

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) – 2022 Bioinformatics and Biological Resources Fund

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	2022 Bioinformatics and Biological Resources Fund
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>The Bioinformatics and Biological Resources (BBR) Fund aims to facilitate the establishment, maintenance and enhancement of high-quality bioinformatics and biological resources to support the UK bioscience research community.</p> <p>This EIA covers the application and assessment process for this funding opportunity.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>Consultation with BBSRC's EDI and peer review policy experts on barriers to inclusion, participation and potential bias in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Engagement with colleagues in UKRI Research Culture has led to 22BBR being a pilot opportunity for The Résumé for Research and Innovation as one part of UKRI's efforts to create a more inclusive and supportive research and innovation culture.</p> <p>Consultation with attendees to understand potential barriers and take action, where possible, to enable attendance and participation.</p> <p>Learning from good practice in objective decision making and interview processes from across UKRI, supported by external independent advice.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants to the funding opportunity, external panel members, and UKRI employees who are taking part in the assessment process.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>UKRI-BBSRC monitors, analyses and publishes data to better understand the diversity of our applicant and assessor community.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC is proactive in increasing the diversity of our panel members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion.</p> <p>Panel members are asked to inform UKRI-BBSRC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation, and reasonable adjustments will be pursued where possible.</p> <p>Further information: https://www.ukri.org/our-work/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/</p> <p>The impact of this funding activity will be monitored through community engagement, with the impact reviewed through revising of the EIA on an annual basis.</p>

General comments

There are three aspects to this equality impact assessment:

- Ensuring that the submission, peer review and awarding processes are free from unintentional bias
- Ensuring the process enables rigorous assessment of this investment
- Identifying and addressing any potential barriers to attendance and participation by a diverse range of people

UKRI-BBSRC is committed to ensuring that the processes for funding are open and inclusive. Those engaged in the processes endeavor to conduct each stage in a fair manner and without prejudice or bias.

In line with this we adopt the following principles:"

- Ensuring that the call and panel dates are conducive to participation by a diverse range of people
- Ensuring that the membership of the panel is diverse and is representative of industry, academia and research institutes, and institutional and regional representation.
- Ensuring that the panel make up is diverse in respect to gender.
- Raising awareness of the potential for unconscious bias to impact on the decision making.
- Ensuring that the format, duration and location of the assessment panel meeting, and the venue itself where applicable for a physical meeting, are conducive to participation by a diverse range of people.

Effective participation in this virtual event depends on access to suitable technology and sufficient internet connectivity. Some participants might be located in areas with more restricted access, e.g. rural communities.

Unconscious bias

In addition to the above, steps have been taken to minimise the potential impact of unconscious bias on the assessment processes. These include:

- Chair and deputy to attend briefing meeting, where unconscious bias will be covered.
- Panel to receive a briefing on Methods of Working and objective decision making (e.g. by webinar).
- Note regarding unconscious bias included in the Chair's brief.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKRI-BBSRC recognises the broad spectrum of disability and as such appreciate that not every barrier can be anticipated. Some specific examples of barriers and adjustments are provided below. • Venues insufficiently catering to the needs of those with physical disabilities. • Neurodivergent participants may experience difficulties with concentration or when accessing electronic documentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure participants are aware of routes to raise any additional requirements they may need in order to fully participate. • Ensure that the venue is easily accessible to main rail/air/road links and is accessible to those with limited mobility (ramps/lifts etc.) • Consider the use of a virtual/hybrid meeting. • Ensure all activities including provision of documentation are arranged with accessibility considerations in mind. • Virtual/hybrid meetings minimise the impact of physical barriers for attendees with physical disabilities.
Gender reassignment	No known negative impact		
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		

Pregnancy, and parental / caring responsibilities	Potential for negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel members that are pregnant or have child care responsibilities may be unable/find it difficult to attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the use of a virtual/hybrid meeting to allow attendees to manage caring responsibilities alongside the meeting. Ensure participants are aware of routes to raise any additional requirements they may need in order to fully participate. Ensure panel members are aware that BBSRC will reimburse any additional child care costs. Where possible meeting dates outside of the school holiday period are chosen.
	Potential negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The panel may be biased against the value of contributions made by other attendees with career breaks due to parental leave/caring responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance to the panel to ensure appropriate assessment of applicant track record without bias against career breaks due to parental leave/caring responsibilities/etc. The panel will be briefed to be aware of unconscious bias as part of the panel kick-off presentation.
	Potential positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a virtual meeting takes less time than a physical meeting (no need for travel, easy opportunity for partial attendance) participants that have child care responsibilities might find it easier to attend and manage. 	n/a
	Potential negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those with caring responsibilities could be potentially negatively impacted (caring responsibilities is not covered in protected characteristics). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimise the impact of this BBSRC will not hold panels over school holiday periods and will adapt the approach according to other caring responsibilities.
Race	No known negative impact		

Religion or belief	Potential for negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a panel is held over a religious holiday, some groups may find it more difficult or may be unable to attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKRI-BBSRC ensures that religious observances are taken into account as much as possible when timetabling major activities. • When applicable, UKRI-BBSRC ensures that the venue caters for all dietary requirements.
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact		
Age	No known negative impact		
Other	Potential negative		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While mitigating for technical difficulties on the day will be difficult, the approach taken towards information gathering (panel engagement ahead of the event via discussion boards), should provide some alternative means for those participants to input into the discussion.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation/Justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Potential for discrimination or negative impact has been assessed, and actions to address negative impacts are being implemented.	
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	✓	Possible barriers have been identified and activities have been adapted as far as possible. BBSRC welcome engagement from the affected community to understand further barriers and will make reasonable adjustments where possible.
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		

Will this EIA be published?* (Yes/No) (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	02.09.2022
Review date (if applicable):	Annually

Change log:

Name	Date	Version	Change
Philip Hubbard	02.09.2022	01	First version