

EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

	Question	Response
1.	Name of policy/funding activity/event	OPP742 – Research to Advance UK Recycling
	being assessed	Capabilities
2.	Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	The aim of this opportunity is to fund research to accelerate UK recycling capabilities in order to support the development of more energy-efficient, scalable, environmentally sustainable, and economically viable recycling systems. The opportunity is open to any project addressing a research challenge related to advancing any section of the recycling system from collection, through sorting and separation, to material recycling in the UK.
3.	What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	 Manufacturing and Circular Economy Theme Representatives from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Resources and waste science) and their counterparts in the devolved nations.
4.	Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	 Research office/institutions and staff Research councils and staff External reviewers (outline panel and expert panel) PDRAs employed by the funded projects. Support staff will also be employed on the grant. industry and the wider innovation landscape. Students may be aligned to the funded projects, although not directly funded through the grants.
5.	What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Research outcomes are collected through Researchfish. Feedback is sought from those involved in the process and policies are considered in light of feedback received.

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan to outline our collective aspirations for

working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. 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)
Disability	Potentially negative	All information provided is in written format.	Information provided will be in a format that is supported by accessibility software to support other access to the information beyond in writing. The panel meeting will be held virtually, panellists and research council staff will be informed in advance and tools such as 'Live Transcript' will be
		Potential for unconscious bias	used. Full guidance in call document of EPSRC's policies. Documents will be produced in

			line with EPSRC formatting guidelines.
			Standard EPSRC policies will be
			followed, including
			providing training materials for
			panellists on
			unconscious bias and empowering all
			panellists to challenge
			potential bias.
Gender reassignment	Potentially Negative	Potential for	Standard EPSRC
		unconscious bias	policies will be followed, including
			providing training
			materials for panellists on
			unconscious bias and
			empowering all panellists to challenge
			potential bias.
Marriage or civil partnership	None Identified		Standard EPSRC policies
partitersimp	None identified		will be followed.
Pregnancy and	Potentially Negative	Participation in	Accommodations will
maternity		activity could be restricted by lack of	be made for individuals if required
		availability due to	at all stages of the
		parental leave/caring	process.
		responsibilities/ pregnancy	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.
			Panellists will be informed if a panel
			meeting is to be held
			virtually as far in
			advance as possible. If this happens, we
			reserve the right to

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		Potential for unconscious bias	change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks and technical issues. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.
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Race	Potentially Negative	Potential for unconscious bias	Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.
Religion or belief	Potentially Negative	Potential for unconscious bias	Ensure religious observances are taken into account when panel dates are chosen, and where possible that there is a prayer room available for panels held in person.
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	Potential for unconscious bias	Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.
Sex (gender)	Potentially Negative	Potential for unconscious bias	Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training

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Age	Potentially Negative	Potential for	materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. Standard EPSRC
7.80	Totellially Hegalive	unconscious bias	policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias.
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	Caring Responsibilities – Potentially Negative	Panellists and applicants may have reduced availability, if they are caring for a vulnerable person or due to unexpected school or childcare closures	Dates for panels will be outside of school holidays wherever possible. Panellists will be informed in advance that the panel meeting is to be held virtually. Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and
Teams Panel Meetings	Potentially Negative	Potential for screen use fatigue and increase to cognitive load as well as potential technical issues	panellists as far in advance as possible. Guidance will be provided to panellists – best practice and tools that can be used such as the hand raising and mute functions. 'Test runs' will be offered to those who have not used Teams before. Contingency plans will be put in place if Teams cannot be used Learning from virtual panels held prior to this, will be incorporated to improve the process.
Intent to submit (ItS)	Potentially Negative	Applicants will have reduced time to complete the ItS as	Information required in the ItS is kept to a minimum. Information

	the deadline is two weeks earlier than the proposal submission deadline	provided on the ItS can be different to that submitted for the outline, for example draft research project title rather than research project title. The ItS is not assessed. An email address for the theme has been provided as part of the ItS in case of any
		queries relating to the ItS.

Evaluation:

Qu	uestion	Explanation	/ justification
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		There is a potential, as outlined above, that some individuals may be disadvantaged. All efforts will be made to minimise this.	
Fin	nal Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1.	No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .		
2.	You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3.	You can adapt or change 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 proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	✓	There are no alternative approaches available to meet the overall aims of the activity. All proportionate mitigations have been identified and adopted to ensure the process is as fair and flexible as possible to all applicants. We will promote and inform as early as possible, and take circumstances into due account when necessary

Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required	Yes

(*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	
Date completed:	05/12/2024
Review date (if applicable):	23/05/2025

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Emily Kruchek	When Published	1	
Emily Kruchek	06/02/25	2	Addition of ItS to the EIA