

# **A GUIDE TO EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

## **Introduction**

The Research Councils are committed to promoting equality and inclusion in all their activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or whether this is related to our responsibilities as an employer. As public authorities we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary for us to understand the potential impacts of our internal and external activities on different groups of people.

## **What is an Equality and Inclusion Impact Assessment?**

An EIIA is an evidence based tool that enables us to explore and determine any impact our activities and policies may have and enables them to be implemented, without discrimination, whilst helping us to also meet our public sector duties.

The term 'policy' covers the range of functions, activities and decisions for which the organisation is responsible, including for example, arranging scientific strategy panels, conferences and training courses. Whether an EIIA is needed or not will depend on the likely impacts that the policy may have and relevance of the activity to equality. The EIIA should be done when the need for a new policy or practice is identified, or when an existing one is reviewed. Advice can be sought from your Research Council HR team.

The EIIA will help to ensure that:

- we understand the potential effects of the policy by assessing the impacts on different groups
- any adverse impacts are identified and actions identified to remove or mitigate them
- decisions are transparent and based on evidence with clear reasoning.

## **Carrying out an EIIA**

An EIIA template is attached an annex A. This covers:

- the purpose of the policy - what is the intention and/or what is it trying to achieve?
- who is affected by the policy?
- the likely impact on the different groups \*
- what actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts

*\* the different groups covered by the Equality Act are referred to as protected characteristics: disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), and age*

## **Follow up action**

Once actions have been identified consideration should be given to reviewing the actual impact of a new policy or changes to an existing policy (e.g. after it has been in place for a period of time).

## Equality and Inclusion Impact Assessment Template

The template below sets out the key elements of an EIIA that need to be documented.

### Section 1

<b>1. Policy/activity being assessed</b>	Newton Bhabha Fund UK-India Pulses and Oilseeds Research Initiative
<b>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/activity</b>	<p>This call seeks a small number of collaborative projects to aid the development of improved varieties of pulse and oilseed crops for India.</p> <p>These projects will strengthen scientific collaboration between the UK and India and bring together research communities with a wide range of expertise to work on common goals relevant to Indian agriculture.</p> <p>Applications are invited for multi-institutional collaborative research projects involving scientists in the UK and India, of up to three years in duration. Up to £3.5M is available from BBSRC to support the UK components of this research and this is matched by the Department of Biotechnology's (DBT) support for the Indian components.</p> <p>The process involves joint BBSRC-DBT assessment of proposals, a joint peer review panel meeting and awarding of joint funding to successful applicants.</p>

**3. Is the policy/activity relevant to equality and diversity?** (*Advice should be sought from HR. If not relevant, record reasons and evidence; the remainder of the form need not be completed*)

Yes - there are four aspects to this equality impact assessment:

1. Ensuring that the submission, peer review and awarding processes are free from unintentional bias
2. Ensuring the process enables rigorous, transparent and credible assessment of this major investment
3. Identifying and addressing any potential barriers to participation in the call and the assessment/awarding process by a diverse range of people from both the UK and India
4. Ensuring that any cultural sensitivities/practices are recognised and accounted for throughout the call process, to enable an inclusive approach for all participants

BBSRC is responsible for administering the peer review process on behalf of both funders and for nominating external reviewers and panel members to represent BBSRC's interest. DBT is responsible for nominating panel members and external peer reviewers to represent DBT's interest.

BBSRC has made the following commitments and undertakings to support an inclusive approach:

- ensuring that the UK membership of the panel is diverse and is representative of industry, academia and research institutes, with balanced institutional and national representation.
- ensuring that the UK panel make up is diverse in respect to gender
- raising awareness of the potential for unconscious bias to impact on the decision making, working with DBT and RCUK India
- working with DBT and RCUK India to ensure that the format, duration and location of the assessment panel meeting are conducive to participation by a diverse range of people in both the UK and India e.g. ensuring working hours are suitable, adequate breaks are taken, and necessary facilities are available
- ensuring appropriate venue and accommodation arrangements to enable participation by a range of international panel members
- ensuring that the meeting arrangements do not interfere with any religious or cultural beliefs of the panel members
- BBSRC and DBT will brief the panel Chair who will have responsibility for ensuring that all panel members irrespective of their group will have equal opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process

<p><b>4. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant stakeholders)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme partners DBT (India) and BBSRC (UK) have endorsed the call design and assessment process.</li> <li>- BBSRC will lead the peer review process and will work with DBT to develop comprehensive guidance notes to brief panel members on the assessment process, so there is a clear understanding amongst all panel members of the assessment criteria and scoring mechanisms etc.</li> <li>- Consultation has been held with UK research community at workshop in London to refine the scope of the call and size of grants to be funded</li> <li>- Consultation with RCUK India to ensure that all activities under this call are suitable for Indian and UK stakeholders</li> <li>- BBSRC will work with RCUK India to develop comprehensive guidance notes for the panel members around awareness of cultural differences between the UK and India</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Who is affected by the policy?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All external panel members and BBSRC / RCUK India / DBT employees taking part in the assessment process</li> <li>- Applicants to the call</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing actual impact of the policy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- During 2017, EIA's will be developed for further Newton Fund calls with a variety of different countries and cultural considerations</li> <li>- Through BBSRC and other delivery partners, there will be continued monitoring against the conditions that may introduce bias into the programme and create barriers for participation.</li> </ul>

## Section 2 – Identifying Impact

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)
<b>Disability</b>	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendees with physical disabilities may have difficulties if the venue cannot cater for their needs.</li>   <li>- Attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration during panel assessments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirements they may need in order to fully participate.</li>   <li>- Ensure the venue is easily accessible to main rail/air links.</li>   <li>- Ensure room is light and airy.</li>   <li>- Ensure that plenty of breaks are built in to the agenda.</li>   <li>- Ability for the potential use of screen readers for personnel who are visually impaired.</li>   <li>- Ensure that colours chosen don't trigger migraines, different colours may assist in this if personnel don't bring their own lap tops.</li>   <li>- Ensure that conditions that create bias are eliminated during the assessment process.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Neutral	N/A	N/A
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	Neutral	N/A	N/A

<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Negative	- Panel members who are pregnant or have caring responsibilities may have additional requirements in order to take part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure the venue is able to provide a babysitting service if requested.</li> <li>- Ensure there are adequate breaks built into the agenda.</li> <li>- Ensure travel arrangements are suitable for pregnancy and/or caring responsibilities</li> </ul>
<b>Race</b>	Neutral	N/A	N/A
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Negative	- Panel meeting arrangements could potentially negatively impact panel members with religious or cultural beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure religious observances/local practices are taken into account.</li> <li>- Ensure differences in religious or cultural beliefs do not prevent panel members from working together.</li> <li>- BBSRC will work with RCUK India to develop comprehensive guidance notes for the panel members around awareness of cultural differences between the UK and India.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Neutral	Neutral	N/A

<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Negative	<p>- Panel members may be disadvantaged and unable to attend if they have caring responsibilities.</p> <p>- Contributions from panel members may not be recognized / respected due to perceived gender</p>	<p>- Ensure that the location is suitable to allow easy return home (venue is easily accessible to main rail/air links)</p> <p>- Ensure that the Panel is diverse in respect to gender and representative of the community</p> <p>- Agreement for BBSRC to pay for any caring responsibilities to ensure panel members can attend</p> <p>- Ensure that everybody has equal opportunity to contribute to the decision making</p> <p>- If panel members have any concerns, BBSRC will make every effort to address any issues to ensure the panel member/applicant are able to take part fully.</p>
<b>Age</b>	Negative	<p>- Contributions from panel members may not be recognized / respected due to perceived age</p>	<p>- Ensure that everybody has equal opportunity to contribute to the decision making</p> <p>- If panel members have any concerns, BBSRC will make every effort to address any issues to ensure the panel member/applicant are able to take part fully.</p>

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