



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Digital Economy Telling Tales of Engagement Competition 2021 (open to individual applicants and teams, from all career stages in academia (including PhD students), industry, users and the third sector.)
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>-Three prizes of £10,000 are available to support researchers or users in any sector to further tell the story of their previously funded Digital Economy research grant impact in an interesting and engaging way.</p> <p>-These awards will help capture and promote impacts arising from Digital Economy research.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>Consulted with previous winners of the Digital Economy Telling Tales of Engagement Competition – examples of previous projects, potential audiences to engage with and general best practice included in call document Appendices.</p> <p>Involvement of EPSRC Digital Economy Theme members with previous experience of working on the competition.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	The academic research community in the Digital Economy space, and related research users (e.g. industry, public and third sector organisations).
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>The assessment of the entries to this competition will be carried out during the EPSRC Digital Economy Programme Advisory Board (PAB) meeting 2022.</p> <p>The PAB members and all panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing.</p> <p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure any unconscious bias can be identified, challenged and managed.</p> <p>The grant holder is expected to prepare an equality, diversity and inclusion plan for the duration of this grant to demonstrate good practice in equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the lifetime of this funding award. This must be recorded through the grant reporting process.</p>

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	No known negative impacts		
Gender reassignment	No known negative impacts		
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impacts		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative impact	COVID-19 has an impact on the EPS community and this impact will be unequally affecting some more than others. Particularly, applicants with care responsibilities are disadvantaged.	<p>The call document provides a full timeline of key milestones, allowing early engagement with EPSRC on specific personal impacts from applicants.</p> <p>The call is open longer than the standard timescale at EPSRC.</p> <p>Dependent on individual circumstances, EPSRC will provide flexibility of start dates of the award – for example, to accommodate for parental leave.</p>
Race	No known negative impacts		
Religion or belief	Potential negative impact	Activities could coincide with religious or cultural holidays	<p>A full timeline has been provided of all key milestones in advance allowing applicants to manage their applications around any religious or cultural holidays.</p> <p>EPSRC has tried to limit any effects by providing key dates in advance with long timelines.</p>
Sexual orientation	No known negative impacts		

Sex (gender)	No known negative impacts		
Age	Potential positive impact	The call is open to applicants ranging from PhD students to established career researchers, and including users, thereby opening the call up to a wider range of applicant ages.	
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	No known negative impacts		

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Applicants from the Digital Economy Programme Advisory Board may be advantaged by having advance knowledge and insight into the call from being involved in the assessment process in previous years. This is mitigated by clear guidance on the approximate call timescales, which allows for sufficient time for potential applicants to understand the call. The call is open for 9 weeks, longer than the standard for EPSRC calls.	
Final 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	X	Possible risks and bias associated with this activity have been identified and activities adapted accordingly. ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the activity and will review this EIA accordingly.
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.		
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Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	23/09/2021
Review date (if applicable):	N/A

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Digital Economy Theme	When published	1	EIA to be published – Yes