



UK Research  
and Innovation

# 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**

	<b>Response</b>
Name of activity being assessed	Critical Mass Programmes to drive a Sustainable Future – Full Stage
Council/department/project team	EPSRC Energy and Decarbonisation Team and EPSRC Manufacturing and the Circular Economy Team
Aims and objectives of the activity	<p>This EIA is being produced to cover a funding opportunity that requires us to consider equality as part of advertising, application process, external review, building a panel, hosting panel meetings and all other related activities.</p> <p>This funding opportunity is to support critical-mass transdisciplinary research programs that drive the transition to sustainable technologies and operations, clean energy, circular materials or Interseasonal Energy Storage (IES) beyond Hydrogen. Projects will apply a systems approach to optimise outcomes for UK prosperity, society and environment, and develop clear pathways for impact and translation to the UK’s mid-to-long term (i.e. by 2040) future.</p> <p>This opportunity is additionally intended as a pilot for EPSRC. We will conduct review and evaluation activities during and after the opportunity to inform the targeted priorities of any potential future funding rounds. In the funding opportunity, feedback has been requested openly from the EPSRC community.</p>
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	<p>This funding opportunity spans several areas of EPSRCs remit, therefore members of the EPSRC community in these sub-disciplines and those in related disciplines are affected.</p> <p>Project partners, comprising for example overseas universities, industry, local authorities or devolved administration, could be impacted by the funding decisions and resulting research outcomes.</p> <p>Applicants, panel members, awardees, members of the research community, research council staff, stakeholders of any successful programmes.</p>
What data and consultation have you used?	This work builds on Community engagement events held by EPSRC (in particular from the Energy & Decarbonisation and Manufacturing & the Circular Economy themes).



## 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 relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Age	☒	☒	<p><b>Positive:</b> The call is open to all. Researchers with expertise in relevant research areas for the funding opportunity can apply. There is no request for a CV or extensive description of expertise that would allude to biological age of applicants.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> For a variety of reasons individuals can face stigma and discrimination in society and assessment processes for their relative youth, or their relative age and the perceived experience or energy associated with these assumptions. If an applicant’s age became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the</p>	<p>EPSRC’s panel members receive a briefing on unconscious bias in advance of the panel. EPSRC panel convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training. Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.</p>

			<p>potential for unconscious bias, but in no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members. This same effect could happen during co-creation and engagement activities.</p>	<p>More information about EPSRC's commitment to ensuring fairness in peer review can be found here. EPSRC have recently published a 3 year EDI action plan which includes actions related to peer review to reduce the likelihood of bias impacting on decision making.</p> <p>Co-creation and stakeholder engagement is part of this funding opportunity. Guidance has been provided to applicants to centre EDI whilst putting together their applications and in how to do undertake these conversations equitably in the funding opportunity.</p>
Disability	☒	☒	<p><b><u>Applicants</u></b>  <b>Negative:</b> This opportunity may require those involved in the project to travel nationally and internationally. This may discourage individuals with additional requirements relating to physical or mental impairments from applying.          There may be differences in accessibility standards and provision in different countries.</p> <p>Individuals who identify as having a disability could be subject to unconscious bias, and their voices may not be heard as strongly during co-creation and engagement activities.</p> <p><b><u>Panellists</u></b>  <b>Positive:</b> The panel will be held virtually therefore this is a more accessible participation</p>	<p><b><u>Applicants</u></b>          We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain (inter)national collaboration with their collaborators that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>We will highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.</p> <p>Co-creation and stakeholder engagement is part of this funding opportunity. Guidance has been provided to applicants to centre EDI whilst putting together their applications and in how to do undertake these conversations equitably in the funding opportunity.</p>

			<p>option. Panellists will not have to travel to an in-person venue which may not have accessibility measures.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> This may have a negative impact for those with hearing impairments and those who find a lot of sensory input overwhelming.</p>	<p><b>Panellists</b> Breaks will be built into the panel schedule at regular intervals to prevent screen fatigue and overwhelm.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that any circumstances which could affect participation can be accommodated wherever possible, e.g. Closed Captions</p>
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>If international travel is involved with the project:</b> depending on the country there may be travel restrictions for transgender travellers.</p> <p>Individuals identifying as transgender could be subject to unconscious bias, and their voices may not be heard as strongly during co-creation and engagement activities.</p>	<p>We will encourage applicant to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested. We will also encourage travel to the UK to ensure an inclusive approach to collaboration for transgender individuals.</p> <p>Co-creation and stakeholder engagement is part of this funding opportunity. Guidance has been provided to applicants to centre EDI whilst putting together their applications and in how to do undertake these conversations equitably in the funding opportunity.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If an applicant's marital status became known to the panel,	EPSRC's panel members receive a briefing on unconscious bias in

			<p>reviewers and/or those involved in leading engagement and co-creation processes, there is the potential for unconscious bias.</p> <p>In no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members.</p>	<p>advance of the panel. EPSRC panel convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training. Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.</p> <p>Co-creation and stakeholder engagement is part of this funding opportunity. Guidance has been provided to applicants to place EDI at the centre whilst putting together their applications and in how to do undertake these conversations equitably in the funding opportunity.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Research collaboration may require those involved in a project to travel nationally and internationally. This may impact investigators or staff members who are pregnant or on parental leave.</p> <p>Pregnant women are unable to travel by aeroplane during latter stages of pregnancy.</p> <p>A researcher on parental leave may not be able to apply or take part as a panel member</p>	<p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain (inter)national collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>Highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that any circumstances which could</p>

			<p>or in co-creation or stakeholder engagement activities.</p> <p>Individuals who are pregnant in the co-creation and/or engagement processes may be subject to unconscious bias by those leading the activities.</p>	<p>affect participation to apply can be accommodated wherever possible.</p> <p>A timetable of key dates will be made available on the funding opportunity, including the Full Proposal stage. A timeline for the panel assessment will be provided to panel members as far in advance as possible.</p> <p>Co-creation and stakeholder engagement is part of this funding opportunity. Guidance has been provided to applicants to centre EDI whilst putting together their applications and in how to do undertake these conversations equitably in the funding opportunity.</p>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Applicants:</b> <a href="#">EPSRC's Ethnicity report</a> found that 'The award rate for PI, CI and Fellowship applicants who identify as White is higher than that of applicants from ethnic minority groups in most reporting years.</p> <p>Overseas research organisations may be in a (remote) location which may be unsafe for ethnic minority PIs (i.e. they may experience racism in these locations).</p> <p>Ethnic minorities involved in the co-creation and/or engagement processes may be subject to unconscious bias by those leading the activities.</p>	<p><b>Applicants:</b></p> <p>We will encourage researchers to accommodate the participation of their ethnic minority collaborators and colleagues in a way which prevents harm via consulting the UKRI Good Research Resource Hub (<a href="https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/">https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/</a>), and to follow the policies their research organisation advocates around safe travel.</p> <p>Co-creation and stakeholder engagement is part of this funding opportunity. Guidance has been provided to applicants to centre EDI whilst putting together their applications</p>

			<p><b>Panellists:</b> There is a risk of not having panel members who identify as an ethnic minority.</p>	<p>and in how to do undertake these conversations equitably in the funding opportunity.</p> <p><b>Panellists:</b> An unconscious bias briefing will be presented to the panel as part of the panel guidance presentation. EPSRC convenors will also carefully listen for instances of bias and step in where appropriate. Diversity will be taken into consideration when putting together the panel membership.</p>
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Travel dates – which could be tied to collaborator availability - could coincide with a religious holiday. Panel and application timeline dates could be affected by the same issue. Co-creation activities could clash with religious holidays.</p> <p>This could negatively disadvantage those who practice particular faiths if this is not taken into account by researchers scheduling a visit and if panel dates clash with religious holidays.</p>	<p>We will encourage applicants to be considerate of their team’s beliefs and that reduce the need to travel if the trip would fall over a religious holiday – or to provide a hybrid attendance option.</p> <p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain (inter)national collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>EPSRC will ensure to schedule panels on days which are not major religious holidays, and ask panel members to highlight circumstances which may affect their ability to participate in a panel and to specify</p>

				<p>accommodations which would enable them to participate.</p> <p>Co-creation and stakeholder engagement is part of this funding opportunity. Guidance has been provided to applicants to centre EDI whilst putting together their applications and in how to do undertake these conversations equitably in the funding opportunity.</p>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Research organisations included may be in a (remote) location which may be unsafe for PIs who identify as LGBTQ+. Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ may also be subject to unconscious bias during co-creation and/or engagement processes.</p>	<p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain (inter)national collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>There are no requirements within the call to collaborate with researchers in particular countries.</p> <p>Co-creation and stakeholder engagement is part of this funding opportunity. Guidance has been provided to applicants to centre EDI whilst putting together their applications and in how to do undertake these conversations equitably in the funding opportunity.</p>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Our gender report found that ‘Women are consistently under-represented in EPSRC’s Principal Investigator (PI) applicant pool across our portfolio’ and ‘Application numbers from women for large grants are particularly low’.</p>	<p><b>Applicants:</b></p> <p>We will encourage researchers to accommodate the participation of their</p>

			<p>Research organisations included may be in a (remote) location which may be unsafe for PIs who identify as women (i.e. they may experience sexism in these locations).</p> <p>Women involved in the co-creation and/or engagement processes may be subject to unconscious bias by those leading the activities.</p> <p><b>Panellists:</b> There is a risk of not having panel members who identify as women.</p>	<p>women collaborators and colleagues in a way which prevents harm.</p> <p>Co-creation and stakeholder engagement is part of this funding opportunity. Guidance has been provided to applicants to centre EDI whilst putting together their applications and in how to do undertake these conversations equitably in the funding opportunity.</p> <p><b>Panellists:</b> An unconscious bias briefing will be presented to the panel as part of the panel guidance presentation. EPSRC convenors will also carefully listen for instances of bias and step in where appropriate. Diversity will be taken into consideration when putting together the panel membership. Gender neutral language will be used throughout the assessment process.</p>
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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).
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	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Geographical location and place (consider UK and international offices)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Education background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Parent/guardian responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Typically, research collaboration requires investigators and staff to travel nationally and internationally, this may impact investigators or staff members who have parent/guardian responsibilities.	<p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain (inter)national collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>Highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.</p>
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Typically, research collaboration requires investigators and staff to travel nationally and internationally, this may impact investigators or staff members who have carer/parent carer responsibilities.	<p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain (inter)national collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>Highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.</p>
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?

In-person visits, travel and meetings can present as negative barriers for disabled people, those who identify as transgender, women, ethnic minorities as well as those with parental or caring responsibilities (and those who have intersectional identities of all of the aforementioned demographics). We will encourage 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).

We will encourage researchers from non-marginalised backgrounds to accommodate the participation of their marginalised collaborators and colleagues who may experience discrimination in a way which prevents harm, and to learn from their lived experiences such that they will work together in a harmonious and inclusive way with a positive, understanding team research culture.



Continued below...

**Evaluation**

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will <b>proceed</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. <b>Adapt or change</b> the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible risks associated with this call have been identified and the guidance and peer review protocols have been adapted accordingly.
3. <b>Stop</b> the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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 <b>extreme cases</b> or where <b>positive action</b> is taken). Therefore, you are going to <b>proceed with caution</b> with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Continued below...



**Review and sign off**

<p><b>What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?</b></p>	<p>Research outcomes will be monitored via ResearchFish. EPSRC Energy and Decarbonisation Team and EPSRC Manufacturing and the Circular Economy Team staff will convene the panels.</p> <p>We will review the EIA as part of a lessons learned activity at the end of the timeline for this funding opportunity.</p> <p>We will use data from groups affected by this funding opportunity to inform future decisions and use new insights to review this EIA.</p>
<p><b>Next review date:</b></p>	
<p><b>Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Point of contact</b></p>	<p>EPSRC Manufacturing and Circular Economy Team and EPSRC Energy and Decarbonisation Team</p>
<p><b>Signed off by (name and date):</b></p>	<p>Rehemat Bhatia March 24 2025</p>



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](mailto:ISPF@ukri.org)

### Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Rehemat Bhatia	24/03/2025	1	Completion of EIA Assessment for Activity

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).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is/will be the impact/outcome?
<p>Timetable of key dates made available to applicants and panel members as far in advance as possible.</p> <p>Religious observances will be taken into account when meeting dates are chosen.</p>	May 2025 – Full Stage opens. This date was known from when the Expression of Interest stage was open in January 2025.	Staff involved in delivering this funding opportunity.	Key dates will be identified when call is published.	Applicants have as much time as possible to prepare applications.
<p>Unconscious bias training to be delivered to panel members. EPSRC members of staff will monitor all meetings and highlight instances of bias in conversations.</p>	Panel date (September 2025)	Staff involved in delivering this funding opportunity.	<p>Unconscious bias training within panel briefing.</p> <p>EPSRC staff presence at meetings.</p>	Preventing unconscious bias as much as possible in panel discussion.