



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	React Awards (pilot)
Council/department/project team	ESRC Grants Delivery Team
Aims and objectives of the activity	<p>This is a new pilot applicant-led funding opportunity.</p> <p>Its purpose is to enable time-critical research to support policymakers and practitioners delivering frontline public services in the UK.</p> <p>Researchers will work with public sector partners to respond to emerging and urgent evidence needs and deliver high-quality, impactful outputs that can be actioned in the near term.</p> <p>To facilitate this, the pilot will be open to applications on a responsive basis and use a streamlined decision process, allowing proposals to be assessed, funded and start delivering within weeks. Successful projects will be expected to start within a month of funding confirmation.</p> <p>Activities covered by this EIA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement and application submission process • Assessment process (both outline and full stage applications) • Operation of awards funded under the funding opportunity.
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants and award holders • External assessors • Internal ESRC assessors • ESRC staff organising and managing the opportunity • Wider public sector policy makers and practitioners that may be collaborating on applications/awards
What data and consultation have you used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with ESRC colleagues on the appropriateness of this EIA • Previous consultations, outcomes or lessons learned from similar projects • 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 face some disadvantages as they may have differential access to public sector partner networks or not have the same track record as an experienced researcher. This is assuming that early career researchers are younger than more experienced peers.</p>	<p>No reference made to age in the documentation.</p> <p>Emphasis is on team capability to deliver, rather than on researcher experience.</p>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations</p> <p>Barriers may arise in application systems or panel formats. Neurodiverse and/or disabled</p>	<p>Disability Access and Accessibility Considerations</p> <p>The Funding Service has been designed to comply with recognised disability access and</p>

		<p>applicants may face difficulties with the application process and accessibility, with a specific focus on concentration and focus during application writing.</p> <p>This consideration includes participation from internal and external assessors.</p>	<p>accessibility standards, ensuring that applicants and assessors can engage fully and equitably with the application and assessment process.</p> <p>Applicants will be signposted to Disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders – UKRI, which provides guidance and practical support throughout the funding lifecycle.</p> <p>Both applicants and assessors will be given the opportunity to confidentially disclose any reasonable adjustments required to support their full participation in the process. Requests will be handled sensitively and in confidence, with adjustments implemented wherever feasible to remove barriers to engagement.</p> <p>Digital Accessibility and Inclusive Participation</p> <p>We will take steps to ensure that all digital guidance relating to the application and assessment processes are accessible and inclusive. This includes adherence to recognised digital accessibility standards and best practice. Considerations include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring all digital materials meet recognised accessibility standards, enabling equal access for all users. • Ensuring staff have sufficient EDI training to be able to respond
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				effectively to requirements of all applicants and assessors.
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See General Equality and Diversity Considerations Gender-neutral inclusive language where possible in the documents will be utilised.	N/A
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A No specific impacts anticipated beyond safeguarding against discrimination. Applicants are not asked at any point in the application to disclose their civil status.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	See General Equality and Diversity Considerations The short-term pilot nature of the opportunity, coupled with the requirements to have pre-formed partnerships with collaborating organisations may pose barriers for applicants on leave with childcare responsibilities or with health needs. Completion of the application may be affected by different types of parental leave, both in terms of those in research organisations as well as partner organisations. Childcare responsibilities could also be a barrier to application submission or in terms of application assessment.	Provision for parental leave are covered in UKRI terms and conditions. The opportunity is open for six months, with applications assessed on a rolling basis. Applicants may choose the timing that best suits their proposal and circumstances, as there is no single submission deadline within the open period. Assessors will be made aware of requirements when appointed, enabling them to plan appropriately and make any necessary arrangements to support participation. Assessors will have flexibility enable them to accommodate caring responsibilities (including childcare), health needs, or other personal circumstances where required.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	See General Equality and Diversity The opportunity requirement to have a pre-formed collaboration risks the perpetuation of	Adopt a transparent, evidence-based approach to the selection of assessors (internal and external), using defined and published criteria. This will include

			existing network biases. UKRI diversity data for applicants and awardees shows the inequalities existing in awarding rates between applicants that identify as White (higher success rates) compared to applicants who identify as being from a minority (lower success rate). Minority researchers are also underrepresented in terms of assessors.	consideration alongside diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, and lived experience.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations Scheduling of application deadline and assessor requirements may disadvantage some religious groups, as religious holidays or practices may present a barrier to participation.</p> <p>Diversity of perspectives may impact on assessment.</p>	<p>Ensure religious observances are appropriately considered when scheduling assessment periods, to support inclusive participation for all members. This may include avoiding requirement for assessments during major religious festivals and holy days, where possible.</p> <p>Adopt a transparent, evidence-based approach to the selection of assessors (internal and external), using defined and published criteria. This will include consideration alongside diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, and lived experience.</p>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See General Equality and Diversity Considerations	Ensure materials are LGBTQ+ inclusive, reflecting respect for diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See General Equality and Diversity Considerations Potential discrimination given it is known somebody has a particular gender.</p> <p>Use of language can be a barrier to participation.</p>	Gender neutral and inclusive language will be used consistently across all documentation, including call specifications, applicant guidance, assessment criteria, and panel material.



				Ensure that the assessor pool has balanced gender representation, taking a proactive approach to achieving diversity across gender identities.
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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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		The lack of a physical assessment panel allows assessors from a diverse range of geographical locations to participate.
Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participants in all the activities proposed for this opportunity will not incur in any expenses.	Applicants are expected to apply through the Research Organisation, which helps to remove many potential accessibility barriers providing institutional support. Applicants and assessors will be contacted directly by ESRC staff, ensuring they have the opportunity to highlight any additional needs or request further support or reasonable adjustments.
Education background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Potential difficulties in understanding jargon/language used by assessors from a different background, outside of academia or in a different discipline	Ensure that unnecessary jargon and/or academic language are not used to prevent potential barriers to understanding.

Parent/guardian responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	May conflict with childcare commitments, presenting potential difficulties in terms of undertaking assessments in a fixed period.	The timeline for the opportunity will be shared well in advance of the deadline, enabling applicants to make appropriate arrangements around parental leave or childcare responsibilities. Assessor participation will be scheduled in due consideration of a caring responsibility. All assessors will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that may require additional support or reasonable adjustments.
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Caring responsibilities may reduce ability to prepare applications to meet the requirement for timeliness. Potential difficulties in undertaking assessments in the constrained period.	The opportunity is open for six months and the and multiple decision points means that there is not a fixed date within the open period that applications need to be submitted by. Assessor participation will be scheduled in due consideration of caring responsibilities. All assessors will be invited to highlight any personal circumstances that may require additional support or reasonable adjustments.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid the assumption that everyone has equal access to technological devices and internet.	All assessors will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that may require additional support or reasonable adjustments. Where possible, alternative formats for information will be considered.

Applicants and assessors are expected to seek assistance from their Research Organisations if they experience difficulties related to technological access.

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 complying with Equality legislation to ensure that our processes are as fair and equitable as they can be.

Eligibility criteria

- Applicants are eligible for funding regardless of whether they are established members of a recognised Research Organization (RO).
- Applicants who are not established members of an RO, must be formally supported by a RO which must confirm that appropriate facilities and support will be provided to carry out the research.

Support for UKRI applicants

- Applicants will have the opportunity to share, in confidence, any arrangements required to support their participation in the opportunity by contacting the office at react@esrc.ukri.org

Internal and external assessor pool recruitment

- External assessors are appointed based on relevant expertise. In doing so, we will seek to appoint a diverse panel, with final decisions taking into account diversity of career status, stage and institutional representation.

Panel process

- All assessors (internal and external) will receive guidance covering key principles, including fairness, objectivity and the mitigation of unconscious bias.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case Officers play a particularly important role in ensuring consistency and fairness will read comments to check that they adhere closely to the published scoring criteria and definitions.
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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 adaptable to overcome barriers on accessibility 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?	This EIA will be monitored on a monthly basis during the management of the funding opportunity by the project team. Responsibility for this will rest with the Opportunity Delivery Manager.
Next review date:	

Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	Yes – on the funding finder page for this opportunity.
Point of contact	Luke Moody
Signed off by (name and date):	Jen Gold, SRO, 05/03/2026

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



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