



**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

Question	Response
<p><b>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</b></p>	<p>New Horizons 2021 Outline Funding Opportunity (phase 2 of the EPSRC New Horizons pilot scheme)</p>
<p><b>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</b></p>	<p>In this second phase of the New Horizons pilot scheme, the aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Support speculative, high-risk research ideas that could potentially offer high reward, to ensure the continued flow of these types of research projects into the EPSRC portfolio and wider UKRI funding streams;</li> <li>b) Trial ways to minimise the bureaucracy of the application process, particularly for the applicant;</li> <li>c) Deliver a faster process compared to current standard funding routes, whilst maintaining robust decision making that is proportionate to the level of risk.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</b></p>	<p>The ICT Theme ran a session with the ICT Theme SAT (with 2 Engineering Theme SAT members in attendance) which explored current understanding of the New Horizons scheme based upon phase 1.</p> <p>Following completion of funding allocation for phase 1 of the New Horizons pilot scheme in 2020, an internal review was carried out for lessons learnt. As part of this review, applicants, reviewers, panel members and research offices were asked to complete a survey which enabled an analysis of the initial outcomes of the first pilot and comparison with current standard funding routes. The results of this survey were considered in the planning of phase 2 of New Horizons. Further information on this is available in the accompanying news story <a href="#">found here</a>.</p>
<p><b>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p>	<p>EPSRC ICT and Engineering Theme research communities.</p>
<p><b>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p>	<p>Research outcomes will be collected through Researchfish, and current standard funding routes will be monitored for subsequent submissions linked to research ideas formulated for the New</p>

	Horizons 2021 funding opportunity. New Horizons is a pilot scheme and following funding of successful projects a review of the funding opportunity will be carried out for lessons learnt.
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As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

- Where meetings are not held remotely via Zoom, EPSRC will 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. In this specific funding opportunity the identity of applicants will remain anonymous during the peer review for the outline stage. This approach is being trialled to help further minimize opportunities for potential bias, with a view to ensuring that the decision making process is focussed on the research. The identity of applicants will be known during peer review at the full proposal stage, during assessment of the applicant team's ability to deliver.
- 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	Potential negative impact.	Panel members may not be able to participate in panels dependent on location selected.  Timescales for the funding opportunity may affect ability to participate e.g. if on sick leave or reduced hours.	Where meetings are not held remotely via Zoom, all venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustment made to logistics to

			<p>support participation.</p> <p>Additional care requirements could occur if individuals are required to: Participate in events on what would normally be a nonworking day, work extended hours on a normal working day, attend meetings with overnight stays and/or travel overseas. Further details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with caring responsibilities can be <a href="#">found here</a>.</p> <p>A pre-launch announcement will be published on the website to help maximise the time applicants have to plan proposals.</p>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No known negative impact.		
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	No known negative impact.		
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Potential negative impact.	<p>Panel members may not be able to participate in panels due to accessibility issues or maternity leave.</p> <p>Timescales for the funding opportunity may affect ability to participate e.g. if on parental leave or childcare.</p>	<p>Where meetings are not held remotely via Zoom, all venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustment made to logistics to support participation.</p> <p>Additional care requirements could occur if individuals are required to: Participate in</p>

			<p>events on what would normally be a nonworking day, work extended hours on a normal working day, attend meetings with overnight stays and/or travel overseas. Further details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with caring responsibilities can be <a href="#">found here</a>.</p> <p>A pre-launch announcement will be published on the website to help maximise the time applicants have to plan proposals.</p>
<b>Race</b>	Potential negative impact.	<p>EPSRC have undertaken analysis to better understand the disparity of gender and race in our funding portfolio. Our aim is to ensure that the ethnic diversity in our grant portfolio and of those who engage in our peer review, advisory and governance processes is at least as representative of the engineering and physical sciences academic researcher population and our award rates across different ethnicities show no disparity. More information is available at <a href="https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/edi-at-epsrc/ethnicity-and-race-equality/">https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/edi-at-epsrc/ethnicity-and-race-equality/</a>.</p>	<p>During the peer review assessment at the outline stage, the identity of applicants will remain anonymous. Note that ability to deliver information will be required for the full proposal stage, where applicant identity will be known during the peer review assessment.</p> <p>EPSRC state in the funding opportunity guidance that we particularly welcome applications from under-represented groups.</p>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Potential negative impact.	Participation could be affected by religious holidays.	A full timeline is provided in the

			<p>funding opportunity guidance. EPSRC endeavours to select dates that are cognisant of major holidays (e.g. deadlines have been extended to avoid full proposal closure over various religious holidays).</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No known negative impact.		
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Potential negative impact.	<p>Gender diversity of peer review panels, in line with EPSRC policy.</p> <p>EPSRC have undertaken analysis to better understand the disparity of gender and race in our funding portfolio. Underrepresentation of women in the engineering and physical sciences remains one of EPSRC's largest equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) challenges and is a well-known issue in the engineering and physical sciences community, with gender diversity in our large grant portfolio an area of particular concern. More information is available at <a href="https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/edi-at-epsrc/gender-diversity-in-our-large-grant-portfolio/">https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/edi-at-epsrc/gender-diversity-in-our-large-grant-portfolio/</a>.</p>	<p>EPSRC endeavours to convene mixed gender panels.</p> <p>During the peer review assessment at the outline stage, the identity of applicants will remain anonymous. Note that ability to deliver information will be required for the full proposal stage, where applicant identity will be known during the peer review assessment.</p> <p>EPSRC state in the funding opportunity guidance that we particularly welcome applications from under-represented groups.</p>
<b>Age</b>	Potential positive and negative impact.	The initial evaluation of the first phase of the New Horizons pilot scheme showed an increase in awards for applicants aged 30-39 and a decrease for applicants aged 50+ compared to current standard funding routes.	During the peer review assessment at the outline stage, the identity of applicants will remain anonymous.

			<p>Note that ability to deliver information will be required for the full proposal stage, where applicant identity will be known during the peer review assessment.</p> <p>EPSRC state in the funding opportunity guidance that we particularly welcome applications from under-represented groups.</p>
<b>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</b>	<p>As part of this funding opportunity we are explicitly encouraging applicants from under-represented groups. The following will be published online as part of the funding opportunity guidance:</p> <p>A dynamic, diverse and inclusive research and innovation system must be an integral part of UK society, giving everyone the opportunity to participate and to benefit. Therefore, we particularly encourage applications from early career researchers, women, people who identify as an ethnic minority, people with a disability, and other groups who are currently under-represented. We welcome applications from people based in all regions and nations of the UK. Note that career stage or diversity information will not be used in the assessment process and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p>		

**Evaluation:**

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Several risks and potential biases have been identified and considered when designing the funding opportunity. Those risks have been mitigated as far as possible. There has been no evidence found to show that this funding opportunity would discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people.	
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	Possible risks and biases associated with the funding opportunity have been identified and activities adapted accordingly. The outcomes of the initial evaluation of the first pilot have been used to help inform this. Given the pilot nature of this funding opportunity, ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the process and lifetime of the grants, and this EIA will be reviewed 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 <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* Yes/Not required</b> (*EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. funding opportunities and events):	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>15 October 2021</b>
<b>Review date</b> (if applicable):	

#### Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Bethany Turner	15 October 2021	1	