of the funding opportunity and assessment process.  Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities.  Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours and this will be considered alongside time zone barriers.  The discussion board period during the assessment process will be live for 1- 2 weeks to ensure panel members are able to submit their comments when they feel it is appropriate.  For panel assessment: UKRI -BBSRC will pay reasonable caring costs incurred while on UKRI -BBSRC business.  it is the responsibility of the employer (the research organisation) to provide sufficient support for those with caring responsibilities.  In partner countries this should conform to the local regulatory framework. |
| Carer/parent carer responsibilities |  |  | Committee members and applicants may find it difficult to participate if they have caring responsibilities. Caring responsibilities fall disproportionately on women and therefore this is likely to interact with gender. | Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities.  Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours and this will be considered alongside time zone barriers.  For panel assessment: UKRI -BBSRC will pay the cost of reasonable caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI - BBSRC business.  The discussion board period during the assessment process will be live for 1- 2 weeks to ensure panel members are able to submit their comments when they feel it is appropriate.  It is the responsibility of the employer (the research organisation) to provide sufficient support. In partner countries this should conform to the local regulatory framework |
| Political opinion (Northern Ireland only) |  |  |  |  |
| Other characteristics |  |  |  |  |

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## Evaluation

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| **Final Decision:** | **Select the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will **proceed**. |  |  |
| 1. **Adapt or change** the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality. |  | The activity has been adapted following the actions described in the previous section. BBSRC acknowledges that there may be unforeseen barriers and encourage individuals to contact the office to arrange for further mitigations where appropriate. |
| 1. **Stop** the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups. |  |  |
| 1. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity (e.g. in **extreme cases** or where **positive action** is taken). Therefore, you are going to **proceed with caution** with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision. |  |  |

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## Review and sign off

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| **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?** | This EIA will be regularly assessed by BBSRC. It will be assessed when this funding call closes, and the assessment process begins. The EIA will also be reassessed based on any suggestions from applicants or members of the public after its publication. |
| **Next review date:** | At call close (25 June 2024) |

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| **Will this EIA be published? \* Yes/Not required** | Yes |
| **Point of contact:** | Emily Finnegan (Emily.finnegan@bbsrc.ukri.org) |
| **Responsible owner:** | Emily Finnegan |
| **Accountable owner:** | Clare Bhunnoo (Clare.Bhunnoo@bbsrc.ukri.org) |
| **Signed off by (name and date):** | **Clare Bhunnoo 28/03/2024** |
| **Before publishing or archiving your EIA, please remove any sensitive information.**  **Completed EIAs should be emailed to your council EDI team and shared with the central team via** [**this form**](https://forms.office.com/e/LXLZutBHpu)  **EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org** | |

## Change log

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
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|  |  | 2 |  |
|  |  | 3 |  |

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## Action plan

Use the table below to define the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the indications of negative impact you have identified or to promote equality. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

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| **Action** | **Deadline** | **Owner** | **How will it be monitored?** | **What is/will be the impact/outcome?** |
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