



UK Research
and Innovation

UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	Physical Sciences NRF Portfolio Refresh (Invite only)
Council/department/project team	EPSRC, Physical Sciences Team
Aims and objectives of the activity	This EIA is being produced to cover a portfolio refresh activity that requires us to consider equality as part of the advertising, application process, external review, building a panel, hosting panel meetings and all other related activities. This is an invite-only funding opportunity to support National Research Facilities (NRFs) for research across EPSRC Physical Sciences within the defined scope of the call. As UKRI and EPSRC enter a new strategy period and following consultation with the SAT and the Research Infrastructure team, the Physical Sciences theme is reviewing its infrastructure portfolio to ensure it continues to support science driven growth and deliver value for money. The aim is to shape a portfolio that is agile, resilient, and responsive to emerging research needs within a fixed financial landscape. As part of this activity, EPSRC may reduce or stop funding NRFs that do not show a clear user-driven need that fits with national needs. Its primary purpose is to ensure that we have a portfolio of NRFs fit for the future. We expect applications to demonstrate adherence to the definition of EPSRC National Research Facilities (NRFs). Facilities should operate nationally significant infrastructure that provides open, user focused access to advanced equipment and expertise; support high quality, collaborative research across the UK; maintain strong governance that enables broad community access and impact; and show leadership in responsible innovation, EDI and accessibility, trusted research, and environmental and financial sustainability.
Who is affected by your activity?	This portfolio refresh activity covers seven existing National Research Facilities and therefore their leadership and management teams, research technical staff, administrative staff, as well as members of the research community in their existing user-bases in all related disciplines are affected. Further groups affected by this call include panel members, research council staff and members of the research community who would consider using any of the National Research Facilities in question.

What data and consultation have you used?	This opportunity follows consultation with the Physical Sciences Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) in May 2025 on the Strategic Infrastructure and National Research Facilities landscape. The SAT were asked to: • Reflect on the future needs of our NRF portfolio, considering the emerging research and innovation requirements, and financial pressures. • Consider the future investment strategy for our strategic infrastructure portfolio and options for further optimising the existing investment landscape. The High-Level Group for the Research Infrastructure Team was also consulted. We sought their opinion on the definition of a National Research Facility and facilitated a session seeking inputs on the following points: • What key features do we need in a future PS NRF portfolio? • What peer review approaches might be open to us to support a more strategic decision? • What is the essential information for peer review and how might we fully utilise annual reports? • How might we carefully assess value for money vs scientific return? • How do we sunset an NRF with tact and sensitivity, and without adversely affecting wider programmes? The SAT and HLG's advice have and will continue to help shape our ongoing activities, strategy and investment decisions, ensuring that our portfolio remains responsive to emerging research needs in an agile and resilient way.
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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
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	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.
Age	☐	☒	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants from specific age groups.	Applicants are not asked to disclose their age. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. Aim for diversity in the panels. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment.
Disability	☒	☒	As the panel will be held virtually, the participants will be able to join from their own accessible venue. However, this may also have a negative impact on those with dyslexia, hearing impairments, attention disorders etc.	Applicants do not need to disclose whether they have a disability. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. Panel will be held virtually. Every attempt will be made to reasonably accommodate accessibility requirements ahead of and during the panel. The ability to request accommodations will be flagged clearly during pre-panel briefings.
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	☐	☐	None identified	Applicants do not need to disclose whether they have undergone gender reassignment. Panel members will be provided with an unconscious bias document and will be briefed by the panel convenors. EPSRC members of staff assisting the process must have completed the unconscious bias training.

Marriage or civil partnership	☐	☐	None Identified	Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Pregnancy and maternity	☐	☒	A researcher on parental leave during the call may be unable to take part.	Applicants do not need to disclose pregnancy. Support will be offered for people with caring responsibilities, and reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible. Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early as possible.
Race	☐	☒	Potential risk –lack of diversity of ethnicity and race of panel members and/or applicants.	Applicants are not asked to disclose their ethnicities. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment. Aim for diversity in the panels.
Religion or belief	☐	☒	Key dates during the timeline may coincide with specific religious festival or events which could disadvantage specific religious groups.	Ensure religious observances are considered when meeting dates and opportunity closing dates are chosen. Applicants are not asked to disclose their religious beliefs.
Sexual orientation	☐	☒	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals of specific sexual orientations, if this is known to the panel.	Applicants are not asked to disclose their sexual orientation. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Sex	☐	☒	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants based on gender. Potential risk –lack of gender balance of panel members and/or applicants.	Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews

				acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment. In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will be mixed gender, with a target of 30% for the under-represented gender. Gender neutral language will be used throughout discussions of individuals.
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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)	☐	☐	None identified	The panel will be virtual to allow for panellists and applicants to attend online.
Socio-economic status	☐	☐	None identified	
Education background	☐	☐	None identified	
Parent/guardian responsibilities	☐	☐		Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible. EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these.

Carer/parent carer responsibilities	☐	☐		Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible. EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	☐	☐	None identified	
Other characteristics	☐	☐	Work for reviewers/panel members may affect those with anxiety. Overly large workloads, and/or a lack of clarity from EPSRC, may affect decision-making. All considerations above should be applied to panel members, applicants, and EPSRC staff.	Ensure we are clear in what the reviewer/panel is assessing, and what is required of them. Aim to give reviewers/panellists sufficient time to complete their review or panel pre-work.

Are there general or overarching impacts on multiple groups ? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?	For general impacts and actions that affect more than one protected characteristic, please use this space. In-person meetings can present as barriers for disabled people, as well as those with parental or caring responsibilities. We will adopt hybrid and/or fully virtual meetings to avoid access issues, travel and overnight stay requirements, and facilitate the use of personal equipment (e.g. closed captioning or live transcript provision). For specific impacts and actions for individual characteristics, please use the table below. Your assessment could encompass: • How your activity supports UKRI or Council's EDI objectives • positive impacts. Think about how you promote equality and foster good relations between people who do or do not share a characteristic. • negative impacts • no impact. Share evidence to support this
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	• actions you are going to consider/put in place to remove disadvantages or minimise negative impacts. You should consider whether you need to change the activity, change how it is implemented or whether the aims could be achieved in a different way • outcomes and outputs. Share how you will measure these • Negative impacts due to accessibility and caring responsibilities will be mitigated using EPSRC/UKRI policies when organising the panel meeting. The panel meeting will be held online to be accessible to all participants. • Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during any interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment. • In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will be mixed gender, with a target of 30% for the underrepresented gender. • An evaluation survey will be given to panel members, and they will be actively encouraged to fill these out and return them. This will help support future activities through a better understanding of impacts.
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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 .	☐	
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	☒	This portfolio review activity has identified possible risks and impacts associated with the activity and has adapted its design to reduce the chance of bias and limit any potential negative impacts on protected groups.
3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	☐	
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.	☐	

Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?	• We will review the EIA as part of a lessons learned activity at the end of the timeline for this portfolio refresh. • Research outcomes for renewed facilities will be monitored via ResearchFish. • We will use data from groups affected by this portfolio refresh to inform future decisions and use new insights to review this EIA. • For successful facilities, EPSRC portfolio managers or senior portfolio managers will be members of the facility advisory board or steering committee. An annual report by the facility with key performance indicators will be submitted to EPSRC and assessed by the high-level group that oversees EPSRC national research facilities. A mid-term review will be conducted by EPSRC, employing an independent peer review panel to determine whether the facility should continue to be funded for the full 5 years.
Next review date:	tbc
Will this EIA be published? EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities for example funding opportunities and events.	Yes
Point of contact	EPSRC Physical Sciences Team – PhysicalSciences@epsrc.ukri.org Or individuals: Leila Behrooz Jessica Parkes
Signed off by (name and date):	

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

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
	11/05/2026	1	Finished Draft
		2	
		3	

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?