



UK Research
and Innovation

UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form



*See guidance document for detailed support.

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

Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	Economics Observatory 2024 (invite only)
Council/department/project team	ESRC, Public Policy and Engagement Team
Aims and objectives of the activity	<p>This invite-only opportunity is for the Economics Observatory (ECO) to apply for 9 – 12 months of funding to maintain its activities from previous phases.</p> <p>This opportunity will enable ECO to provide public policy decision-makers with demand-led research and evidence to inform the developing of effective strategies responding to key challenges and government priorities.</p> <p>Activities to be covered by the EIA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application process • Panel recruitment • Panel assessment and meeting.
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants • Commissioning Panel • ESRC staff organising the opportunity, including the Panel meeting.
What data and consultation have you used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal ESRC consultation, including with the Executive Board • Correspondence with stakeholders (previous phases) • Previous EIAs both within and outside UKRI

Analysing your impact

In addition to data gathering and consultation, the guidance materials should be used to assist in identifying impacts on different groups.



Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	Negative impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Early career researchers* may be disadvantaged as they don't have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher.</p> <p>(*It is assumed that early career researchers are generally younger than their more experienced peers, although this by no means always the case. This is why this point has been included under 'age').</p>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and hence (indirectly) age. Panel members are briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them and not reading between the lines. They should assess an individual's capability to deliver their proposed research.</p> <p>Applicants are not required to disclose their age at any point in the application process, although this may be inferred from the information on their CV.</p>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>The Funding Service has been designed to comply with disability access schemes.</p>



			<p>Neurodiverse members may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during the online panel meeting.</p>	<p>Direct applicants to <u>UKRI guidance on disability and access support for applicants and grant holders</u>.</p> <p>Provide the opportunity for panel members to share, in confidence, any reasonable adjustments they may require for participating fully.</p> <p>Online meeting platforms offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants. Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enabling the chat function and closed captioning, and adjusting the volume, to support those with hearing requirements.• Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers (ensuring any images are well described so that text-to-speech applications can recognise them) for the visually impaired.• Provision of documents in sans-serif dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats.• Avoiding colours, lighting etc. that may trigger migraines, epilepsy etc.• Consideration of the length of any online meetings, shortening if necessary and ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda.• Ensure that staff have had sufficient EDI training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants.
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<p>Gender reassignment (Trans identity)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition and UKRI records may show the wrong gender.</p> <p>A person's pronouns may be used incorrectly in panel meetings or suitable options for titles (e.g. Mx) may not be available on funding opportunity documents.</p>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and permit absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's relevant policies and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other health-related absence.</p> <p>We will work to ensure the use of gender-neutral language where possible in our documents.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.</p>
<p>Marriage or civil partnership</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status at any stage of the application.</p> <p>While there is potential for related discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual orientation, these issues will be managed by the specific mitigations for these characteristics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p>



			<p>Completion of application or project may be affected by maternity, paternity or parental leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption.</p> <p>Childcare responsibilities may be a barrier to attending panel meetings.</p> <p>Applicants may be perceived to be less productive by Panel members if they have gaps in their career or publication record on their CV due to maternity leave.</p> <p>Panel members may have unconscious bias towards applicants that are pregnant which may disadvantage the applicant.</p> <p>Applicants may be unable to apply to the call if they are on parental leave during the funding call or feel unable to apply if they are on leave during the latest start date for successful awards.</p>	<p>Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions.</p> <p>Dates will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow meeting and webinar attendees to make arrangements to attend.</p> <p>We should ensure the use of gender neutral language, irrespective of sexual orientation.</p> <p>The costs of additional childcare for grant-holders, beyond that required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the job, and that are directly related to the project, may be requested as a directly incurred cost if the institutional policy is to reimburse them. However, childcare costs associated with normal working patterns may not be sought.</p> <p>Regular breaks in the commissioning panel meeting for breastfeeding/expressing or the management of pregnancy symptoms if necessary.</p> <p>Reimbursement of additional childcare costs if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include childcare at the venue, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children)</p>
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				Applicants are not asked to disclose pregnancy at any stage of the application.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p><u>UKRI diversity data</u> for applicants and awardees shows that inequalities exist in awarding rates between applicants who identify as White (higher success rates) compared to applicants who identify as being from a minority ethnic group (lower success rates). This is particularly the case for Black applicants.</p> <p>Minority ethnic researchers are also under-represented within panel membership.</p> <p>Research shows that people from minority ethnic groups are under-represented within research funding and across scientific research and innovation careers more broadly, and face additional barriers to achieving success within academic pathways</p> <p>Potential discrimination for against an applicant due to their perceived or actual race/ethnicity as the process is not anonymous and names are present.</p>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations for mitigations against unconscious bias and assessment criteria.</p>
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Potential for discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, a</p>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to mitigations against unconscious bias).</p>

			<p>research applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief.</p> <p>Religious holidays or practices may present a barrier to attending panel meetings.</p>	<p>Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings. Considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – ie. during Ramadan ensuring that meetings finish early so that participants are able to get home to break their fast, awareness of the sensitivities around offering Muslims meals during periods of fasting); • Not scheduling meetings when they would conflict with religious attendance or observance on specific days or times (e.g. Jewish Sabbath on Friday evenings or Islamic Friday prayer) • Allowing prayer breaks if requested.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Potential for discrimination because it is known to somebody (either panel member or a research applicant) has a particular gender.</p> <p>Use of language can present a barrier to participation.</p>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.</p> <p>Ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation (aim for at worst 60:40 split).</p>



Additional characteristics

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)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The meeting will be virtual, which will allow panel members from a more diverse range of geographical locations to participate.	See General Equality and Diversity Considerations. All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support.
Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participation in any activities related to this opportunity will not incur any expenses for individuals.	We will ensure that the meeting schedule is sent out with adequate time for participants to rearrange existing work commitments. We would expect applicants to apply via their Research Organisation which should remove most barriers to access. Applicants and panel members can contact ESRC directly to highlight any additional support required.
Education background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Potential for difficulties in understanding research jargon/language if panel member is from outside of academia or from another discipline.	Ensure that unnecessary jargon and academic language are not used as these could provide a barrier.

<p>Carer/parent/guardian responsibilities</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>It may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.</p> <p>Potential difficulties attending panel or interviews due to caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>See also discussion of actions to reduce negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>ESRC can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Reimbursement of additional childcare costs if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children).</p> <p>All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support.</p>
<p>Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Other characteristics</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>We should avoid the assumption that everyone has equal access to technological devices or the internet.</p>	<p>All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any needs that will need additional support.</p> <p>If relevant, we will provide alternative formats for information and/or make provisions for people to access information. We will ask participants about how they would prefer to access information and what tools they have access to.</p> <p>Applicants and panel members should ask for assistance from their research</p>

organisations when experiencing digital difficulties.

Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?

GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

ESRC is committed to go above and beyond simply complying with Equalities legislation to ensure that our processes are as fair and equitable as they can be.

Eligibility and criteria

- Economics Observatory 2024 (invite only) is an invite-only funding opportunity.
- Applicants are eligible for funding whether or not they are established members of a recognised RO, but applicants who are not an established member of a recognised RO must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research.
- The applicants will be required to answer a question on how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will be embedded into the proposed work. The answer will be assessed by the opportunity panel.

Support for UKRI applicants

- Applicants have the opportunity to share, in confidence, any relevant sensitive information – including barriers to participation – by contacting the office for advice via TBC@esrc.ukri.org.
- Applicants may experience difficulties with the fact that the application period is shorter than recommended at **4 weeks**. However, this approach has been used because the opportunity is responding to emerging strategic requirements and new funding must commence by a required date. This issue will only affect the investment who will be invited to apply. Applicants are advised to contact ESRC with any queries or issues that arise.

Standard Grant Terms and Conditions:

- UKRI standard Grant Terms and Conditions comply with UK equality legislation and include provisions designed to mitigate against potential

negative impacts (e.g. sick pay, parental and adoption leave, the possibility of part-time and flexible working, and grant extensions).

- Research Organisations are subject to equality legislation and have a duty to comply with it. RGC 8 states that 'The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.' Universities are therefore required to make reasonable adjustments as required to support their staff.

Panel recruitment

- While panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. Final decisions take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions. We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates.
- A tool has been developed which allows ESRC staff to assess the EDI characteristics of commissioning panels, and this will be used when appointing panels.

Process

- All panel members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.
- It is the role of panel members to moderate and assess the quality of peer review and to agree final scores for each proposal. Panel members will be briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. The Panel Chairs and Panel Secretaries play a particularly important role in this respect. An implementation intention statement will be read out at the beginning of the commissioning panel meeting which sets the tone for discussions and requires that panel members pay close attention to the scoring criteria and definitions.



Panel meeting

- The meeting will be held virtually in order to offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants, including those with parental/caring responsibilities or disabilities. For further details on specific adjustments, please see the relevant section of the form.



Continued below...

Evaluation

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will proceed .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The mitigations outlined will enable the opportunity to be adapted to overcome barriers to access and eliminate potential bias.
3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Continued below...



Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress will be monitored through regular reporting and meetings with funder
Next review date:	

Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	Yes
Point of contact	Catherine Han
Signed off by (name and date):	

Before publishing or archiving your EIA, please remove any sensitive or confidential information such as personal identifiable data.

Once your EIA is completed or updated:

1. Upload it to the UKRI central repository via [the EIA submission form](#)

EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org

Change log



Name	Date	Version	Change
		1	E.g. Based on input received from consultation groups at the business case stage, added actions under the gender section
		2	E.g. Based on input received from x at the announcement of opportunity stage, added/removed/edited x
		3	E.g. Based on input received from x at the investment authorisation stage, added/removed/edited x

Continued below...



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).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is/will be the impact/outcome?
e.g. Update application form to include questions on additional support and reasonable adjustments	December 2023	Applications manager	Updated form published and submissions reflect individual needs	Individual needs can be addressed. Inform inclusive design of the activity