

## Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</b></li> </ul>	<p>Interdisciplinary environmental social science leadership team</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</b></li> </ul>	<p>This funding activity will deliver the following objectives:</p> <p>Champion, co-ordinate and facilitate collaboration within and beyond the social sciences in the area of climate and environment to contribute towards the urgent evidence base and policies needed to inform pathways to a UK Net Zero by 2050 and broader environmental, biodiversity and sustainability goals.</p> <p>Increase understanding of the relevance and value of the social sciences within environmental research amongst other disciplines and stakeholder communities.</p> <p>Engage with stakeholders including policy at national and local scales, business, and civil society in order to understand user needs, co-produce activities and accelerate impact of research.</p> <p>Contribute to scoping future transformative social science and interdisciplinary research within the area of climate and environment that draws on diverse stakeholder perspectives to ensure strategic research outcomes that make a difference.</p> <p>Support capacity and capability building for interdisciplinary research and knowledge mobilisation.</p> <p>Support access to and use of climate and environmental data generated within and beyond the social sciences that builds on and integrates with the existing data landscape, opening up opportunities for interdisciplinary research and achieving greater impact.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>What involvement and consultation has been done in</b></li> </ul>	<p>This funding activity has been developed in consultation with ESRC's Environmental Social</p>

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<b>relation to this policy?</b> (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Science Strategic Advisory Group, wider teams across ESRC, and with input from across UKRI and contacts in BEIS, Defra, Welsh Government, and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</b></li> </ul>	Applicants to the funding call.  Assessment Panel members and Interview Panel members.  ESRC staff attending the Panel meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b></li> </ul>	The likely impact of each proposal's planned activities will be scrutinised during the Assessment Panel and Interviews.  Championing and coordinating research will be central to the role of the investment, and accelerating research impact is a core objective.  It will be a requirement of the successful application to regularly report, and carry out monitoring and evaluation on the investment, that will include the impact of the investment.  Given the nature of this investment, ESRC will have a high degree of ongoing interaction with the investment.

## GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

ESRC's research commissioning processes are designed with fairness in mind.

### Eligibility and criteria

- The call for an interdisciplinary environmental social science leadership team is open to all eligible research organisations (RO). 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.

### 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.

**Process:**

- We will aim to ensure that all activities relating to the interdisciplinary environmental social science leadership team are inclusive and take account of diversity.
- At this time all meetings are being held virtually. We will therefore take account of access needs and review this continuously.
- We will review our approach in line with changing government guidance relating to Covid-19 and the activities on which this will impact.
- Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. 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.
- 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.
- All panel members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.

<b>Protected Characteristic Group</b>	<b>Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?</b>	<b>Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used</b>	<b>Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)</b>
<b>Disability</b>	Potential negative	<p>See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations</p> <p>There may be barriers for disabled people to benefit from any online events associated with the funding activity.</p> <p>Participants with visual and hearing disabilities may have difficulties if virtual activities cannot</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Solicit information from online meeting participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate.</p> <p>Online meeting platforms offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants. Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The chat function and closed captioning can be enabled, and volume</li> </ul>

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		<p>cater for their needs.</p> <p>Participants with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during virtual activities.</p> <p>The current situation may present additional challenges for those intending to apply. We recognise that due to the shift to homeworking during the enforced lockdown, people with disabilities may find the current circumstances particularly challenging for a variety of reasons.</p>	<p>adjusted, to support those with hearing requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired.</li> <li>• Provision of documents in sans-serif dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats.</li> <li>• Avoiding colours, lighting etc. that may trigger migraines, epilepsy.</li> <li>• Consider the length of any online meetings, shorten if necessary, and ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda.</li> <li>• Ensure that staff have had sufficient EDI/unconscious bias/diversity awareness training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants.</li> <li>• If we promote the event on a web site, we will need to check it is accessible and compatible with the range of specialist hardware and software that people with disabilities use to access electronic information.</li> <li>• Recording of online workshops/webinars so that it can be made</li> </ul>

<b>Protected Characteristic Group</b>	<b>Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?</b>	<b>Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used</b>	<b>Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)</b>
			available for access at any time.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Potential negative	<p>See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations</p> <p>Use of non-gender neutral language can present a barrier to participation.</p> <p>There could be potential discrimination against a panel member, an applicant or an event/research participant due to their perceived or actual experience of gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition and UKRI records may show the wrong gender.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>We will work to ensure the use of gender neutral language where possible in our documents.</p> <p>Reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel.</p> <p>UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's sick policy and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other sick absence.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.</p>
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	Probably not		
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Potential negative	<p>See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations</p> <p>Childcare responsibilities may</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related</p>

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		<p>be a barrier to attending events, meetings, and interviews.</p> <p>Completion of the grant may be affected by maternity and parental leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption.</p> <p>The current situation may present additional challenges for those intending to apply. We recognise that the shift to homeworking during the enforced lockdown, and the need to balance caring responsibilities for children may generate unequal burdens.</p> <p>This funding call will be open over the summer holidays, which may disadvantage those with caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions.</p> <p>Dates will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to attend.</p> <p>Ensure there are sufficient breaks in any online meeting to provide breaks for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary.</p> <p>Reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel.</p> <p>There was not much scope to change the timeline for this funding activity, and despite being open over the summer holidays, the call will launch approximately five weeks before the summer holidays begin, and close a week after the holiday ends. We have therefore mitigated the impact of the call being open over the summer holidays by extending the period when the call is open – it will be open for 12 weeks.</p>
<b>Race</b>	Potential negative	See above, under General Equality	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in

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)
		and Diversity Considerations.	relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias)
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Potential negative	<p>See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, an applicant or workshop/research participant) has a particular faith or belief.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias).</p> <p>Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings. Considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 Muslims meals during periods of fasting).</li> <li>• Not scheduling meetings such that they would require travel late on Friday evenings (Jewish Sabbath) or on Fridays (Friday prayer, Islam).</li> <li>• Allowing prayer breaks if requested.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Potential negative	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.

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			Reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel.
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Potential negative	<p>See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Potential for some attendees to have caring responsibilities affecting ability to attend meetings and interviews.</p> <p>Use of non-gender neutral language can present a barrier to participation</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Dates for events will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to attend.</p> <p>We will work to ensure the use of gender neutral language where possible in our documents and at events.</p> <p>Reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel.</p>
<b>Age</b>	Potential negative	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.

Note: Excessive use of repeated line breaks can make a document inaccessible for users of assistive technologies. To ensure inclusion, please ensure a new table row is inserted for each point if there is more than one consideration or impact for each group (please ensure you populate the “protected characteristic group” column e.g. “disability continued”); rather than using the same row for multiple points with repeated line breaks to separate points.

**Evaluation:**

Question	Explanation / justification
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	See the potential negative impacts outlined above.

Question	Explanation / justification	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
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	X	See the mitigations outlined above.
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.		

<b>Will this EIA be published*</b> *EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events.	Yes
<b>Date completed:</b>	20/05/2021
<b>End date of activity:</b> (if applicable)	
<b>Review date</b> (if applicable):	If any significant changes are made to the funding activity.