

### EPSRC – Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Digital Economy Sustainable Digital Society – call for research proposals
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	The Digital Economy Theme, led by EPSRC as part of UKRI, would like to commit up to £5 million (at 80% FEC) to support around six research projects, which address research challenges involved in achieving a Sustainable Digital Society.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>The Sustainable Digital Society priority area was developed based on consultation with a varied range of stakeholders, and further developed with advice from the Digital Economy Theme Programme Advisory Board.</p> <p>This specific call has been developed based on stakeholder consultation at a workshop (including academic, industrial, policy and third sector participants) and with members of the Digital Economy Theme Programme Advisory Board and Digital Economy Theme NetworkPlus Directors.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>The research community in the Digital Economy space.</p> <p>Related research users (e.g. industry, public and third sector organisations) who may be involved as Project Partners.</p>
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed.</p> <p>All panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing.</p> <p>The activity will be monitored by the Digital Economy Theme in EPSRC.</p> <p>Research outcomes will be collected via ResearchFish.</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 [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	None identified		
Gender reassignment	None identified		
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		
Pregnancy and maternity	None identified		
Race	None identified		
Religion or belief	Potentially negative		The closing date for the Intent to Submit stage is Thursday 03 September 2020 and the closing date for full proposals is Thursday 01 October 2020. We have tried to avoid religious holidays, however the opening date, Thursday 30 July, falls on the Day of Arafah. Timelines for full proposal submission have been extended to nine weeks to help account for school summer holidays.
Sexual orientation	None identified		
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative	In line with EPSRC policies the assessment panel will be mixed gender.	
Age			

	None identified		
<b>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</b>	None identified		

**Evaluation:**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Explanation / justification</b>	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	A number of risks have been identified and actively considered as part of the call design. These risks have been mitigated as far as possible.	
<b>Final Decision:</b>	<b>Tick the relevant box</b>	<b>Include any explanation / justification required</b>
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 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.
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> (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>07/07/2020</b>

<b>Review date</b> (if applicable):	N/A
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#### Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Sonia Raikova	When published	1	