



UK Research
and Innovation

UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

About your activity

Title of your activity

Strategic Infrastructure/Resources to support Strategic Infrastructure

Council or business area

EPSRC / Research Infrastructure

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this activity are:

- To fund items of equipment over £400K that enhance UK scientific capability and support a portfolio of high-quality, cutting-edge research of high priority to EPSRC.
- To encourage a culture of equipment sharing as appropriate.
- To improve access to existing equipment in order to maximise its usage.
- To support equality, diversity, and inclusion for all funding applicants, encouraging applicants from a diverse range of researchers and accommodating personal circumstances.

This opportunity was first introduced in 2012 and is the same as the previous one launched in July 2026 under [EPSRC Strategic Infrastructure 2026 \(invite only\) – UKRI](#). No changes were made from the previous proposal stage.



Who is affected?

Academics and Research Technical Professionals wishing to apply for equipment totalling over £400K, or for resources to enhance the capability of existing infrastructure.

Members of the Research infrastructure theme, members of other EPSRC themes involved in the processing of proposals.

What data and consultation have you used?

- Funding diversity data from previous rounds of the scheme
- Lessons learned from previous strategic infrastructure rounds
- Previous EIAs for strategic infrastructure
- Consultation with the UKRI EDI Caucus and the Research Infrastructure Strategic Advisory Team
- Feedback from wider EPSRC research community

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.

Impact (affecting multiple groups)

The Strategic Infrastructure funding opportunity has potential impacts across multiple protected and additional characteristic groups. Due to the scale and strategic nature of the funding, there is a risk of unconscious bias during assessment, which could affect applicants across characteristics including age, sex, race, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, educational background and geographical location. In addition, participation in the application and assessment process may be more challenging for individuals with caring responsibilities, parental responsibilities, disabilities, religious commitments, or other personal circumstances that affect availability at key assessment stages.

At the same time, the opportunity has the potential to create positive impacts across multiple groups by improving access to strategic research infrastructure, supporting a broader range of



researchers and institutions, encouraging equipment sharing, and requiring applicants to consider accessibility and inclusive access in the management of funded infrastructure.

Actions to increase positive impact and mitigate negative impact

- Ensure assessment panels have diverse membership and are briefed on unconscious bias and inclusive assessment practices.
- Require panel members and EPSRC staff to challenge inappropriate comments or bias during assessment discussions.
- Assess applications solely against the published assessment criteria and strategic objectives.
- Deliver panels virtually where appropriate and provide flexibility around scheduling, regular breaks, and reasonable adjustments.
- Continue providing guidance, webinars, FAQs and support to applicants to ensure equitable access to information.
- Encourage applicants to include accessibility and inclusion plans for proposed infrastructure to maximise benefits for a diverse range of users.
- Monitor participation and outcomes data across funding rounds and review the EIA regularly to identify and address any emerging inequalities.

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	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Age	Negative	Potentially negative - The call is open to all career stages, however due to the size of equipment bids there may be unconscious bias towards applicants that are early career.	EPSRC will endeavour to have representation from across career stages and positions on the interview panel, such as RTPs and ECRs. Panel are briefed regarding unconscious bias prior to the interview panel. During the panel, the panel members and EPSRC staff are



			encouraged to challenge any bias and inappropriate comments. EPSRC encourages applicants from diverse career stages to apply for the opportunity. Resources are provided, such as webinars recordings and FAQ documents, to ensure all applicants have the same knowledge of the scheme and access to EPSRC advice.
Disability	Positive & Negative	The interview panel is taking place virtually which is a long period of screen time which may be a problem for some. However, those with physical disabilities will find it easier to attend virtually. The applicant could find difficulties when applying for the opportunity and also during the assessment process	Regular breaks will be included in the agenda. Panel members will be encouraged to request additional breaks. EPSRC and UKRI offer support in the application and assessment process, and when requesting eligible costs for reasonable adjustments. In addition, EPSRC engages with members of the EDI Hub to provide feedback on the application and interview process. Within the application, applicants are asked to provide an accessibility plan for their proposed infrastructure. This includes accommodation for all types of disabilities.
Gender reassignment	Positive & Negative	Strategic infrastructure offers opportunities to embed equality in leadership, skills development and workforce planning. Potentially negative - Potential unconscious bias of panel members and convenors may affect the decision process. Infrastructure leadership and technical roles may skew	EPSRC is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants, that includes UKRI gender equality plan, which is part of the equality, diversity and inclusion work, EDI strategy and action plans. EPSRC and UKRI emphasise that anyone can apply for this opportunity regardless of their gender.

		towards men, reinforcing gender imbalance. Trans and non-binary researchers may face exclusion through binary systems (facilities access, records, culture) or lack of visible support.	During the assessment process, panel members and EPSRC staff are encouraged to challenge any bias or inappropriate comments. EPSRC staff will look to ensure assessment is made based solely on published assessment criteria.
Marriage or civil partnership	None	Marriage or civil partnership is not impeditive for applicants.	
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	Potentially negative – participation in the call may be negatively affected if EPSRC panel members or applicants are unavailable at key assessment stages. This is dependent on individual circumstances. Potentially negative - Potential unconscious bias of panel members may affect the decision process.	The outline stage is held internally by EPSRC personnel, therefore, there is no impact on the applicant at this stage. EPSRC panel members and applicants are contacted in advance of the outline assessment to schedule the panel on a preferred day/time. Panels will be held virtually so that travelling to Polaris House is not necessary. The Research Infrastructure team will do its best to accommodate timing adjustments, such as deputising - When EPSRC panel members cannot attend the panel, they will send others to represent them and the team of their behalf. In line with EPSRC policies, we will endeavour to ensure both the outline (internal EPSRC) and interview panel have diverse membership. However, this might be impacted by panel member's availability and expertise in the area.

			EPSRC is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants, that includes UKRI gender equality plan, which is part of the equality, diversity and inclusion work, EDI strategy and action plans. EPSRC and UKRI emphasise that anyone can apply for this opportunity regarding their race.
Race	Negative	Potentially negative - Potential unconscious bias of panel members and convenors may affect the decision process.	In line with EPSRC policies, we will endeavour to ensure both the outline (internal EPSRC) and interview panel have diverse membership. However, this might be impacted by panel member's availability and expertise in the area. EPSRC is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants, that includes UKRI gender equality plan, which is part of the equality, diversity and inclusion work, EDI strategy and action plans. EPSRC and UKRI emphasise that anyone can apply for this opportunity regarding their race.
Religion or belief	Negative	Potentially negative - The date and time of the outline panel may coincide with a religious festival, date, or prayer time.	The timeline has been drawn up with due consideration of all religious festivals during the lifecycle of the activity. The Research Infrastructure team will do its best to accommodate timing adjustments, such as deputising - When EPSRC panel members cannot attend the panel, they will send others to represent them and the team on their behalf.



			Panel meetings will be held virtually and include regular breaks.
Sex	Negative	Potentially negative - Potential unconscious bias of panel members and convenors may affect the decision process.	In line with EPSRC policies, both the outline (internal EPSRC) and interview panel will be mixed gender. The opportunity document encourages a broad range of applicants and EPSRC provides support for completing the application.
Sexual orientation	Negative	Potentially negative - Potential unconscious bias of panel members and convenors may affect the decision process.	EPSRC engages with members of the EDI Hub to provide feedback on the application and interview process. EPSRC is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants, that includes UKRI gender equality plan, which is part of the equality, diversity and inclusion work, EDI strategy and action plans. EPSRC and UKRI emphasise that anyone can apply for this opportunity regarding their sexual orientation.

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	Positive & Negative	The funding opportunity aims to enhance UK scientific capability, which could benefit research institutions across diverse regions, including underrepresented areas. Distribution of previous EPSRC-funded projects and their geographical spread. Potential bias from panel members against certain institutions.	Continue outreach to institutions across the UK. Use case studies to promote and further benefit to diverse regions. Research Infrastructure provides guidance and briefs panel members about bias against institutions and EPSRC's themes. Research Infrastructure also ensures that the panel members assess applications against the assessment criteria for the opportunity, as well as the strategic priority for their theme During the panel, the panel members and convenors are encouraged to challenge any bias and inappropriate comments.
Socio-economic status	Positive	By funding strategic infrastructure, the opportunity may indirectly support researchers from varied socio-economic backgrounds by improving access to cutting-edge facilities.	Institutions with a higher proportion of researchers from disadvantaged backgrounds can benefit from the infrastructure.
Education background	Positive & Negative	The opportunity focuses on infrastructure rather than individuals, but improved facilities could enhance	Applications from institutions with diverse educational profiles are welcomed to apply for this opportunity as long as it has been

		educational outcomes for students and researchers. Bias based on an applicant's background could impact the assessment of their application.	successful during the outline stage. EPSRC provides guidance to panel members about R4RI (Résumé for Research and Innovation), which puts emphasis on the ability to deliver rather than educational background. During the assessment process, panel members and EPSRC staff are encouraged to challenge any bias or inappropriate comments. EPSRC staff will look to ensure assessment is made based solely on published assessment criteria.
Parent or guardian responsibilities	Positive & Negative	Potentially positive - It could indirectly benefit researchers with such responsibilities by improving work-life balance through better infrastructure. Potentially negative – participation in the call may be negatively affected if potential applicants, peer reviewers or panel members are unavailable at key assessment stages or any additional responsibilities were inappropriately used during assessment of applications. This is dependent on individual circumstances.	This opportunity supports equality, diversity, and inclusion for all funding applicants, encouraging applicants from a diverse range of research and accommodating personal circumstances such as flexible working, alternative working patterns etc. The outline stage is held internally by EPSRC personnel, therefore, there is no impact on the applicant at this stage. EPSRC panel members are contacted in advance of the outline assessment to schedule the panel on a preferred day/time. Panels will be held virtually so that travelling to Polaris House is not necessary. The Research Infrastructure team will do its best to accommodate timing adjustments, such as deputising - When EPSRC panel members cannot attend the

			panel, they will send others to represent them and the team on their behalf.
Carer responsibilities	Positive & Negative	Enhanced infrastructure may provide more flexible research opportunities for carers. Potentially negative – participation in the call may be negatively affected if potential applicants, peer reviewers or panel members are unavailable at key assessment stages or any additional responsibilities were inappropriately used during assessment of applications. This is dependent on individual circumstances.	Highlight the importance of inclusive project planning to accommodate carers. Provide accessibility guidance for applicants. The outline stage is held internally by EPSRC personnel, therefore, there is no impact on the applicant at this stage. EPSRC panel members are contacted in advance of the outline assessment to schedule the panel on a preferred day/time. Panels will be held virtually so that travelling to Polaris House is not necessary. The Research Infrastructure team will do its best to accommodate timing adjustments, such as deputising - When EPSRC panel members cannot attend the panel, they will send others to represent them and the team on their behalf. During the assessment process, panel members and EPSRC staff are encouraged to challenge any bias or inappropriate comments. EPSRC staff will look to ensure assessment is made based solely on published assessment criteria.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	None	The funding opportunity is unlikely to impact this characteristic directly.	Ensure equal access to the opportunity across all regions, including Northern Ireland as long as it has been successful during the outline stage.



			Information regarding political alignment is neither requested nor incorporated into assessment of applications.
Other characteristics		N/A	N/A

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.

1. No negative or positive impact identified therefore, activity will proceed
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality
3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.
- 4. 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**

The outline stage is held internally by EPSRC personnel, therefore, there is no impact on the applicant at this stage - We will communicate clearly with applicants regarding timelines and outcomes as soon as possible. We will do our best to accommodate timing adjustments, such as deputising - When EPSRC panel members cannot attend the panel, they will send others to represent them and the team on their behalf.

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

Updates are given at every SAT and trends discussed. Universities are required to provide an annual equipment report for all items over £400K.

The EIA is regularly reviewed as a live document when organising the peer review process of the strategic infrastructure opportunity. The opportunity has two rounds per year and when planning each round the EIA is also reviewed and updated.

What is the EIA review date?

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

28-July-2026

Contact

Enter the name and contact details for the main contact

Researchinfrastructure@epsrc.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

Alex Broomsgrove, Joint Head of Research Infrastructure, 10 August 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?