



Equality Impact Assessment Template

Before carrying out EqIA, you should familiarise yourself with the University's EqIA Policy Statement and Guidance and Checklist Notes, and undertake our online training on Equality and Diversity and EqIA. These, along with further information and resources, are available at www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment

EqIA covers policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services, but will be referred to as 'policy/practice' hereinafter.

A. Policy/Practice (name or brief description):

agCensus is a data collection of agricultural census data. Currently it is available through Digimap, an online map and data delivery service, available by subscription to UK Higher and further education establishments. EDINA aims to make the data available for sale to a commercial market. In order to reach our target market we will be establishing a new website to advertise the data product and enable potential customers to make an enquiry about the data. Enquiries will translate into a conversation (by email or by telephone) with the customer to establish what data they require, what the costs would be and how the data can be delivered upon payment. This is a manual process and the customer will not have access to any online "service" other than the website through which to make an initial enquiry.

The website will be available 24/7 to a global customer base. Initial enquiries will be through a web form or by telephone. Prices will be quoted according to an established formula dependent upon the data type and geographical area requested. Customers will need to supply a name and contact details initially. Should a data purchase be arranged, payment details will also need to be submitted. This will be done using existing supplier registration forms.

B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (Mark **yes against the applicable reason):**

- Proposed new policy/practice **YES**
- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
- Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice
- Other (please state):

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **James Reid**

Job title: **Geospatial Services Manager**

School/service/unit: **EDINA, Information Services Group**

D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any of the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:

- affects primary or high level functions of the University

- is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)? **YES**
- It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA? **YES. This is a new public-facing service. Any member of the public might reasonably expect the University to have conducted an Equality Impact Assessment.**

E. Equality Groups

To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)

- Age
- Disability
- race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership¹

Since our service is open to all users (the general public), it has the potential to impact on any of the 9 protected characteristic groups.

Age: The service is available to all users regardless of age. We do not request any information about a potential customer's age such as date of birth etc.

Sexual orientation: The service is available to all regardless of sexual orientation. We do not request any information about a potential customer's sexual orientation, including honorific titles.

Religion or belief: The service is available to all regardless of faith or belief or lack of faith or belief. We do not request any information about a potential customer's religion or belief or lack of any religion or belief. Our service aims to be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (routine maintenance and unforeseeable outages aside) which creates flexibility for users who adhere to specific times of religious observance.

Pregnancy and maternity: We do not request any information about whether a potential customer is pregnant or has any caring responsibilities. Our service aims to be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (routine maintenance and unforeseeable outages aside) which creates flexibility for users who are pregnant, on maternity leave or who have caring responsibilities.

Disability: the protected characteristic of disability may experience the greatest impact, as this relates to accessing a census and database service through the use of IT equipment (either desktop or mobile and via the internet). The public facing website for this service has had a full accessibility assessment undertaken against the WCAG 2.1 guidelines, as per The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Reasonable adjustments will be made where we are unable to rectify any accessibility issues to accommodate disabled users,

¹ Note: only the duty to eliminate discrimination applies to marriage and civil partnership. There is no need to have regard to advancing equality or opportunity or fostering good relations in this respect.

including availability of all information in alternative formats and alternative means to contact us.

Marriage and Civil partnership: We do not request any information about a potential customer's status regarding marriage or civil partnerships. We do not request a title on our contact form, nor does our Customer Relationship Management software require a title be recorded for each contact. A customer's status in this respect does not affect the contractual sale of any data.

Sex: We do not ask for titles on our forms or for any information regarding sex, including honorific titles.

Gender reassignment: We do not request or store any information about a potential customer relating to gender reassignment. Should we be contacted by a customer to request a change in the way we refer to them, any records we hold will be adjusted according to the customer's wishes without delay.

Race: we do not request or store any information about a potential customer's race. Another significant consideration is that the information will primarily be provided in English, which is mitigated by the fact that the main teaching language of the University is also English. There is a potential positive effect in that by providing the service online, users can access the information and subsequently use browser translation tools to convert into a preferred language.

Another issue is that some websites may be blocked in countries which have internet restrictions such as China and the USA. We are not aware of any reason why this website would be blocked but if this did occur potential customers would be able to contact us via the main University contact page as before to request information.

The University vision involves a continuing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for both students and staff. The University has a single [Equality Strategy](#) to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are guiding principles in our pursuit of academic excellence. The agCensus data has been created to ensure there is no discriminatory or offensive material. If any discriminatory or offensive content was found the University's disciplinary procedures would be followed.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- **On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:** We have met and discussed the website with the ISG Disability Information team in terms of accessibility. We will continue to monitor all feedback about the service for any comments positive or negative related to any of the 9 protected characteristics. This is an initial service provision to establish demand for this service provided in this way and further consultation will be undertaken as required in the future.
- **Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this will be addressed:** at this stage, we believe we have sufficient information to proceed.
- **If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups:** We do not believe that the implementation of our new service will lead to any forms of prohibited conduct for the reasons listed above and below. Information will be made available in alternative formats when requested. Our website has been assessed for accessibility against the WCAG 2.1 AA guidelines and a programme of accessibility improvements planned. We will ensure reasonable adjustments are

made whenever the need for them arises and we are unable to rectify a specific issue. Reasonable adjustments may include ensuring alternative methods of contacting us are available including a web form, an email address, a telephone number and a postal address. We will continue to monitor all feedback about the service for any comments positive or negative related to any of the 9 protected characteristics.

- **If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity²** Our service will increase the availability of agricultural census data to the general public, including any individual with any of the 9 protected characteristics as the information has only previously been available through an institutional subscription. The website is available 24/7 so may enable increased participation by those who require greater flexibility such as some disabled users, those with caring/parental responsibilities and for those who observe times of religious observance. In addition, we have made the system as accessible as possible in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA Standards.
- **If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations:**
 - It is hoped that by considering impacts on all the protected characteristics, both positive and negative, through the service and subsequently through this EqIA, we are showing that the University is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We have considered ways to mitigate and provide support and information to users in these groups.
- **If the policy/practice creates any barriers for any other groups?** In order to access this service, an individual will require access to the internet, if only to acquire a telephone number or postal address with which to communicate directly with us. This could include a desktop computer, mobile device or tablet. Also, users have to pay for the data they purchase do there may be a potential impact on social economic status however the service aims to keep costs at as reasonable as possible. Most of the individuals requesting the information will be doing so on behalf of organisations that will be funding the query rather than individuals themselves. Public libraries in the UK facilitate free access to the internet which will assist with this. Other countries have similar options available. Payment methods for purchasing data can be flexible according to a customer's available options.
- **How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant?** Our new service website will be publicly available and can be found via an internet search. The website has been tested for accessibility and an accessibility statement added in line with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Information will be available in alternative formats on request and free of charge. We will provide a telephone number, email address and postal address to enable potential customers to make those requests.
- **How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?** Feedback (both positive negative) from customers will be reviewed when received and action taken accordingly. Accessibility testing has been conducted. Where feedback highlights any issues related to any of the nine protected characteristics we will take appropriate action as necessary and consult with the relevant stakeholders including representatives of the various protected characteristics.

² This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

- **Any potential or actual impact of applying the policy or practice, with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations:**

Nothing other than mentioned above and below.

F. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision

Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust. **For the reasons detailed above and below.**

~~**Option 2:** Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.~~

~~**Option 3:** Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified~~

~~**Option 4:** Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.~~

G. Action and Monitoring

1. Specify the actions required for implementing findings of this EqIA and how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above). **We will monitor the service in relation to its equality impact according to feedback, positive or negative, relating to the nine protected characteristics; we will advise EDINA staff about reasonable adjustments required to assist customers with any protected characteristics where these impact on the provision of our service; we will provide information about the service in alternative formats, free of charge, upon request.**
2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed? **Practice will be reviewed when any significant change is made to the service, or when any feedback, positive or negative, relating to the 9 protected characteristics is received. On each of these occasions, the EqIA will be updated.**

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? **Yes/No**

If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Emma Diffley, Senior Geoservices Business Partner, EDINA, Information Services Group**

Accepted by (name): **James Reid, Geospatial Services Manager, EDINA, Information Services Group**

[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date: 24.01.2022

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk