# UK Research and Innovation

# Equality Impact Assessment Form

\*See guidance document for detailed support.

\* Delete the guidance text in the response column when completing your EIA.

## Overview of activity

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|  | **Response** |
| Name of activity being assessed | UKRI Creating Opportunities Evaluation Development Follow-on Fund |
| Council/department/project team | ESRC – Work, Education & Skills Team |
| Aims and objectives of the activity | This fund will support the enhancement and expansion on the current Evaluation Development Fund (EDF) to generate and/or maximise causal evidence on increasing opportunities and reducing disparities for people and places across UK.  The objectives of this fund are to build up on existing EDF grants to generate further causal evidence on what works to spread opportunities and reduce spatial disparities in outcomes for people and places across the UK and/or deliver activities that utilise causal evidence to provide actionable insights and support knowledge mobilisation to inform policy and/or practice at a local, regional, national, or international scale  Funding will support evaluation and impact enhancement activities with awards lasting between 12 and 24 months ranging between £100k - £300k full economic cost (FEC). UKRI is investing a total of £1.5 million and will fund 80% of the FEC. |
| Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event? | Applicants to the Evaluation Development Follow-on Fund. This opportunity is by invite so only project leads and project co-leads currently holding an EDF grant will be able to apply.  The funding opportunity is going straight to Panel. Panel members for the Follow-on Fund will be affected.  UKRI staff, including ESRC employees carrying out the commissioning of the funding opportunity, and staff members across other councils who will provide input throughout the process. |
| What data and consultation have you used? | The development for the opportunity involved a process of developing a survey questionnaire which was sent out and completed by all EDF grant holders to identify the needs and assist UKRI in framing what the objectives and requirement for the fund would be. In addition, a meeting was held with key stakeholders. The results of analysis of the survey responses and the meeting with key stakeholders was used to write up the Opportunity Specification.  The feedback, comments and lessons learnt from similar opportunities were considered in preparing this EDF Follow-on Opportunity Specification. We also looked at previous Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)’s for similar opportunities such as the EIA for Evaluation Development Fund (EDF) and Trial Accelerator Fund (TAF). |

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| **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 relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.** |
| **Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown** | |
| Age |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Early career researchers\* may be disadvantaged as they don’t have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher.  (\*It is assumed that early career researchers are generally younger than their more experienced peers, although this is by no means always the case. This is why this point has been included under ‘age’). | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Applicants are not required to disclose their age at any point in the application process, although this may be inferred from the information on their CV.Track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and hence (indirectly) age. Panel members are briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them and not reading between the lines. They should assess an individual’s capability to deliver their proposed research.  Project co-leads are able to also apply for this fund. Project co-leads although not always the case are sometimes early career researchers and being the project lead is an opportunity to acquire experience of leading a project. |
| Disability |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Applicants should seek support from their own institution’s research support office.  Panel meeting attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during online panel assessments. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  The Funding Service and the UKRI Funding Finder have been designed to comply with disability access schemes.  Direct applicants to [UKRI guidance on disability and access support for applicants and grant holders](https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply/disability-and-accessibility-support-for-ukri-applicants-and-grant-holders/)  Solicit information from panel meeting participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate.  Online meeting platforms offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants. Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:   * Enabling the chat function and closed captioning, and adjusting the volume, to support those with hearing requirements. * Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers (ensuring any images are well described so that text-to-speech applications can recognise them) for the visually impaired. * Provision of documents in sans-serif dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats. * Avoiding colours, lighting etc. that may trigger migraines, epilepsy etc. * Consideration of the length of any online meetings, shortening if necessary and ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda. * Ensure that staff have had sufficient EDI training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants. * Consider (on a case-by-case basis) paying T&S for carers or support workers to attend alongside the participant, where this is required and not covered by the Individual’s own employment contract. * Scheduling regular breaks to allow and encourage panel members to step away from their screen |
| Gender reassignment (Trans identity) |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Trans people may be absent from work due to a medical recovery period. UKRI records may show the wrong gender.  A person’s pronouns may be used incorrectly in panel meetings or suitable options for titles (e.g. Mx) may not be available on funding opportunity documents. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and absence as a result of medical treatment are positively considered. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation’s (RO) sick policy and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other medical absence.  Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.  Panellists will be invited to include pronouns in their Zoom names.  We will work to ensure the use of gender-neutral language where possible in our documents. |
| Marriage or civil partnership |  |  | Applicants’ eligibility is not based on marriage or civil partnership status.  While there is potential for related discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual orientation, these issues will be managed by the specific mitigations for these characteristics. | N/A |
| Pregnancy and maternity |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Completion of application or project may be affected by maternity, paternity or parental leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption.  Childcare responsibilities may be a barrier to attending panel meetings.  Applicants may be perceived to be less productive by Panel members if they have gaps in their career or publication record on their CV due to maternity leave.  Panel members may have unconscious bias towards applicants that are pregnant which may disadvantage the applicant.  Applicants may be unable to apply to the funding opportunity if they are on parental leave during the funding opportunity or feel unable to apply if they are on leave during the latest start date for successful awards. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Applicants are not asked to disclose pregnancy at any stage of the application.  Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions.  The costs of additional childcare for grant-holders, beyond that required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the job, and that are directly related to the project, may be requested as a directly incurred cost if the institutional policy is to reimburse them.  Dates will be agreed in advance to allow meeting attendees to make arrangements to attend.  During the online panel meeting, breaks will be provided to provide opportunity for feeding children if necessary. This could include expressing/breastfeeding.  Reimbursement of additional childcare costs (on a case-by-case basis) if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include additional hours of childcare in the child’s usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children). |
| Race |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  There could be potential bias or discrimination because somebody (either a panel member, a research applicant or research participants) is from a particular ethnic background.  [UKRI diversity data](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/uk.research.and.innovation.ukri./viz/UKRICompetitiveFundingDecisions2022-23/CompetitiveFundingDecisions) for applicants and awardees shows that inequalities exist in awarding rates between applicants who identify as White (higher success rates) compared to applicants who identify as being from a minority ethnic group (lower success rates). This is particularly the case for Black applicants.  Minority ethnic researchers are also under-represented within panel membership.    Research shows that people from minority ethnic groups are under-represented within research funding and across scientific research and innovation careers more broadly, and face additional barriers to achieving success within academic pathways.  Potential discrimination for against an applicant due to their perceived or actual race/ethnicity as the process is not anonymous and names are present. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations for mitigations against unconscious bias and assessment criteria.  We will follow UKRI EDI Policy to ensure that all policy recommendations, including those covering panel compositions are followed. |
| Religion or belief |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, a research applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief.  Religious holidays or practices may present a barrier to attending panel meetings. | Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings. Considerations might include:   * Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – i.e.. during Ramadan ensuring that meetings finish early so that participants are able to get home to break their fast, awareness of the sensitivities around offering Muslim’s meals during periods of fasting); * Not scheduling meetings when they would conflict with religious attendance or observance on specific days or times (e.g. Jewish Sabbath on Friday evenings or Islamic Friday prayer). * During the online panel meeting, breaks will be provided to allow prayer if requested. |
| Sexual orientation |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, a research applicant or research participant) has a particular sexual orientation. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  We will follow UKRI EDI Policy to ensure all policy recommendations are followed. |
| Sex |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Potential for discrimination because it is known to somebody (either panel member or a research applicant) has a particular gender.  Use of language can present a barrier to participation, and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.  Ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation (aim for at least 60:40 split)  Encourage successful ROs to adopt gender neutral language in all relevant documentation. |

## Additional characteristics

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| **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) |  |  | Place is one of the requirements for this funding opportunity.  The meeting will be virtual, which will allow panel members from a more diverse range of geographical locations to participate. | This funding will support activities that have the potential to deliver a step-change in approaches to reducing place-based inequalities.  The proposal submitted must provide a rationale for the approach to defining the geography most relevant to the proposed activity and explain how the proposed activity could support the reduction of place-based inequalities.  All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support. |
| Socio-economic status |  |  | There is potential for those with different socio-economic statuses to be impacted differently by this call. | We will follow UKRI EDI Policy.  We will ensure that the meeting schedule is sent out with adequate time for participants to rearrange existing work commitments. Participation in any activities related to this opportunity will not incur any expenses for individuals.  We would expect applicants to apply via their Research Organisation which should remove most barriers to access.  Applicants and panel members can contact ESRC directly to highlight any additional support required. |
| Education background |  |  | Potential for difficulties in understanding research jargon/language for panel member is from outside of academia or from another discipline. | Ensure that unnecessary jargon and academic language are not used as these could provide a barrier.  We will brief the Chair to ensure that the meeting is organised to accommodate the needs of user panel members. |
| Parent/guardian/carer responsibilities |  |  | It may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.  Those with parent/guardian/caring responsibilities may experience more obstacles in arranging alternative caring support. | See also discussion of actions to reduce negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.  During the panel meetings, adequate breaks would be provided so that those with parent/guardian responsibilities or other responsibilities would have time out.  ESRC can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to caring responsibilities.  Reimbursement of additional childcare or other caring costs if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include additional hours of childcare in the child’s usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children).  All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support. |
| Political opinion (Northern Ireland only) |  |  | NA |  |
| Other characteristics |  |  | We should avoid the assumption that everyone has equal access to technological devices or the internet. | All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any needs that will need additional support.  If relevant, we will provide alternative formats for information and/or make provisions for people to access information. We will ask participants about how they would prefer to access information and what tools they have access to.  Applicants and panel members should ask for assistance from their research organisations when experiencing digital difficulties. |

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| Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact? | **GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**    ESRC is committed to go above and beyond simply complying with Equalities legislation to ensure that our processes are as fair and equitable as they can be.    **Eligibility and criteria**   * UKRI Creating Opportunities Evaluation Development Follow-on Fund is an invite-only funding opportunity. * Applicants are eligible for funding whether or not they are established members of a recognised RO, but applicants who are not an established member of a recognised RO must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research. * The applicants will be required to answer a question on how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will be embedded into the proposed work. The answer will be assessed by the opportunity panel.   **Support for UKRI applicants**   * Applicants have the opportunity to share, in confidence, any relevant sensitive information – including barriers to participation – by contacting the office for advice via [evaluation-development-fund@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:evaluation-development-fund@esrc.ukri.org).     **Standard Grant Terms and Conditions:**   * UKRI standard Grant Terms and Conditions comply with UK equality legislation and include provisions designed to mitigate against potential negative impacts (e.g. sick pay, parental and adoption leave, the possibility of part-time and flexible working, and grant extensions). * Research Organisations are subject to equality legislation and have a duty to comply with it.  RGC 8 states that ‘The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.’  Universities are therefore required to make reasonable adjustments as required to support their staff.   **Panel recruitment**   * While panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership.  Final decisions take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions.  We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates. * To ensure that the opportunity’s assessment process aligns with its aims, we will aim to recruit one user members to the panel for every two academic members. * A tool has been developed which allows ESRC staff to assess the EDI characteristics of commissioning panels, and this will be used when appointing panels.     **Process**   * All panel members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias. * It is the role of panel members to moderate and assess the quality of peer review and to agree final scores for each proposal.  Panel members will be briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it.  The Panel Chairs and Panel Secretaries play a particularly important role in this respect.   An implementation intention statement will be read out at the beginning of the commissioning panel meeting which sets the tone for discussions and requires that panel members pay close attention to the scoring criteria and definitions.   **Panel meeting**   * The meeting will be held virtually in order to offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants, including those with parental/caring responsibilities or disabilities. For further details on specific adjustments, please see the relevant section of the form. |

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## Evaluation

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| **Final Decision:** | **Select the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will **proceed**. |  | Yes, some potential barriers have been identified (see above) however the necessary steps have been taken to mitigate the likelihood of this in the areas covered. |
| 1. **Adapt or change** the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality. |  | Activities have been adapted following the actions described in the previous section. |
| 1. **Stop** the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups. |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |

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## Review and sign off

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| **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?** | An EIA is a live document and should regularly be reviewed throughout the life cycle of an activity  The EIA will be reviewed as part of the closure of the project and lessons learned activity. There will be an evaluation of the project every six months which will ensure that objectives are being met.  If on reading this document, you have feedback or suggestion for any amendments, you can contact the ESRC team for this opportunity via [evaluation-development-fund@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:evaluation-development-fund@esrc.ukri.org) |
| **Next review date:** | July 2025 |

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| **Will this EIA be published? \* Yes/Not required** | Yes. |
| **Point of contact** | [evaluation-development-fund@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:evaluation-development-fund@esrc.ukri.org) |
| **Signed off by (name and date):** | Diana Martin, 7 November 2024 |
| **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](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=juC3i6TajkqSfvyjjbBLfuzmJllr2UxPiagnQdB9dGBUMzFPRDY0RUJIRlpCRkwzN01WMTJWM1BKRCQlQCN0PWcu)**   **EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org** | |

## Change log

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | 1 | E.g. Based on input received from consultation groups at the **business case** stage, added actions under the gender section |
|  |  | 2 | E.g. Based on input received from x at the **announcement of opportunity** stage, added/removed/edited x |
|  |  | 3 | E.g. Based on input received from x at the **investment authorisation** stage, added/removed/edited x |

Continued below…

## 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).

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| **Action** | **Deadline** | **Owner** | **How will it be monitored?** | **What is/will be the impact/outcome?** |
| e.g. Update application form to include questions on additional support and reasonable adjustments | December 2023 | Applications manager | Updated form published and submissions reflect individual needs | Individual needs can be addressed.  Inform inclusive design of the activity |
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