

UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

About your activity

Title of your activity

Large Grant Full Applications November 2026 (invite only)

Council or business area

NERC

Aims and objectives

This funding opportunity supports innovative, large-scale and complex projects that tackle big environmental science questions and have the potential to produce world-leading research. It is open to research groups and individuals.

We:

- encourage multidisciplinary research and collaborations with other UK organisations
- welcome applications from individuals at any career stage, subject to the UKRI eligibility criteria

Applications will be subject to external peer review. Those meeting a quality threshold will be shortlisted for consideration by a moderating panel and have 14 working days to respond to reviewer comments. NERC will make the final decision based on the recommendations of the panel, available budget and alignment with the strategic priorities of the opportunity.

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the funding opportunity design, application and assessment processes.

Who is affected?



Applicants (project leads, project co-leads, researchers and other team members), eligible UK research organisations, project partners and stakeholders, NERC and UKRI staff involved in delivery, assessment and award management.

What data and consultation have you used?

UKRI and NERC equality, diversity and inclusion policies and guidance, previous EIAs, Standard UKRI/NERC funding opportunity templates and assessment processes, evidence and learning from previous NERC funding opportunities, including Chairs' panel meeting reports, views of panel members and applicants, staff observations and suggestions at wash-up meetings post panel.

Impact on specific groups

Are there general impacts on multiple groups?

Impact: This funding opportunity is for invited applicants only following a successful outline application. Team membership can be adapted between outline and full application stage – individuals are restricted to involvement in no more than two applications to this opportunity. The opportunity is open to organisations with standard NERC eligibility and uses established UKRI expert review and panel moderation processes. The opportunity recognises diverse career paths and personal circumstances, including career breaks, caring responsibilities, flexible working and alternative working patterns.

Actions to increase positive impact or mitigate negative impact: The closing date will be at least three months after publication of the funding opportunity and applicants have been informed by email one month before the opportunity publication date if they are being invited to submit a full application. Clear and accessible opportunity documentation, delivery via the UKRI Funding Service with consistent guidance for all applicants, signposting to UKRI disability and accessibility support for applicants, assessment processes aligned with UKRI principles of assessment and decision making. Should the moderating panel meeting in May 2027 be held in person, we will ensure that there will be a hybrid attendance option.

This opportunity will include the UKRI harmonised assessment criterion of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) which requires applicants to consider the responsible research context of their project, which includes EDI. Our responsible business statement (which applicants should align with) sets expectations for adopting responsible research practices to promote good research conduct and supporting a positive and inclusive culture for the community.

Impact on protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Age	None	Historically more senior/established researchers are more likely to have strong track records, be known in their research disciplines and have more experience of writing applications. There is a possibility of unconscious bias in the assessment process.	The opportunity welcomes applications from individuals at any career stage and adopts the updated UKRI individual eligibility criteria. The assessment criteria and panel guidance will aim to mitigate any potential negative impact on ECRs by focussing on applicants' (team or individual) 'capability to deliver' the proposed research and ensuring that in assessment of this criterion, individual applicants' skills and expertise are considered relative to career stage. This opportunity includes UKRI standard eligibility principles, allowing academics, technicians and research staff to be costed into the application. Unconscious bias guidance will be provided for Chairs and panel members. NERC will aim for diversity in the panel to minimise risk of bias.
Disability	None	Individuals with disabilities may experience/perceive barriers to applying for, assessing, or conducting research projects?	Clear signposting of UKRI disability and accessibility support during application, assessment and award. Unconscious bias guidance for panellists. Aim for diversity in the panel to minimise risk of bias.
Gender reassignment	None	N/A	Unconscious bias guidance for panellists. Aim for diversity in the

			panel to minimise risk of bias.
Marriage or civil partnership	None	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	None	Individuals who have childcare or other caring responsibilities may have limitations on their availability at certain times of days and may be unable to travel. People taking parental leave and/or with caring responsibilities may need to delay the grant start or work part-time on the project.	The opportunity enables researchers to design the research that suits them and their caring responsibilities. Whilst there is a fixed closing date for this opportunity, applicants will have been invited to submit to it at least four months beforehand. Chairs and panel members will be able to participate remotely in virtual/hybrid meetings. The timing of meetings can be adjusted to accommodate panel members who have childcare/other caring responsibilities. NERC will also reimburse them for caring-related costs incurred through attending the panel meeting. We anticipate that applications will have flexible (not fixed) start dates and that UKRI terms and conditions relating to no-cost extensions will apply.
Race	None	There is the possibility of unconscious bias in the assessment process. Participants for whom English is their second language may be negatively impacted. Individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds are under-represented in the	The opportunity is open to anyone who meets NERC eligibility requirements. Aim for diversity of reviewers and in the panel to minimise risk of bias. Unconscious bias guidance for panel members. Our assessment process will align with UKRI's EDI principles.

		environmental science community and the proportion decreases as you go up the career ladder.	
Religion or belief	None	There is the possibility of unconscious bias in the assessment process. Individuals attending virtual meetings may require consideration for specific times required for religious observance.	The opportunity is open to anyone who meets NERC eligibility requirements. Aim for diversity of reviewers and in the panel to minimise risk of bias. Unconscious bias guidance for panel members. We will endeavour to schedule the moderating panel to avoid religious holidays.
Sex	None	There is the possibility of unconscious bias in the assessment process. People with caring responsibilities (which falls disproportionately on women) may have less time to prepare an application, review an application or serve on the moderating panel.	The opportunity is open to anyone who meets NERC eligibility requirements. Unconscious bias guidance for panel members. Aim for diversity in the panel to minimise risk of bias. We will give applicants at least three months' notice of the closing date for the funding opportunity which will be timed to avoid school holidays. Also, we will give panel members several months' notice of the moderating panel meeting date. We will reimburse panel members for additional childcare/carers' support costs needed to allow them to attend the moderating panel meeting. We will provide a minimum of 5 working days for people to respond to the initial reviewer invitation and send system generated reminders if no response is received. We will be as flexible as possible to extend reviewer deadlines if requested.

			We anticipate that applications will have flexible (not fixed) start dates and that UKRI terms and conditions relating to no-cost extensions will apply.
Sexual orientation	None		The opportunity is open to anyone who meets NERC eligibility requirements.
		There is the possibility of unconscious bias in the assessment process.	Unconscious bias guidance for panel members. Aim for diversity in the panel to minimise risk of bias.

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	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Geographical location and place	None		The opportunity is UK-wide and open to eligible organisations across the UK.
Socio-economic status	Unknown	Potential indirect barriers reflect wider sector challenges.	The opportunity includes UKRI standard eligibility principles, allowing academics, technicians and research staff to be costed into the application. Panel members will receive reimbursement of eligible direct costs incurred in attending the moderating panel meeting.
Education background	None		The opportunity includes UKRI standard eligibility principles, allowing academics, technicians and research staff to be costed into the application.

			The opportunity enables researchers to design the research that suits them.
Parent or guardian responsibilities	None	People with caring responsibilities may have less time to prepare an application, review an application or serve on the moderating panel. Individuals who have childcare or other caring responsibilities may have limitations on their availability at certain times of days and may be unable to travel. Applicants taking parental leave and/or with caring responsibilities may need to delay the grant start or work part-time on the project.	The opportunity enables applicants to design the research that suits them and their caring responsibilities. Whilst there is a fixed closing date for this opportunity, applicants will have been invited to submit to it at least four months beforehand. Chairs and panel members will be able to participate remotely in virtual/hybrid meetings. The timing of meetings can be adjusted to accommodate panel members who have childcare/other caring responsibilities. NERC will also reimburse them for caring-related costs incurred through attending the panel meeting. We anticipate that applications will have flexible (not fixed) start dates and that UKRI terms and conditions relating to no-cost extensions will apply.
Carer responsibilities	Positive	People with caring responsibilities may have less time to prepare an application, review an application or serve on the moderating panel	The opportunity enables applicants to design the research that suits them and their caring responsibilities. We will give applicants at least four months' notice of the closing date for the funding opportunity which will be timed to avoid school holidays. Also, we will give panel members several months' notice of the moderating panel meeting date

		Individuals who have childcare or other caring responsibilities may have limitations on their availability at certain times of days and may be unable to travel. People with caring responsibilities may need to delay the grant start or work part-time on the project	and they will be able to participate remotely in virtual/hybrid meetings. The timing of meetings can be adjusted to accommodate panel members who have childcare/other caring responsibilities. NERC will also reimburse them for caring-related costs incurred through attending the panel meeting. We anticipate that applications will have flexible (not fixed) start dates and that UKRI terms and conditions relating to no-cost extensions will apply.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	None	N/A	N/A
Other characteristics	None	No additional impacts identified.	N/A

Final decision

Make a decision on whether to proceed with the activity

Decision: No negative or positive impact identified, therefore activity will proceed.

Reason: The funding opportunity aligns with UKRI equality, diversity and inclusion principles. No disproportionate negative impacts have been identified, and appropriate mitigations are in place.

Review and sign off

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

Monitoring of application and award data where available. Review of feedback from the co-Chairs, panel members and applicants alongside the EIA as part of the lessons learned activities.

What is the EIA review date?

30 June 2027

Contact

NERC Large Grants team largegrants@nerc.ukri.org

Will the EIA be published?

Yes

Who has this been signed off by?

Liesbeth Renders, Associate Director of Discovery Science, Talent & Skills and Community Engagement: 15 July 2026

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
		1	
		2	
		3	

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?