



UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

About your activity

Title of your activity

Funding Opportunity – Partnership to Transform University Knowledge Exchange Metrics

Council or business area

Research England, Knowledge Exchange Directorate, National KE Metrics Team

Aims and objectives

Research England (RE) is seeking to drive forwards the quality and breadth of HE Knowledge Exchange (KE) data and evidence through a funded external advisory partnership. The aim of this activity is to secure leading external expertise via a competitive grant funding opportunity to advise RE on the development, interpretation and application of next generation, robust and inclusive KE metrics and data outputs. This will support the continued evolution of the KE Metrics programme.

Objectives include:

To provide improved data and insights tools for use in the KE workplace that enables the sector to succeed. This includes informing university policy and strategic decisions, driving best practice, and improving the quality of KE provision across the sector.

To enhance the overall measurement and characterisation of the HE KE system, inform decision-making by policymakers, universities, investors, and university collaborators.

To drive more sophisticated, impactful, and effective data systems through better linking of public and commercial data sources.

To increase the breadth and quality of data for use in RE and UKRI policy development, delivery, and funding, including HEIF, KEF, and strengthen the evidence base for understanding the impact of our funding.

This EIA is intended to cover both a) the design and delivery of the competitive funding opportunity, including the competitive grant funding process and b) the subsequent delivery of the advisory contract. Where relevant, impacts and mitigations specific to either the funding call or the contracted advisory activity are explicitly identified. Potential barriers and impacts (both positive and negative) arising from the design, delivery and management of the funding opportunity are considered across protected characteristics, alongside additional EDI considerations.



Who is affected?

List all affected groups, for example, staff, applicants

- Applicants (including, for example, Higher Education Providers, research organisations, consultancies, other organisations with expertise in KE data).
- Individuals and groups employed at institutions involved in KE activities (academics, professional services, and KE partners including but not limited to business, public sector organisations, community organisations), who will have a range of protected and additional EDI characteristics.
- Higher Education Providers and the wider KE community, who may benefit indirectly from improved KE metrics and data outputs.
- Research England and UKRI staff, particularly those involved in commissioning, managing and using KE metrics and evidence.

What data and consultation have you used?

Give details of the evidence you've used, for example, survey results, UKRI reports, external data, legal precedents

This EIA has been informed by relevant Research England policy documentation, previous Equality Impact Assessments, and internal learning from comparable funding opportunities and advisory activities.

Previous EIAs include:

- [Higher Education Innovation Funding Review Equality Impact Assessment Feb 2026](#)
- [Sector engagement strategy and equality impact assessment – UKRI](#)
- [Future research assessment programme provisional equality impact assessment](#)
- [RE-08082024-Equality-Impact-Assessment-for-SIRF-review Aug-2024 v1 FINAL.pdf](#)

Impact on specific groups

Are there general impacts on multiple groups?

Give details of an impact which affects multiple groups, include the actions you will take to increase positive impact, or mitigate negative impact.

Yes, there are potential, general impacts across multiple groups. This is primarily related to access to the funding opportunity, participation in the process and participation in the advisory activity.

Potential impacts include:

Barriers to access if application processes or guidance are unclear, overly burdensome, or rely on informal networks.

Unequal participation if opportunities disproportionately attract well-established or highly resourced organisations.

Indirect exclusion if application processes or advisory activities rely on inflexible working practices or inaccessible engagement formats.

Reinforcement of historical biases if existing datasets or metrics are not sufficiently considered, although the risk is relatively low as data is unlikely to include any special category data.

Unequal regional impacts where differences in KE infrastructure, capability or capacity are not sufficiently considered which could have a knock-on effect to communities/ regions with a high proportion of protected characteristics.

Positive impacts where open competition, transparent assessment criteria and inclusive engagement practices broaden participation and diversify expertise informing KE metrics.

Positive impacts where improved KE data and metrics better identify structural bias or unequal outcomes within the KE system. More robust and inclusive metrics may therefore support evidence-based interventions, helping mitigate existing sector-level inequalities.

Actions to mitigate risk and promote equality include:

- Publishing clear, accessible and proportionate guidance and assessment criteria.
- Using open competitive processes rather than invitation-only approaches.
- Allowing applications from partnerships or consortia where appropriate.
- Ensuring reasonable timelines for application development.
- Embedding EDI considerations within assessment and contract management processes.

Assessment and interview considerations:

Interviews form part of the assessment process; arrangements will be inclusive and proportionate, this may include:

- Allowing sufficient lead-in time to enable applicants to request reasonable adjustments.
- Ensuring the in-person interview location provides disabled access and toilets, prayer rooms and breastfeeding facilities.
- Offering hybrid or remote interviews where required.
- Ensuring interview panels are briefed on inclusive practices.

There is a potential risk that the composition of assessment and decision-making panels could limit the range of perspectives applied during decision-making. To mitigate this, Research England will seek to ensure panels reflect an appropriate balance of expertise and perspectives, and that panel members are briefed on inclusive assessment practice.



Impact on protected characteristics

Complete the table for all characteristics. You only need to add details if there is a positive or negative impact.

Protected characteristic: Age

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

General assumption: Age and seniority in career stages often, but not always, overlap.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

More senior or established professionals may be more likely to lead applications due to experience or visibility within the field. Encourage applications from teams demonstrating relevant skills; ensure assessment focuses on expertise and approach rather than seniority alone.

Protected characteristic: Disability

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

Inaccessible application materials, interviews, competitive processes, engagement or working practices could limit the participation of individuals with disabilities.

During the advisory contract, the development or review of metrics, dashboards, interfaces or data products that are not accessible could also limit usability for individuals with disabilities.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Ensure application documentation is accessible; offer reasonable adjustments during the application and delivery stages; provide accessible formats and inclusive meeting practices.

Inclusive meeting and engagement practices will be adopted as standard. Applicants will be invited to specify any reasonable adjustment requirements as part of the application and interview processes. Interviews will be offered in accessible venues and/or via hybrid or remote formats as required. Where in-person meetings or interviews take place, venues will be selected with consideration given to accessible facilities, including the availability of a quiet space for rest or reflection.

Any metrics, dashboards, interfaces or analytical outputs developed or reviewed through the advisory partnership will be expected to meet accessibility standards where feasible (for example compatibility with assistive technologies, clear visual design, and appropriate use of colour and contrast).



Protected characteristic: Gender reassignment

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

There is a risk of misgendering or deadnaming (referring to a transgender or non-binary person by a name they were given at birth but no longer use) participants within the exercise.

Otherwise, no impact identified.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Encourage voluntary usage of pronouns in video conferencing usernames and on physical name badges and promote and use inclusive communication practices.

Protected characteristic: Marriage or civil partnership

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): None

Details of impact:

No impact identified, marriage or civil partnership should not be affected by this funding opportunity.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Not applicable

Protected characteristic: Pregnancy and maternity

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

Those on parental/maternity leave over the course of the the bid period may return and be unaware of the opportunity.

If interview, panel processes and subsequent delivery activities do not include sufficient breaks and spaces for pregnant and breast-feeding participants, this will limit the participation of these community members. Provide clear timelines in advance; build flexibility into delivery plans; ensure role expectations allow for leave and flexible working where possible.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Stakeholder events, meetings and engagement opportunities will typically start after 10am and should finish before typical school pick up time. Timings of events should vary by day and time to allow flexibility and increase the likelihood that those with maternity responsibilities can attend.

Meeting venues will be chosen with consideration that a private room should be available for breastfeeding and extracting milk, and participants will be informed where to find the room.

Recordings of any information sessions should be made available after events to allow people to engage when convenient.

Any community engagement will include breaks and where possible, avoid school holidays and typical school drop off and pick up times.

Protected characteristic: Race

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

Engagement with only those individuals in senior positions in the higher education sector could seriously limit input from people from minority ethnic backgrounds due to the currently low representation on senior career levels. It could also place undue burden on the limited representation at this level. Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are underrepresented in the UK research community, and particularly at senior positions, as per HESA statistical data.

The funding opportunity itself should not negatively or positively impact this protected characteristic. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of the current makeup of the research and innovation sector in England (e.g. Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are underrepresented in the research community, and particularly at senior positions (HESA data – 88% professors are white), and of any barriers to wider participation in research from all ethnicities.

Structural underrepresentation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in senior analytical and advisory roles may affect who leads applications.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Use open competition, transparent criteria and inclusive communications; focus assessment on skills, approach and experience rather than institutional prestige.

The RE Expert Advisory Group on Equality Diversity and Inclusion will be consulted where applicable

Protected characteristic: Religion or belief

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

Application or engagement timelines could clash with religious holidays.

The funding opportunity itself should not negatively or positively impact this protected characteristic.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Allow sufficient time for applications; avoid fixed-date mandatory events where possible; provide asynchronous engagement options.

Where in-person meetings or interviews are held, venues will be selected with consideration given to the availability of a private room suitable for prayer or quiet reflection.

Protected characteristic: Sex

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

The only legally recognised options for sex in the UK are 'female' and 'male'. Therefore, some community members who were born with both sets of reproductive organs (inter-sex) or those who don't identify with either of these sex options may feel excluded if no 'other' option is provided when EDI data is being collected for monitoring purposes during virtual or in person engagement.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Include 'other' or 'prefer not to say' option in EDI data collection activities.

Protected characteristic: Sexual orientation

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): None identified

Details of impact:

No impact identified. Sexual orientation should not affect opportunities to stay informed of and engage with the funding opportunity.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Not Applicable

Protected characteristic: All characteristics

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative and potential positive impacts

Details of impact:

There is a risk that historical datasets or existing metrics may reflect structural biases which could be perpetuated if used without appropriate scrutiny.

Positive impacts may also be realised where improved KE data and metrics better identify structural bias or unequal outcomes within the KE system. More robust and inclusive metrics may therefore support evidence-based interventions, helping mitigate existing sector-level inequalities.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Advisory activity will explicitly consider the limitations and potential biases within historical datasets.

Consideration of how AI is used, including transparency around assumptions and steps taken to mitigate bias.



Use of AI

The advisory activity will include usage of AI. There is a risk that this could reproduce or amplify existing bias in historical data. Risks will be mitigated through expert oversight, transparency of methodology, and consideration of bias during analysis and interpretation activities. We will expect any successful candidates to have consideration of this throughout the call and in their advisory capacity

Impact on additional characteristics

Complete the table for all characteristics. You only need to add details if there is a positive or negative impact.

Additional characteristics: Geographical location and place

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

Some community members may not be able to travel to events far from their place of residence. Recognising the distribution of HEPs across England and the location of research-intensive institutions, acknowledging their highest density in the London and Southeast region, this could have an impact on representative engagement of individuals.

Differences in KE infrastructure, institutional capacity and local ecosystems may also affect engagement with, or contribution to, advisory activity if this is not sufficiently considered.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Use national promotion channels; avoid in-person-only requirements; design delivery to minimise travel requirements.

Where in-person engagement events are held, there should either be a hybrid participation option or, they should be organised in multiple regions across England to facilitate geographic representation of our community members.

Additional characteristics: Socio-economic status

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

Organisations with fewer resources may face barriers to preparing competitive bids or participating in engagement activities that involve travel, time, or additional costs.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact

Provide clear guidance; proportionate application requirements; transparent assessment processes.



In-person engagement events should either offer a hybrid participation option or be organised in multiple regions of England to facilitate representation of our community members from a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

Additional characteristics: Education background

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): None identified

Details of impact: There is nothing to suggest that this characteristic will be impacted in the delivery of this opportunity.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact:

Not applicable

Additional characteristics: Parent or guardian responsibilities

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

Rigid expectations around working patterns could disadvantage those with parental responsibilities.

There is a risk that activities could be scheduled for times when parents/guardians are less likely to be available e.g., August, post-4.00pm, which would reduce input into from these groups. All parents may need breaks during virtual engagement to attend to their responsibilities.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact

Encourage flexible working practices within the advisory partnership, e.g. invite participants sufficiently in advance and avoid school holidays where possible.

Any events or engagement opportunities should normally start after 10am and be planned with an awareness of commitments outside of work, such as school pick up times. Timings of events should vary by day and time to allow flexibility and increase the likelihood that those with parent/guardian responsibilities can attend.

Recordings of any information sessions should be made available after events to allow people to engage when convenient.

Additional characteristics: Carer responsibilities

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

Similar risks as identified above for carers of adults or children.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact

As with those with parental or guardian responsibilities, build flexibility into engagement and delivery expectations, including timing, format and participation options.

Additional characteristics: Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): Potential negative

Details of impact:

RE only funds English higher education providers. However, funders and sector members from devolved nations, including Northern Ireland, may be invited to some engagement events and access related comms.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact

Participation of Northern Irish stakeholders in any activities will be planned in an inclusive way, regardless of their political opinions. Code of Conduct of all events will require respect of all participants towards all participants, regardless of where they are on the political spectrum.

Additional characteristics: Other characteristics

Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown): None identified

Details of impact: None identified.

Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact: Not applicable

No special category personal data will be collected as part of the funding opportunity or the advisory activity. As such, there is no identified risk of personal data being used in a way that could identify individuals or cause harm.

Final decision

Make a decision on whether to proceed with the activity

State which one of the following outcomes applies and give a reason for your decision.

No negative or positive impact identified therefore, activity will proceed

Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality

Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.

Barriers and impact identified, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity. Proceed with caution with this activity knowing the impact



Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality:

Whilst no significant direct negative impacts are anticipated, proportionate adaptations to the design and delivery of the funding opportunity will be made to promote inclusive access and participation. The activity will proceed with EDI considerations embedded throughout. We are intending for this EIA to be a live document and have no evidence to suggest that the funding opportunity should not proceed at this stage. We will review and update this EIA periodically, adapting how we conduct the opportunity or award if needed.

Review and sign off

How will you monitor and review the impact of your activity?

For example, by planning regular reviews of the EIA, consulting with affected groups

EDI considerations will be kept under review throughout the delivery of the funding opportunity and subsequent advisory activity. This will also include ongoing consideration of inclusive working practices throughout the contract management. This EIA will be treated as a live document and will be updated when our monitoring of impacts requires it. We will engage periodically with the RE EDI Expert Advisory Group on our EIA and embed EDI considerations within all of activity connected to the delivery of the funded opportunity.

What is the EIA review date?

Add a review date in the format day/month/year

30/06/2026

Contact

Enter the name and contact details for the main contact

Louise Wall, Head of Strategic Projects and Partnerships
Rhiannon Hails, Senior Policy Advisor, Research England
Email: kepolicy@re.ukri.org

Will the EIA be published?

EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities for example funding opportunities and events

Yes



Who has this been signed off by?

Include the name, date and job title

Ellen Bamford, 29/04/2026, Associate Director for Knowledge Exchange Data & Evidence

Submitting the form

You need to [submit the form to the central repository](#)

EIAs for the International Science Partnership Funds should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org

Change log

Include changes as you've reviewed the EIA. For example, based on input received from x at the announcement of opportunity stage, x was added

Name	Date	Version	Change
First version of KE Metrics Advisors – Funding Opp EIA	April 2026	1	This is the initial version, and the Equality Impact Assessment will evolve as our review progresses. Changes will be recorded in this log.

Action plan

Add the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the negative impact you have identified. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is the outcome?
Design accessible and proportionate application materials	Funding opportunity launch	RE KE SP&P Team	Internal review checklist	Inclusive access to opportunity
Promote opportunity through open, national channels	Launch period	RE KE SP&P Team	Confirmation of channels used	Wider awareness
Offer reasonable adjustments throughout process	Ongoing	RE KE SP&P Team	Applicant feedback	Reduced barriers



Review EIA	June 2026	RE KE SP&P Team	Scheduled EIA review point	Identification and mitigation of emerging EDI risks
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