

EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>Strategic Priority Fund (SPF) ExCALIBUR Cross-cutting Research call. This activity is a call for proposals.</p>
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>EPSRC on the behalf of UKRI, plan to allocate up to £2.5 million for standard grants that will fund investigators across the UKRI remit to inform communities of the potential that exascale software and algorithm developments will have to their science, identify and assess community software requirements and initiate knowledge exchange between their community and the wider ExCALIBUR programme. This call is part of the SPF ExCALIBUR programme.</p>
<p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</p>	<p>The ExCALIBUR Steering Committee were invited to comment on the scope of this call, the MRC and BBSRC Supercomputing taskforce and ExCALIBUR Delivery Team (made up of UKRI council representatives) have also had the opportunity to comment on this call during the scoping stage. The membership of these groups include funders of the community that will engage with this call and academics who interact with those who would apply to this call.</p>
<p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>This call is open to institutions with SPF eligibility; the research community within UKRI's remit, Public Sector Research Establishments and industry will be affected. UKRI staff, the Met Office staff and UK Atomic Authority staff who are managing the ExCALIBUR programme.</p>
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>Contact details will be provided alongside the call document to applicants interested in this call. The ExCALIBUR Delivery Team members will discuss the impact the call has on their relevant communities during the opening and assessment of the funding opportunity.</p> <p>EPSRC will engage with all funded grants to monitor the projects and learn about the challenges and successes.</p> <p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed. All panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing. UKRI will pay special attention to</p>

applicants that can demonstrate multi-disciplinary, collaborative teams and approaches.

As a funder of research, EPSRC remain 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.
- Offer support available for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#)
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities
- Ensure attendees have an opportunity to raise any specific requirements in advance e.g. cover letter and joining instructions
- Support for flexible working of stakeholders
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels
- Abide by the Principles of peer review
- Unconscious Bias training for EPSRC staff 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	Both potentially negative and positive	As the panel will be held virtually, the accessibility of a venue may have a positive impact. However, this may also have a negative impact on those with dyslexia or hearing impairments.	Panel will be held virtually. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that any circumstances which could affect the participation can be accommodated wherever possible. Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help

			ensure unbiased peer review.
Gender reassignment	None identified		
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative on those with caring responsibilities		Support will be offered for people with caring responsibilities, and reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible.
Race	Potentially negative	Racial bias may be perceived.	Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
Religion or belief	Potentially negative		We have tried to avoid major religious holidays when setting dates. All panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that may affect their ability to participate and how this can be accommodated.
Sexual orientation	None identified		
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative	Gender bias may be perceived.	In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will be mixed gender.
Age	Potentially negative	Age bias may be perceived.	Unconscious bias briefing will be given

			<p>as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.</p>
<p>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</p>	<p>Potentially negative</p>	<p>The call will be open during winter holidays. Those with caring responsibilities may be impacted.</p>	<p>The funding opportunity has been promoted within communities throughout the year to prepare them for the opportunity opening. The deadline has been extended by two weeks to reflect the funding opportunity being open over the winter holidays. Applicants to the call will be given two weeks to complete their PI responses as per EPSRC policy.</p>

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	A number of risks and potential negative impacts have been identified and considered as part of the call design. Reasonable adjustments will be made and by adhering to the standard peer review principles and the risks have been mitigated as far as possible.	
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		
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.	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 EPSRC will review this EIA accordingly. Reasonable adjustments will also be made wherever possible.

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:	25.11.2022
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Elizabeth Bent	When published	1	Final version created

