

Response ID ANON-B9YC-89NM-3

Submitted to Consultation on the draft UKRI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
Submitted on 2022-03-28 10:37:53

General guidance

Questions about you

Are you responding as an individual or are you representing the views of an organisation or group?

I am representing the views of an organisation or group

About you: organisation or group

Which of the following best describes the type of organisation or group are you representing?

Charity or third sector body

If other, please specify:

What is the name of the organisation or group you are representing?

Please enter the name of the organisation or group you are representing with your responses:
British Academy of Management [BAM]

Questions about the draft UKRI EDI strategy

Accessibility of the draft UKRI EDI strategy

As a document, how accessible is the draft EDI strategy?

Accessibility - The content and wording of the draft EDI strategy was easy to understand:
Strongly agree

Accessibility - The format and layout of the draft EDI strategy made it easy to read:
Agree

Are there any further comments you would like to provide on the accessibility of the EDI strategy?:

The margins appear to be very wide – narrower margins would allow for having more words per line, which would help with readability of the text. This could be a wireframe problem on the web. It's probably worth checking in all formats.

Did you use assistive technology to read the EDI strategy?

No

If yes, were there any issues? Please provide details below:

EDI strategy: Our ambition

Is the EDI strategy's proposed ambition clear?

No

If no, please provide brief details of what is unclear:

Not fully. The overall tone of the ambition statement is unambiguous: UKRI wants to see a change, and is prepared to challenge itself and do things differently to achieve this change. However, it isn't clear from the statement of ambition what the intended actions and desired outcomes will be. It would be good to see more specificity: add something more concrete to substantiate the expression 'by everyone, for everyone', e.g. 'regardless of background', 'regardless of their diversity characteristics'. Also, anchoring the ambition to the current legislative framework in the UK might make it sounds more concrete – e.g. reference to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

What do you like most about the EDI strategy's proposed ambition?

Please provide brief details on what you like most about the EDI strategy's ambition:

- The declaration that UKRI is prepared to 'challenge themselves' and 'take action' to become a more inclusive, equitable and accessible organisation.
- Commitment to 'transform the system'.

- Acknowledgement that UKRI needs to work together with other parties.

How do you think the EDI strategy's proposed ambition could be improved? Are there any significant gaps?

Please provide specific suggestions where possible:

- Add more specificity within the ambition statement (see comment above)
- Make reference to notions of 'belonging', 'contribution' and 'recognition' (not just 'everyone feels included', but perhaps a separate bullet point: 'everyone feels that they belong, that they are able to make and be recognised for their contribution')
- At the British Academy of Management we use the notion of EDIR – Equality Diversity Inclusion and Respect. For us, Respect is a really important aspect of understanding how to act when it is inappropriate to treat everyone the same in order to be inclusive and achieve equal opportunity and equitable outcome. We define respect as the demonstration of consideration for all persons, taking into account diversity to support equality and inclusion. We suggest that integrating respect into a broader narrative of how we work together, how we treat others, and work in pluralistic communities of practice, could bring about broader cultural change. Including respect as part of an institution's strategy, and strategic approach, could equally be transformative. We would be happy to have further conversations to support UKRI in their approach, should you think it appropriate.

EDI strategy: Our cornerstones for change

Thinking about UKRI today, how well is UKRI exhibiting the behaviours set out in the cornerstones?

Cornerstone 1: We will foster an inclusive, equitable, just and diverse research and innovation system by championing and focusing on systemic and structural change.

Cornerstone 1 - UKRI is consistently exhibiting the behaviours set out in this cornerstone:

Agree

Are there any further details you would like to provide?:

Cornerstone 2: We will be open, transparent, and inclusive in our approaches by listening, influencing and working in partnership.

Cornerstone 2 - UKRI is consistently exhibiting the behaviours set out in this cornerstone:

Agree

Are there any further details you would like to provide?:

Cornerstone 3: We are committed to leading, taking action and being innovative. We will use evidence, data and learning from ourselves and others to inform our actions and how we work.

Cornerstone 3 - UKRI is consistently exhibiting the behaviours set out in this cornerstone:

Agree

Are there any further details you would like to provide?:

Cornerstone 4: We expect every individual in UKRI to be inclusive in all that they do, and we will hold ourselves to account for our actions as individuals, as leaders, partners and as an organisation.

Cornerstone 4 - UKRI is consistently exhibiting the behaviours set out in this cornerstone:

Agree

Are there any further details you would like to provide?:

EDI strategy: Strategic objectives

Are the proposed EDI strategic objectives clear?

Yes

If no, please provide brief details of what is unclear:

EDI strategy: Objective 1

What do you like most about this proposed objective?

Please provide brief details on what you like most about this objective:

- The slogan 'by everyone, for everyone' is attractive and encourages the reader to become curious and to 'buy in'
- The holistic focus on the system suggests a strong commitment to change across UKRI
- It's very reassuring to see UKRI's recognition of its responsibility and of the importance of leading by example

How do you think this proposed objective could be improved? Are there any significant gaps?

Please provide specific suggestions where possible:

It would be helpful to define what is meant by 'all', 'everyone' etc., e.g. through reference to the legal framework within which UKRI operates (i.e. Equality Act 2010) or, even better, the diversity and complexity of the academic population in the UK (e.g. including different national / linguistic / cultural backgrounds – something that the Equality Act 2010 doesn't directly cover).

It would be helpful to define the outcomes of this objective more concretely. How will UKRI measure / be able to tell whether it has become a more inclusive organisation? In the present version, the outcome come across as somewhat vague and less ambitious than the remainder of the text under this objective.

What opportunities can you see for you or your organisation to work with UKRI in achieving this proposed objective?

Please provide specific suggestions where possible:

We would be keen to help UKRI operationalise some of the priorities and ambitions that come with this objective: what exactly does 'embedding EDI in how we catalyse, convene and invest in research and innovation' mean in practice? What does 'good look like'? What obstacles are there currently in place within UKRI that make the implementation of this objective difficult? BAM would be keen to work with and support UKRI in carrying out the important work of 'organisational soul-searching' and engaging in organisational reflexivity, recognising which of the current practices do not reflect a commitment to embedding EDI principles across the board, and translating the principles and objectives into new practices and processes.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is a major field of expertise developed within management research. As such, the British Academy of Management can offer a particularly valuable, scholarship- and evidence-based contribution to UKRI's efforts in this area. The British Academy of Management has been leading on this work within the UK and internationally. For example, we were the first to produce a study of FTSE 100 companies focused on EDI matters. We feel strongly that UKRI should collaborate with us directly on its EDI strategy'.

EDI strategy: Objective 2

What do you like most about this proposed objective?

Please provide brief details on what you like most about this objective:

We liked that:

- There is a recognition that equality and inclusion require investment
- There is an emphasis on the processes associated with conducting research, choosing collaboration partners and UKRI's own ways of working.
- There is an emphasis on transparency, which is very important and reassuring.

How do you think this proposed objective could be improved? Are there any significant gaps?

Please provide specific suggestions where possible:

Please note that two people at BAM read this strategic objective differently. One person read it as investing in EDI, another read it as the grant funding investments that UKRI makes. Further clarification may be helpful.

- Inclusion itself requires investment – this can't necessarily be rolled up into existing investment activities.
- In addition to working towards 'including and valuing a diversity of people', it would be helpful to say something about the wish to make everyone feel that they belong and can make a contribution that will be recognised and valued.
- The title of the award 'Young Innovators Award' could be interpreted as ageist so perhaps it isn't best to use it as a 'celebrating diversity' example. How about 'Early Career Innovators Award', which is an age-neutral term?
- As with Objective 1, it would be useful to specify how the achievement of this objective is going to be measured. How will UKRI know that the reformed R&I system 'encourages and values a diversity of people, ideas, and projects'?

What opportunities can you see for you or your organisation to work with UKRI in achieving this proposed objective?

Please provide specific suggestions where possible:

Again, BAM would be keen to help UKRI on its journey on developing an understanding of what changes to the ways UKRI works are necessary in order to advance equality and inclusivity. BAM could also help UKRI understand what within UKRI's current ways of working is an obstacle to advancing equality and inclusion.

EDI strategy: Objective 3

What do you like most about this proposed objective?

Please provide brief details on what you like most about this objective:

- The recognition that UKRI's employees are part of its EDI strategy
- The emphasis on the need for senior leaders to act as role models
- The emphasis of creating an organisational culture in which people feel safe and heard
- Attention to UKRI's staff recruitment.

How do you think this proposed objective could be improved? Are there any significant gaps?

Please provide specific suggestions where possible:

- We would recommend changing the expression 'will feel included, valued and able to contribute and participate' to 'will feel that they belong, are recognised, and able to make a contribution that will be valued' (or something along these lines – mention explicitly a sense of 'belonging' and 'recognition' as this is what 'feeling included' really means in practice).
- We would suggest mentioning somewhere that it would be desirable for the UKRI workforce to be representative, in its diversity, of the workforce within UK academia (which is very internationally diverse).

What opportunities can you see for you or your organisation to work with UKRI in achieving this proposed objective?

Please provide specific suggestions where possible:

We would be happy to review the current staff recruitment policies with UKRI and advise UKRI on how to approach talent recruitment and development in a more inclusive way.

EDI strategy: Objective 4

What do you like most about this proposed objective?

Please provide brief details on what you like most about this objective:

- The emphasis on the need for monitoring and measurement, not just on ambition and objectives.
- The emphasis on becoming an evidence-based organisation.
- The grammatical use of the word 'data' in plural rather than singular – very refreshing!
- The expressed wish to understand and learn from good practice.

How do you think this proposed objective could be improved? Are there any significant gaps?

Please provide specific suggestions where possible:

Under 'objective outcomes', it would be useful to specify the timeline within which UKRI intends to have developed the evaluation approaches in the EDI area. Making progress (or lack thereof) visible to the community that we are trying to transform will be really important to bringing about change, raising awareness and exploring and championing best practice as it emerges.

What opportunities can you see for you or your organisation to work with UKRI in achieving this proposed objective?

Please provide specific suggestions where possible:

- BAM would be keen to support UKRI in developing an understanding of what / how to monitor and evaluate.
- BAM would welcome opportunities to amplify UKRI's efforts, and provide a platform to demonstrate best practice to help our wider community grow and become more EDIR in all that it does.