Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
Name of funding activity/ event being assessed	Policy engagement training programme for UKRI, delivered by the Institute for Methods Innovation, on behalf of the Natural Environment Research Council and Economic and Social Research Council.
Summary of aims and objectives of the funding activity/ event	The project aims to deliver a comprehensive training programme for researchers working in the environmental and economic and social sciences. It employs a blended approach to training, combining in-person and online methods to ensure accessibility and accommodate diverse learning styles and needs. The programme will prioritise environmental and social science participants while focusing on making it as accessible as possible for all groups in the 'protected categories' list below.
What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this activity? *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)*	At the proposal stage, we considered the potential impact of the training programme activities on diversity, inclusion and equality. This was specifically indicated as important by the funders, NERC and ESRC. We consulted extensively within the consortium to ensure we followed best practices. We also consulted UKRI resources on the website to ensure that our proposal is in line with UKRI guidelines and expectations. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that the funders, the training participants, as well as consortium staff members, and other stakeholders (guest speakers, facilitators, etc.) are at ease and feel included.
	At the proposal stage, we committed to establishing a shared Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policy within the consortium. This policy was included in the official plan for the project. Furthermore, we committed to integrating DEI into the training content, including efforts to decolonise research and promote inclusive language. In addition, we have ensured diverse team composition within the consortium. Our content developers, training facilitators, and support staff members are experienced and have received the appropriate training to ensure inclusivity. In addition, to ensure inclusivity, we made sure that the training dates for both in-person and virtual sessions do not clash with school holidays, or religious practices and observances.
	Furthermore, during the project kick-off meeting, we consulted with NERC-ESRC to agree on best practices for ensuring diverse participation without discrimination. We have also completed a comprehensive GDPR questionnaire to ensure our data collection approaches are in line with best practices. We will continue to ensure our training programme aligns with the values of UKRI (NERC-ESRC) throughout the duration of the contract. We will also ensure that our in-house practices align with the values of UKRI (NERC-ESRC) to ensure the promotion of social value, open science activities, environmental sustainability, employee engagement, health and well-being of staff.
	In terms of wider stakeholder engagement and involvement, the planned programme will involve a range of policy professionals (operating at different levels) in the delivery of the training as 'guest speakers'. In addition, the delivery team will 'sense check' content with existing contacts in the policy world.
	During the introduction to each virtual and in-person training session, ground rules relating to inclusivity will be communicated to participants. This includes our policy on the use of gender pronouns. We prioritise respecting individuals' chosen pronouns in all interactions, whether in person, online and in small or large groups. For online events we will invite attendees to add their preferred pronouns to their name captions. For in-person training, to avoid anyone feeling exposed, attendees are invited to privately inform the facilitator of their preferred pronouns. We recognise the importance of addressing each person as they prefer, fostering inclusivity and affirming their identity.

	In addition, we will select training venues that have gender-inclusive facilities.
	Taking into account that English may not be everyone's first language, we have committed to presenting all training materials and sessions in plain language, to ensure maximum accessibility and understandability. Our trainers and facilitators have experience in presenting training sessions to a diversity of participants and will be ready to assist any participants with specific requirements regarding language as best we can (e.g., by facilitating the use of machine translation). The provision of training content in advance via the always-available online self-paced course will enable participants who may be unfamiliar with the terminology to prepare for the live sessions at their own pace.
Who is affected by the funding activity/ event?	- Prospective training participants in the environmental and social sciences fields - Consortium partner organisations and their employees - Other stakeholders, including, for example, guest speakers and training facilitators - NERC and ESRC staff members attending the training programme
What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the funding activity/ event?	- A longitudinal impact evaluation will be conducted throughout the duration of the contract. This evaluation will include reports delivered after each phase of the project. - Participants will be asked to provide feedback on the training programme. - Data will be collected using online surveys, interviews, and focus groups as needed. This approach aims to achieve a data-driven understanding of contract delivery's success and sustained impact. - Metrics will be included to measure how training delivery affected the economic, social, and environmental aspects of social value. For instance, participants will be asked about increased policy engagement, more and equal career and training opportunities, improved work-life balance, and enhanced skills and knowledge. - These insights and feedback will be discussed in regular project review meetings, both internally and with NERC-ESRC, to assess and guide the project's progress. - Notably, we will have a formal six-month review with NERC and ESRC staff members to evaluate the project's first phase, ahead of the implementation of the second phase of the training programme. This means that adjustments and improvements can be made ahead of Phase 2.

Protected Characteristic Group/ Additional factors	Potential for negative impact?	Explain or examples of evidence/data used	Action to prevent negative impact
Disability	Yes - Negative (inadvertent) and Positive (intervening)	**Negative (inadvertent):** Possible discrimination may arise against participants, speakers, trainers, and support staff based on disabilities. Physical meetings might pose challenges for	- Participants will be given space to request specific accommodation when they apply to take part in the training programme. - Indirect impacts on our work linked to disability will be picked up through a request for specific requirements to maximise individuals' participation. - Participants will be able to attend both virtual or in-person sessions

| | | participants with physical disabilities if venues aren't accessible.

Participants with neuro-disabilities could struggle with focus and concentration during live training sessions.

Positive (intervening):
Participants with disabilities can join the training programme online from a comfortable space.

Inclusive approaches allow for a diverse range of experiences and a better understanding of their specific needs and circumstances. | depending on what is the most comfortable for them based on their specific requirements.
- The core training programme content will be self-paced materials hosted on a learning management system. This means that participants with specific requirements can access the materials in their own time, in a space where they feel comfortable. The live training sessions, both in person and online, are supplementary.
- Accessibility will be prioritised in digital (e.g., ensuring that content is screen reader compatible) and in-person training provisions (e.g., ensuring wheelchair access to the venue).
- The self-paced course content is available at all times to those who would like to revisit content.
- Specialised features on Zoom will be used - closed captioning - will be enabled for all virtual sessions and in all pre-recorded videos.
- For in-person sessions, we will engage with venues about the provision of accommodations for hearing and visual disabilities.
- Regular breaks will be incorporated into the live training sessions to allow participants to rest.
- Participants will have the option to use chat to communicate or ask questions during the live training sessions rather than requiring the use of cameras or microphones.
- Venues for in-person training sessions will be suitable for participants with disabilities.
- All training staff have been briefed on the importance of EDI/unconscious bias/diversity awareness so they can effectively respond to participants' accommodation requests.
- Dates will be determined and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to travel and attend.
- A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org) |
|---|---|---|---|

| Gender reassignment | Yes - Negative (inadvertent) and Positive (intervening) | **Negative (inadvertent):**
There's a potential for discrimination related to gender transition that could impact attendees, presenters, facilitators, and team members.

Individuals undergoing gender transition might not be able to attend training sessions.

Records could incorrectly reflect the gender of those undergoing gender reassignment.

Positive (intervening):
Participants in the midst of gender transition can be accommodated in the training programme by enabling them to join virtual sessions from a space that meets their requirements.

Adopting inclusive strategies fosters a variety of perspectives and enhances comprehension of their unique needs and situations. | • Participants will be able to attend virtual or in-person sessions depending on what is the most comfortable for them based on their specific requirements.
• Indirect impacts on our work linked to gender/sex/gender reassignment/sexual orientation will be picked up through a request for specific requirements to maximise individuals' participation.
• Participants will have the option to use chat to communicate or ask questions during the live training sessions rather than requiring the use of cameras or microphones.
• Regular breaks will be incorporated into the live training sessions to allow participants to rest.
• The self-paced course content is available at all times to those who would like to revisit content.
• Training materials will use gender-neutral language where possible.
• Dates will be determined and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to travel and attend.
• All training staff have been briefed on the importance of EDI/unconscious bias/diversity awareness so they can effectively respond to participants' accommodation requests.
• A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org) |

| Marriage or civil partnership | Yes - Negative (inadvertent) and Positive (intervening) | **Negative (inadvertent):** Discrimination might occur against participants, speakers, trainers, and staff based on their marital status or civil partnership. Participants in certain locations in the UK may be disadvantaged because of travel time or family situations that do not allow them to leave dependents. **Positive (intervening):** Inclusive training can be achieved by offering virtual sessions and accommodating the needs of participants who are married or in civil partnerships. Inclusive approaches allow for a diverse range of experiences and a better understanding of their specific needs and circumstances. | Participant selection will not be based on marital/civil partnership, or any other protected characteristics. Indirect impacts on our work linked to marriage or civil partnership will be picked up through a request for specific requirements to maximise individuals' participation. Participants will be given space to request specific accommodation when they apply to take part in the training programme. Participants will be able to attend both virtual or in-person sessions depending on what is the most comfortable for them based on their specific requirements. Dates will be determined and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to travel and attend. The core training programme content will be self-paced materials hosted on a learning management system. This means that participants with specific requirements can access the materials in their own time, in a space where they feel comfortable. The live training sessions, both in person and online, are supplementary. The self-paced course content is available at all times to those who would like to revisit content.. Dates for training sessions are scheduled to fall outside UK school holidays. A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org) |

| Pregnancy and Maternity (Paternity) | Yes - Negative (inadvertent) and Positive (intervening) | **Negative (inadvertent):** Discrimination may occur against those who are pregnant, including participants, speakers, trainers, and staff.

UK participants might face challenges due to travel demands or family commitments that prevent leaving dependents.

Positive (intervening): Pregnant or maternity participants can join training virtually, tailored to their needs.

Inclusive approaches allow for diverse experiences and a better understanding of their specific needs and circumstances. | • Participant selection is not based on pregnancy/maternity, or any other protected characteristics.
• Indirect impacts on our work linked to pregnancy and maternity will be picked up through a request for specific requirements to maximise individuals' participation.
• Participants will be given space to request specific accommodation when they apply to take part in the training programme.
• Participants will be able to attend both virtual or in-person sessions depending on what is the most comfortable for them based on their specific requirements.
• The core training programme content will be self-paced materials hosted on a learning management system.
  ○ This means that participants with specific requirements can access the materials in their own time, in a space where they feel comfortable.
  ○ The live training sessions, both in person and online, are supplementary.
• The self-paced course content is available at all times to those who would like to revisit content.
• Dates will be determined and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to travel and attend, such as ensuring dates that fall outside UK school holidays.
• Where possible, venues for in-person training sessions will be selected to include facilities suitable for nursing/breastfeeding.
• A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org) |

Race	Yes - Negative (inadvertent) and Positive (intervening)	**Negative (inadvertent):** There could be potential discrimination against participants, guest speakers, trainers and other support staff, due to their race/ethnicity. **Positive (intervening):** Inclusive approaches allow for diverse experiences and a better understanding of their specific needs and circumstances.	• Participant selection is not based on race or ethnicity, or any other protected characteristics. • Indirect impacts on our work linked to race will be picked up through a request for specific requirements to maximise individuals' participation. • All training staff have been briefed on the importance of EDI/unconscious bias/diversity awareness so they can effectively respond to participants' accommodation requests. • A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org) • Taking into account that English may not be everyone's first language, we have committed to presenting all training materials and sessions in plain language, to ensure maximum accessibility and understandability. Our trainers and facilitators have experience in presenting training sessions to a diversity of participants and will be ready to assist any participants with specific requirements regarding language as best we can (e.g., by facilitating the use of machine translation). The provision of training content in advance via the online self-paced course will enable participants who may be unfamiliar with the terminology to prepare for the live sessions at their own pace.
Religion or belief	Yes - Negative (inadvertent) and Positive (intervening)	**Negative (inadvertent):** There could be potential discrimination against participants, guest speakers, trainers and other support staff due to their faith or belief. **Positive (intervening):** Inclusive approaches allow for diverse experiences and a better understanding of their specific needs and circumstances.	• Participant selection is not based on religion or belief, or any other protected characteristics. • Indirect impacts on our work linked to religion or belief will be picked up through a request for specific requirements to maximise individuals' participation. • All training staff have been briefed on the importance of EDI/unconscious bias/diversity awareness so they can effectively respond to participants' accommodation requests. • Where possible, venues for in-person training sessions will be selected to include prayer facilities. • Menu options for those with dietary requirements will be offered for in-person training sessions (participants are asked to provide their dietary requirements in the application form). • The self-paced course content is available at all times to those who would like to revisit content.

			• Dates are agreed upon and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to attend. • A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org)
Sexual orientation	Yes - Negative (inadvertent) and Positive (intervening)	**Negative (inadvertent):** There could be potential discrimination against participants, guest speakers, trainers and other support staff due to their sexual orientation. **Positive (intervening):** Inclusive approaches allow for diverse experiences and a better understanding of their specific needs and circumstances.	• Participant selection is not based on sexual orientation or any other protected characteristics. • Indirect impacts on our work linked to gender/sex/gender reassignment/sexual orientation will be picked up through a request for specific requirements to maximise individuals' participation. • All training staff have been briefed on the importance of EDI/unconscious bias/diversity awareness so they can effectively respond to participants' accommodation requests. • A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org)
Sex (gender)	Yes - Negative (inadvertent) and Positive (intervening)	**Negative (inadvertent):** There is a risk of potential discrimination against participants, guest speakers, trainers and other support staff based on their gender and/or sex. **Positive (intervening):** Inclusive approaches allow for diverse experiences and a better understanding of their specific needs and circumstances.	• Participant selection is not based on sex, gender, or other protected characteristics. • Indirect impacts on our work linked to gender/sex/gender reassignment/sexual orientation will be picked up through a request for specific requirements to maximise individuals' participation. • Standard gender-inclusive practices will be implemented, including active facilitation to ensure balanced group contributions and prevent dominance. • Training staff are briefed on EDI, unconscious bias, and diversity awareness to respond effectively to accommodation requests. • Efforts are being made to use gender-neutral language in documents and training events • Participants self-report their sex/gender in the application, aimed at removing assumptions by the training staff. • A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org)

| Age | Yes - Negative (inadvertent) and Positive (intervening) | **Negative (inadvertent):**
There is a risk of discrimination based on age may affect participants, speakers, trainers, and staff.

Early-career individuals, where age may be a corollary factor, might be at a disadvantage, as applicants must be at postdoctoral level or higher.

Positive (intervening):
Inclusive approaches allow for diverse experiences and a better understanding of their specific needs and circumstances. | • Participants selection is not based on age, or any other protected characteristics.
• Indirect impacts on our work linked to age will be picked up through a request for specific requirements to maximise individuals' participation.
• A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org) |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** | Potential Negative (inadvertent) | **Negative (inadvertent):**
Participants in certain locations in the UK may be disadvantaged because of travel time or family situation that do not allow them to leave dependents. | • Efforts are made to hold in-person training sessions at various UK locations for accessibility across different regions.
• Dates are set and announced in advance, enabling attendees to plan their participation.
• Those unable to travel can attend virtual training sessions.
• A designated team will be available for any assistance (training@methodsinnovation.org) |

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification
Is it possible the proposed activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Yes; therefore, numerous risk mitigation measures have been carefully considered and implemented into the training programme design. The focus is on including underrepresented groups in line with NERC-ESRC's approach, but DEI metrics will not be the criteria for participant selection. However, DEIA-related data will be collected during the application. Gathering racial or ethnic information assesses participant group diversity and compares experiences. This evaluates if the training reaches a representative segment of the target population. Understanding participants' diverse backgrounds aids in developing culturally sensitive and relevant content, ensuring the training's effectiveness for various racial or ethnic groups.

Recommendation:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will **proceed**		
2. You can decide to **stop** the activity at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can **adapt or change** the activity in a way which you think will eliminate the bias	X	
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 activity (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to **proceed with caution,** 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:	Wednesday 31 January 2024
Review date (if applicable):	