



**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

Question	Response
<b>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</b>	EPSRC Digital Twinning Research Hub for Decarbonising Transport
<b>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</b>	This funding opportunity intends to support one large scale, interdisciplinary, digital research hub which will support both the decarbonisation and improved integration of transport systems in the UK..
<b>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</b>	Following extensive engagement with government, industry, and academic advisors, including seeking advice from Chief Scientific Advisors (CSAs), EPSRC decided to launch a series of investments in digital twinning research. Some of these investments are funded by EPSRC, whilst others are funded through the UKRI Building a Secure and Resilient World strategic theme. On the advice of CSAs, notably Sarah Sharples and Paul Monks, the main EPSRC-funded applied research investment in digital twinning is to be in support of the decarbonisation of transport. This investment is being run through a two-stage 'Leader First' approach with the potential for up to £20m of EPSRC funding in total to be provided, if deemed successful through peer review. We will need to provide just less than £20m of funding, even when including indexation.
<b>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals eligible to apply for EPSRC funding and others who may be employed using funding awarded as a result of this call.</li> <li>• Research office/institutions and staff</li> <li>• External expert reviewers and panel members</li> <li>• There will be significant interaction with government, industry, academia and the wider innovation landscape.</li> <li>• UKRI staff running the opportunity</li> </ul>
<b>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant holder will establish an Independent Advisory Board with an EPSRC Project Officer on the Board.</li> <li>• The grant holder will be required to submit annual progress report to EPSRC detailing their progress against agreed non-financial performance metrics.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The activity of the hub will be monitored by the Digital Security and Resilience Theme in EPSRC.</li> <li>• Research outcomes will be collected through Researchfish and additional data through an annual data return.</li> <li>• The impact of this funding opportunity will be monitored and reviewed at the conclusion of the grant (5 years).</li> </ul>
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As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

- Select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.
- All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#).
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
- Support and encourage panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.
- Support flexible working of stakeholders.
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavor to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors.
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
<b>Disability</b>	Access to meeting venues for panel members and applicants could have a negative impact on participation.	Applicants/panel members may find it difficult to participate in briefings/panels	Panels are likely to be held entirely virtually to reduce the barriers associated with in-person meetings.

		<p>dependent on location selected.</p> <p>Timescales for the call may affect ability to participate e.g. if on sick leave or reduced hours.</p> <p>EPSRC support staff co-ordinating the process will request details of any particular requirements, but we will be aware that some individuals may choose not to disclose this information.</p>	<p>If any meetings are not held remotely, all venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustment made to logistics to support participation. Additional care requirements could occur if individuals are required to: Participate in events on what would normally be a nonworking day, work extended hours on a normal working day, attend meetings with overnight stays and/or travel overseas. Further details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with caring responsibilities can be <a href="#">found here</a>. Information will be made available for those not able to attend meetings.</p>
<p><b>Gender reassignment</b></p>	<p>Possible Negative:</p> <p>If holding in person meetings, availability of non-gender specific toilet facilities.</p> <p>Panel members may be biased with prejudices affecting their decision-making.</p>	<p>EPSRC support staff co-ordinating the process will request details of any particular requirements, but we will be aware that some individuals may choose not to disclose this information.</p>	<p>We are likely to run the panels entirely virtually to reduce the barriers associated with in-person meetings.</p> <p>If we hold in person meetings, ensure we provide the location of non-gender specific facilities, if they are available.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Applicants are not asked to disclose whether they have undergone gender reassignment. Anonymity is not practical at interview, but standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process.</p>
<p><b>Marriage or civil partnership</b></p>	<p>No known negative impact</p>		<p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation.</p>

			Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
<b>Care-giving, pregnancy and maternity</b>	<p>Possible Negative, particularly if having in-person meetings:</p> <p>Some attendees may have breastfeeding schedules.</p> <p>Some attendees may have care-giving/parenting responsibilities.</p> <p>Pregnant attendees may have specific dietary requirements or need more breaks than those scheduled in the agenda.</p>	<p>EPSRC support staff co-ordinating the process will request details of any particular requirements, but we will be aware that some individuals may choose not to disclose this information.</p> <p>Timescales for the call may affect ability to participate e.g. if on parental leave or childcare.</p>	<p>This is an invite only opportunity and we have not been made aware of any care-giving, pregnancy and maternity responsibilities.</p> <p>We are likely to run the interview panel entirely virtually, but with virtual or physical meetings we will have appropriate start/finish times, and make sure there are sufficient breaks built into the schedule.</p> <p>Where meetings are not held remotely, all venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustment made to logistics to support participation.</p> <p>Additional care requirements could occur if individuals are required to: Participate in events on what would normally be a nonworking day, work extended hours on a normal working day, attend meetings with overnight stays and/or travel overseas. Further details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with caring responsibilities can be <a href="#">found here</a>.</p> <p>Call is only open for a short while but this has been discussed and agreed with the applicants.</p>
<b>Race</b>	<p>Possible negative:</p> <p>Panel members might be biased by the race of applicants.</p>	<p>Potential for unconscious bias in panel process.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>EPSRC have undertaken analysis to better understand the disparity of gender and race in our funding portfolio. Our aim is to ensure that</p>

			<p>the ethnic diversity in our grant portfolio and of those who engage in our peer review, advisory and governance processes is at least as representative of the engineering and physical sciences academic researcher population and our award rates across different ethnicities show no disparity. More information is available at <a href="https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/edi-at-epsrc/ethnicity-and-race-equality/">https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/edi-at-epsrc/ethnicity-and-race-equality/</a>.</p> <p>Aim for diversity in the panels.</p>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<p>Participation in funding opportunity may be affected, if potential applicants or peer reviewers are unavailable at key assessment stages. Activities could coincide with religious holidays.</p> <p>Panel members might be biased by the religious beliefs (or lack thereof) of applicants.</p>	<p>Potential for unconscious bias in panel process.</p> <p>Participation could be affected by religious holidays.</p>	<p>As much detail on key dates will be provided when the opportunity is published, allowing early engagement with EPSRC on specific mitigations. EPSRC will do its best to accommodate adjustments. EPSRC will check for and avoid significant dates.</p> <p>Aim for diversity in the panels.</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<p>Panel members might be biased by the sexual orientation of applicants.</p>	<p>Potential for unconscious bias in panel process</p>	<p>Unconscious bias awareness, as above.</p> <p>Aim for diversity in the panels.</p>
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	<p>Panel members can be biased by gender of applicants.</p>	<p>Potential for unconscious bias in panel process.</p>	<p>Unconscious bias awareness, as above.</p> <p>In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will have balanced gender representation</p> <p>Ensure use of gender neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.</p> <p>Aim for diversity in the panels.</p>
<b>Age</b>	<p>Panel members can be biased by age of applicants.</p>	<p>Potential for unconscious bias in panel process</p>	<p>Unconscious bias awareness, as above.</p>

			Aim for diversity in the panels.
<b>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</b>	None identified.		

**Evaluation:**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Explanation / justification</b>	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	A number of potential negative impacts have been identified and considered as part of the call design. Reasonable adjustments will be made and by adhering to the standard peer review principles the risks have been/will be mitigated as far as possible	
<b>Final Decision:</b>	<b>Tick the relevant box</b>	<b>Include any explanation / justification required</b>
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will <b>proceed</b> .		
2. You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can <b>adapt or change</b> the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	Yes	Barriers have been identified but all actions to address negative impact have been highlighted above and all alternative options have been carefully considered. Possible risks and bias associated with this activity have been identified, particularly for the interviews, and activities adapted accordingly. ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the activity and EPSRC will review this EIA accordingly. Reasonable adjustments will also be made wherever possible

<b>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required</b> (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>15/12/2023</b>
<b>Review date (if applicable):</b>	<b>n/a</b>

**Change log**

Name	Date	Version	Change