

UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

About your activity

Title of your activity

Funding opportunity-NQS Mission 2 - Components, Systems and Architectures.

Council or business area

EPSRC

Aims and objectives

Give an outline of your activity in two or three sentences, including the aspects of it which need to be covered by the EIA.

This activity will support the delivery of National Quantum Strategy Mission 2 by addressing priority research challenges in quantum networking and communications. The investment will provide opportunities for researchers to advance research and development relevant to mission 2, collaborate across disciplines and engage with relevant stakeholders, strengthening the UK research base and advancing knowledge in the field. By fostering knowledge exchange and building connections across the ecosystem, projects will contribute to future innovation, capability development and long-term impact.

Who is affected?

Affected groups include applicants, grant holders, staff and researchers in academia, industry, public sector research establishments, investment bodies.

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

Relevant EPSRC and UKRI guidance and best practice for EDI.

Consultation with Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

Lessons learned from similar projects

Consultation with EPSRC Business Improvement Team

Consultation with the NQTP Strategic Advisory Board

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 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	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants from specific age groups.	• Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. • Applicants are not asked to disclose their age. • We will not be equating age with experience and focus on required competencies. All views and opinions will be valued regardless of level of seniority. • Evidence requirements for the Director are only about their ability to manage a large complex research grant and collaborate with users. They do not refer to years of experience

			• EPSRC presence at assessment meetings acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment.
Disability	Potentially negative	In person or virtual panel as part of the process which could lead to accessibility issue. All information provided is in written format. A panel and chairs briefing meeting will be provided and briefings will be available in the call guidance.	• Applicants are not asked to disclose whether they have a disability. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. • Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review. • All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation. • Participants who can't travel due to disability reasons have the option to attend virtually. • Ensure the venue has accessibility facilities and put resources in place for virtual panel if required/preferred. • Reasonable adjustments for specific requirements will be made. Documents will be produced in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines. • It is anticipated that panels will be held virtually. Where held in person or not fully virtual, the option to attend virtually will be available. Accessibility will be

			considered when choosing a physical venue. - Panel dates will be provided in advance to give sufficient time for applicants to discuss and plan required adjustments as required. - We will be able to provide monetary support for any attendees who may request personal assistance e.g., carer, interpreter or note taker.
Gender reassignment	None identified		- Applicants are not asked to disclose whether they have undergone gender reassignment. - Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. - We will ensure that gender neutral language is used in both written and verbal form. - If panel meetings are held in-person we will look to provide gender-neutral facilities where possible
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		- Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status - Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative	Also, a researcher on parental leave during the open call may be unable to apply. Participation in activity could be restricted by lack of availability due to	- Reasonable adjustments will be made for individuals if required at all stages of the process. - Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early as possible. - We will make every effort to ensure that school holiday and public holiday key dates will be avoided when deciding on panel meeting dates.

		parental leave/caring responsibilities/ pregnancy.	• EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these. Panellists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held in person or virtually as far in advance as possible. • We will ensure that breaks are scheduled in throughout the duration of panel meetings whether held virtually or in-person. • Additional care requirements could occur if individuals are required to attend the panel meeting on a non-working day or work extended hours on a normal working day. It is an individual's responsibility to check with EPSRC and confirm what costs can be reimbursed prior to attendance at a panel. Further details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with caring responsibilities can be found here. • Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.
Race	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals of specific race, if this is known to the panel.	• Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. • To be mindful to limit the use of colloquialisms used within both written and verbal format. • We will endeavour to have representation of ethnic diversity amongst panel members and reviewers.

			• Applicants are not asked to disclose their ethnicities
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	Key dates (open call closing, panel) coinciding with specific religious festivals/ events could disadvantage specific religious groups	• All panel members will be asked to inform EPSRC of any personal circumstances that may affect their ability to participate and how this can be accommodated for. • Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen. • To ensure the venue for the panel meeting can provide a prayer/quiet room. • Breaks scheduled to coincide with any prayer times. • Dietary requirements and the opportunity to raise them in advance will be available to all attendees. • Applicants are not asked to disclose their religious beliefs
Sex	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of gender.	• Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings. • We will ensure to select gender diverse panellists and reviewers. • Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. • Applicants are not asked to disclose their gender. • In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will be mixed gender.
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals of specific sexual orientations, if this is known to the panel.	• Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. • Applicants are not asked to disclose their sexual orientation. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.

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	Potentially Negative	Disability or travel plans can be impacted during in-person panel	The Expert Panel is planned to be held virtually, with option to hold in person with hybrid element to allow virtual attendance, but if we have international panellists, then we will aim to find a time which is acceptable for all.
Socio-economic status	Negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of their socio-economic status	Aim for diversity in the panel to minimise risk of bias.
Education background	Negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of their education background	Aim for diversity in the panel to minimise risk of bias.
Parent or guardian responsibilities	Negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of their parental responsibilities	For virtual panel: make panellists and attendees aware that some attendees may require flexibility and make reasonable accommodations if needed. For in-person panel: make reasonable accommodations if needed and aim to run at a time which is most suitable for all. Aim for diversity in the panel to minimise risk of bias.

Carer responsibilities	Negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of their carer responsibilities	For virtual panel: make panellists and attendees aware that some attendees may require flexibility and make reasonable accommodations if needed. For in-person panel: make reasonable accommodations if needed and aim to run at a time which is most suitable for all. Aim for diversity in the panel to minimise risk of bias.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	Negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of their political opinion	Aim for diversity in the panel to minimise risk of bias.
Other characteristics		N/A	As above, panel will be briefed on and told to look out for, unconscious bias. Also, we will aim for diversity in the panel to minimise bias.

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

Review and sign off

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

We will apply all reasonable mitigations as described above and adapt further where any unforeseen issues arise during the process. The assessment process has been reviewed and designed to ensure any unconscious bias and challenges to participation will be identified and managed. All EPSRC staff involved in the call have received unconscious bias training. All Panel Chairs and members will receive an unconscious bias briefing.

What is the EIA review date?

The EIA is a live document and will be regularly reviewed throughout the life cycle of the activity and at important points - see action plan.

The EIA will also be reviewed as part of any closure or lessons learned activity.

Contact

Quantum Technologies Theme – QuantumTechnologies@epsrc.ukri.org

Will the EIA be published?

Yes, this EIAs will be published alongside the funding opportunity

Who has this been signed off by?

Lydia Gardner, Joint Head of Quantum Technologies, 11/08/2026

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
Adam Oliver	03/07/2026	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?
Review diversity information in this funding opportunity	TBC	Adam	Will ensure requirements from EIA will be embedded in the funding opportunity	Inform inclusive design of the activity
Review when inviting reviewers for expert panel	TBC	Adam	Through the use of this document and review date updated	A diverse panel will be recruited which will reflect the diversity of our research community
Planning for in-person expert panel	TBC	Adam	Through the use of this EIA and onboarding folder documents and review date updated	EDI is embedded in the planning materials for panel
Expert panel	TBC	Adam	Through the use of this EIA and incorporation of EDI into panel guidelines and documents	The chair will run an inclusive panel meeting in which everyone has chance to fully participate.



				The design will be assessed internally by the team to ensure diversity requirements are in line with the funding opportunity
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