

Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>UKRI Trustworthy Autonomous Systems (TAS) programme – Nodes call</p>
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>To allocate £20.5 million to fund seven research nodes. The aims are to establish a multidisciplinary research programme in TAS via investment in seven research nodes conducting fundamental research on one of the seven topics, and a hub via a separate call. The call for hub outlines closes at 16:00 on 12 December 2019.</p>
<p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</p>	<p>A Town Hall meeting, held in October 2019 to raise awareness of the programme (i.e. Hub & Nodes) and upcoming funding opportunity, help facilitate engagement and broker new collaborations to ensure that multidisciplinary condition of the project is met. This included academics from different institutions, leading figures within the AI community and other disciplines. The workshop was also attended by representatives from industry and government. A Webinar was held on the 20th November 2019 concerning the TAS programme with a specific focus on the hub. Another Webinar is scheduled for 8 January 2020 for potential applicants to ask questions about the Node call and the TAS programme.</p>
<p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants to the call • Research office/institutions and staff • Research Councils and staff • External reviewers (outline panel, postal peer reviewers, interview panel)
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>The call will be open to all, applications will be welcome from any eligible UK-based research team.</p> <p>Outputs from the Town Hall meeting were used to formulate an FAQ document, this was published alongside the Hub call document. The questions asked in the Webinar will be published as part of FAQ document.</p> <p>The outline applications for this call will be subject to short listing and consideration by an independent multidisciplinary panel. Those that succeed through this stage, will be invited to submit a full proposal for peer review, followed by an interview.</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.
- Offer support 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 flexible working of stakeholders
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Ensure EPSRC staff receive tailored unconscious Bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors to reduce the effects of unconscious bias in panel meetings
- 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	Potentially negative	Accessibility of the panel venue may have a negative impact on the participation.	<p>Reasonable attempts will be made to ensure that venue is accessible for the panel and interviews. Enquiries made to ensure that, if possible, any circumstances that could affect the participation can be accommodated wherever possible. It is an individual's responsibility to check with EPSRC and confirm what costs can be reimbursed prior to attendance at a panel/interview.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings</p>

			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	Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding may have concerns about facilities. Thus, not attend.	Support will be offered for people with caring responsibilities wherever possible.
Race	None identified		
Religion or belief	Potentially negative		Major religious holidays have been avoided 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 both the shortlisting and interview panel will be mixed gender.
Age	None identified		
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	None identified		

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Potential negative impact has been identified. Reasonable adjustment will be made and by adhering to the standard peer review principles. These 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	x	Reasonable adjustments will be made wherever 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/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	28/11/2019
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Alex Shevchuk	When published	1	Final version created