

Panel for the Allocation of Telescope Time Equality Impact Assessment

| Question | Response |
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| 1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed | Allocation of Telescope Time Panel or PATT, meets once a year by video conferencing. |
| 2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event | <p>The Panel for the Allocation of Telescope Time (PATT) is an advisory body set up to consider the allocation of telescope time and associated travel and subsistence costs in support of those allocations for a range of astronomy facilities for the UK community. These include those where the UK Community has priority access to time via an agreement (such as the ING, LT and e-MERLIN) and those where the UK community is able to compete via open access (such as facilities owned and operated within the US, Chile or Australia).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advise the executive on the award of travel and subsistence expenses consistent with allocated telescope time • Take account, as appropriate, of any strategic advice provided by STFC • Take account, as appropriate, of the recommendations of external reviewers • Provide clear concise feedback to Applicants • Advise the Executive as required on all issues relating to PATT • Liaise with other bodies as necessary |
| 3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders) | <p>The Panel for the Allocation of Telescope Time (PATT) advises on the policy related to PATT and regularly reviews the scheme and its processes.</p> <p>This EIA has been reviewed by a member of STFC's Equality and Diversity policy group.</p> <p>STFC is dedicated to ensuring that our processes for funding are open and inclusive. Individuals engaged with our funding processes endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner, without prejudice or bias. In line with this, STFC adheres to the seven principles of</p> |

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| | <p>public life. In addition, we adopt the following principles for PATT awards:</p> <p>For applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual call for PATT is advertised on the STFC website • The call text and guidance clearly states the eligibility and assessment criteria • The STFC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page • STFC will provide support to applicants before and after submission in order to assist them in the application and assessment process <p>For Panel Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STFC staff will work with the Panel Chair to agree approaches that are designed to minimise opportunities for bias and improve the transparency of decision-making • STFC enable participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours • Panel members are asked to inform STFC if they have any additional needs to enable participation at the teleconference • STFC will provide appropriate breaks if required <p>For STFC staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All STFC staff involved in the process will receive training in unconscious bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact upon their decision making. |
| <p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p> | <p>Applicants who apply for PATT grants or anyone involved in the assessment process.</p> |
| <p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p> | <p>STFC will review this equality impact assessment annually to identify any further actions or interventions that are required to improve the process.</p> <p>STFC monitors, analyses and publishes data to better understand the diversity of our applicant and assessor community.</p> <p>STFC recognises the need to increase the diversity of its panel membership and takes a</p> |

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| | pro-active approach to meeting this requirement. |
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| 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) |
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| Disability | Negative | <p>Applicants and/or panel members with visual disabilities or impairments may find it difficult to access and review electronic documentation.</p> | <p>STFC takes all necessary steps to ensure that electronic information is accessible. STFC will respond to individual support needs on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Going forward all panel meetings will be held via videoconferencing facilities such as Zoom (the UKRI Primary VC choice). STFC will take all reasonable steps to make adjustments to enable participation in virtual meetings. This can include, for example, use of screen readers, closed captioning, automatic transcripts and keyboard accessibility. More frequent breaks will be scheduled in virtual meetings.</p> <p>STFC will work with individuals to understand what help can be provided. This could entail arranging a face-to-face meeting rather than a teleconference</p> |

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| | | <p>Panel members with hearing disabilities may face difficulties in engaging in discussions</p> | <p>For virtual meetings, Zoom follows the latest accessibility standards to ensure it is fully accessible for the latest screen readers. Where other VC programmes are to be used, we will ensure this is also the case.</p> <p>For virtual meetings, STFC the use of closed captioning and automatic transcripts is available with Zoom. We will make sure this is also the case where other VC Programmes are to be used.</p> <p>There is flexibility to make adjustments throughout the assessment process where appropriate for example, more frequent breaks will be scheduled into the agenda for virtual meetings to allow adequate time away from the screen</p> |
| <p>Gender reassignment</p> | <p>Negative</p> | <p>Information regarding gender reassignment is not made available throughout the peer review process.</p> | <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference. STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts</p> |

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| | | | as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review |
| Marriage or civil partnership | Negative | | Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference. STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review |
| Pregnancy and maternity | Negative | <p>Panel members who are pregnant or on maternity leave may find it difficult to participate in the teleconference or require changes to be made to enable their participation</p> <p>Nursing mothers may need additional support in terms of childcare but</p> | <p>For virtual meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic, STFC will make all reasonable efforts to ensure the timing of the meeting is convenient for any requirements relating to the current homeworking environment, for example, adjusted working hours, caring and childcare responsibilities.</p> <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference. STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure</p> |

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| | | because it is a telecom and in their own institution or home this should be less of a problem. | unbiased peer review STFC will liaise with panel members to identify and address barriers that may prevent their participation in the process. |
| Race | Negative | Information regarding race is not made available throughout the peer review process. | Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference. STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review. |
| Religion or belief | Negative | Panel members may be unable to participate in the teleconference due to religious observances | Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference. STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review. |
| Sexual orientation | Negative | Information regarding sexual orientation is not made available throughout the peer review process. | Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious |

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| | | | <p>bias during the teleconference. STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> |
| Sex (gender) | Negative | <p>Panel members with caring responsibilities may face difficulties in participating in the teleconference</p> | <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference. STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>Whenever possible, the teleconference will be scheduled to avoid school holidays.</p> |
| Age | Negative | <p>Information regarding age is not made available throughout the peer review process.</p> | <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference. STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> |

Evaluation:

| Question | Explanation / justification | |
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| Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | | |
| 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. | | |

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| Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events: | |
| Date completed: | |
| Review date (if applicable): | |