



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Hub call
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>To fund a Hub which, as part of a broader UKRI programme, will provide national leadership and coordination, driving knowledge exchange and whole-systems learning across the Circular Economy investments funded under this programme and the wider research and innovation landscape (with academic, policy, consumer, third sector and business stakeholders).</p> <p>This call is the second in a two-stage process. The first stage funded two co-Coordinators, recommended by an expert interview panel. The co-Coordinators received £150k to convene an interdisciplinary community linked to circular economy research and prepare a proposal for the second stage - a Circular Economy Hub. This second stage offers up to £3.27M (80% FEC) for one successful grant for up to 45 months of funding starting 01 January 2021. Only one application, from the appointed co-Coordinators, is expected.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>Due to the nature of the funding, it was not possible to run significant external consultation before the first stage coordinator call was launched (although the work is based on previous consultations e.g. with Strategic Advisory Teams).</p> <p>There has been significant internal consultation, including with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- All involved UKRI Councils- EPSRC Business Improvement team- EPSRC Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) <p>Since the coordinators call was launched, there has been further consultation with the SPF Circular Economy Strategic Advisory Group, Government policy officials, and again internally within UKRI about the second stage Hub call. Up to date, most consultations covered how to embed ED&I across all the Coordinator/Hub activities.</p>

	<p>Once the Hub is funded, the Strategic Advisory Group for the Circular Economy Programme will offer regular guidance to the Hub on ED&I aspects. Additionally, a mid term review of the grant will include assessment of ED&I inclusion by the Hub.</p>
<p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>UK universities, primarily academics across UKRI's remit</p> <p>The funding will also influence UK industry (especially SMEs who will engage with the proposed Centres), UKRI and central Government, all of whom will engage with the Hub.</p>
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>During the call process, questions will be monitored; contact details will be available to answer external queries.</p> <p>The Hub call include requirements for consideration of ED&I across the lifetime of the Hub.</p> <p>A monitoring and evaluation plan has been developed for the overall programme and monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the hub will be agreed with the grant holders when awarded. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Hub having a UKRI contact who will attend steering committee meetings to provide support and guidance - Quarterly and annual reporting to ensure compliance with the funding terms and conditions, and the objectives of the programme - A mid-term review process to provide similar assurance, including against the original assessment criteria - A final programme evaluation activity <p>ED&I considerations form part of the current assessment criteria for the Hub proposal and as such will also feature in the monitoring and evaluation processes, including the mid-term review. Monitoring and evaluation of the Hub will be assessed against the same assessment criteria as those used for evaluation of the Hub proposal.</p>

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	Potential negative impact	<p>Panel members and applicants may not be able to participate in panels due to accessibility issues.</p> <p>Accessibility issues could affect ability to participate in any hub development and engagement activities organised by the co-ordinators.</p>	<p>All panel members, interviewees and any other attendees will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support or reasonable adjustments. Where possible and appropriate video conferencing will be encouraged, while on other occasions EPSRC will select venues that are accessible and encourage the co-ordinators to do the same.</p> <p>Additionally, where possible, EPSRC will accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation, including carer and costing support, as well as grant flexibility for those with disabilities.</p> <p>Assessment of the Hub proposal includes a requirement for the co-ordinators to show evidence of an inclusive approach during the development of the Hub proposal.</p>
Gender reassignment	No known negative impact		

Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative impact	<p>Participation in the call may be negatively affected, if potential applicants, reviewers and/or panel members are unavailable at (or unable to access) key assessment stages.</p> <p>Panel members and applicants may not be able to participate in interviews due to accessibility issues or maternity leave.</p> <p>Accessibility issues and/or maternity leave could affect ability to participate in hub development and engagement activities proposed by the co-ordinators.</p> <p>Fixed timescales for call may affect ability to participate e.g. if on maternity leave.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>All panel members and interviewees will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support or reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>A full timeline is provided in the call document of all key milestones, which are unchanged from those provided at outline stage.</p> <p>The equality act allows for flexibility to the grant, following the start date, to support maternity leave, as stated in the call document.</p>
Race	<p>No known negative impact</p> <p>Potentially positive impact</p>	<p>Grant condition to demonstrate ED&I throughout the lifetime of the Hub.</p> <p>Co-ordinators expected and</p>	

		encouraged to take an inclusive approach when developing Hub proposal.	
Religion or belief	Potentially negative impact	Participation could be affected by coincidence with religious holidays, as well as dietary or religious beliefs.	<p>A full timeline is provided in the call document of all key milestones, which are unchanged from those provided at outline stage. We will endeavour to select dates that are cogniscent of major religious holidays. To the best of our knowledge, key dates do not coincide with any major religious holidays.</p> <p>EPSRC will select venues that account for any religious needs and cater for any dietary requirements, and encourage the co-ordinators to do the same.</p>
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact		
Sex (gender)	<p>No known negative impact</p> <p>Potentially positive impact</p>	<p>Gender diversity of peer review panels, in line with EPSRC policy.</p> <p>Assessment of the Hub proposal includes a requirement for the co-ordinators to show evidence of an inclusive approach during the development of the Hub proposal. Additionally, grant conditions include demonstration of ED&I throughout the lifetime of the Hub.</p>	

		Co-Coordiators expected and encouraged to take an inclusive approach when developing Hub proposal.	
Age	Potentially positive impact	Grant condition to demonstrate ED&I throughout the lifetime of the Hub. Co-Coordiators expected and encouraged to take an inclusive approach when developing Hub proposal. Opportunity for career progression of grant holders.	
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	Potentially negative impact	Only 1 application allowed, predetermined by the coordinator call.	This was already communicated in the coordinators call. Co-Coordiators have several months to prepare the Hub proposal. Addition of Co-investigators to the Hub proposal is encouraged and co-Coordiators are expected to demonstrate a fully inclusive approach in proposal development that goes beyond the consideration of protective characteristics.
	Potential positive impact	Interdisciplinary Hub allows for participation from across UKRI disciplines. Co-Coordiators are expected and encouraged to take an inclusive approach when developing Hub	Co-Coordiators expected and encouraged to take an inclusive approach when developing Hub proposal, as well as through the Hub's lifetime.

		proposal, as well as during the lifetime of the Hub. This goes beyond inclusion across all protected characteristics, as the co-Coordinator (and later the Hub) are encouraged to expand their Circular Economy networks widely beyond those that are already engaged in this field.	Flexible funding is available during the lifetime of the Hub.
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Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	<p>No. The proposed funding activity is open to one application from previously appointed co-Coordinator, which was communicated from the start in the coordinators call document and the Hub application will be reviewed and scored against transparent assessment criteria. Additionally, applicants are expected and encouraged to demonstrate an inclusive approach during Hub proposal development as well as throughout the lifetime of the Hub. The call timeline has been planned to ensure that the timings will not adversely affect any groups and reasonable adjustments will be made to facilitate participation where necessary.</p> <p>A number of risks and potential biases have been identified and considered when designing the call. These risks have been mitigated as far as possible. Further risks could arise once the investments are active, and we will continue to actively monitor ED&I aspects during the lifetime of the Hub.</p>	
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 biases associated with this activity have been identified and activities have been adapted accordingly. Given the flagship nature of

		the investments, ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the lifetime of the investments, and this EIA will be reviewed accordingly after 6 months from grant start date.
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:	27.03.2020
Review date (if applicable):	August 2020 or 6 months after grant start date

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Julia Lipecki	27/3/2020	1	N/A