

ARIA Activation Partners Cohort 2

Accelerating the speed and scale of breakthroughs

ARIA is looking to launch a request for proposals for a second cohort of Activation Partners. We're asking for feedback to inform our approach – dive into our current thinking below and tell us what you think through the form at the bottom.

Who we are & why we exist

ARIA backs scientists and engineers to pursue research at the edge of the possible, activating the UK's world-class R&D ecosystem and working with exceptional partners from around the world to meet these head on. Established by the UK Government in January 2023 via the [ARIA Act](#), we operate with a high degree of autonomy.

The opportunity

ARIA works closely with our [Activation Partners](#) to drive the discovery and translation of breakthroughs within and across our [opportunity spaces](#) – accelerating the impact of the R&D we fund and powering our mission to unlock scientific and technological breakthroughs that benefit everyone.

Following the early learnings and successes of our first cohort (shared [here](#)) we're now shaping our approach to a second cohort. Our founding partnerships have already increased our researchers' speed and ambition. They've driven impact through multiple approaches – from access to expert translational support, all the way through to bespoke engineering services.

In parallel, the progress of our [AI Scientist initiative](#) has shown how important the latest AI technologies will be for researchers pushing the frontier of R&D at pace. We believe that advanced AI techniques applied to science, both for AI for Science models used by researchers and AI Scientists that can run the full research process with minimal intervention will allow us to explore far more research directions than humans alone. This could lead to a massive increase in the speed and scale of societally important breakthroughs. We're therefore expanding the scope of our Activation Partners initiative to bring these AI Scientist capabilities, and the facilities to support them, into our opportunity spaces and the wider UK ecosystem.

This spring, we'll launch a £100m call to recruit 8-10 new Activation Partners to design and run

bespoke activities across our opportunity spaces to accelerate the pace, probability, and translation of breakthroughs. Funding will not be distributed equally across partners but be allocated based on the scale and ambition of their activities.

Who you are

We're not setting strict definitions on the types of organisations we'll work with (and anticipate we'll end up partnering with organisations which look quite different from one another).

What we do know is that the right organisations care deeply about working within and across our spaces to:

- Collaborate closely with ARIA's Programme Directors and our Creators, the individuals and teams carrying out ARIA-funded research;
- Increase the pace and probability of transformational scientific discoveries;
- Turn breakthroughs into high-impact real-world applications;
- Identify and develop scientific/technical talent;
- Intentionally build community/network.

Below we outline some examples of organisations we may work with:

Science translation

Building on our founding cohort, we're looking for partners with a strong track record of translating R&D from the lab into societal-scale impact. We're looking for activities across the full spectrum of science translation – from engineering support to venture creation, or entirely new approaches to science translation. [Read the retrospective](#) on our first cohort to learn more about the breadth of activities we're already supporting. You might be a: talent programme, incubator/accelerator, engineering firm experienced in taking R&D into the real world, venture creator, nonprofit organisation, seed stage science/deeptech investor, philanthropic fund, an R&D company, a combination of these, or something else.

AI for Science and AI Scientists

We're also seeking partners to apply advanced AI capabilities – often referred to as AI for Science and AI Scientists – to accelerate progress in our research areas. We anticipate that specialised, domain-specific AI for Science models can drive progress in many of these spaces. Furthermore, deploying broader AI Scientists that utilise state-of-the-art agentic technology to coordinate research can significantly increase the velocity of discovery by automating tasks such as hypothesising, experimenting, running, and processing results. To meaningfully accelerate the emerging development of AI Scientists, we plan to build a highly-connected ecosystem of

practice around our opportunity spaces, which will offer a valuable proving ground for these new capabilities. We're looking to bring together researchers, agentic technology developers, ML model builders, automated laboratories and other essential resources to build the AI-augmented future of science such as knowledge databases and advanced AI safety capabilities to ensure that we responsibly accelerate scientific discovery. We therefore expect to partner with a range of organisations to bring these capabilities - you might be a: ML model builder, lab-in-the-loop or in silico AI Scientist, running an AI for Science or AI Scientists talent programme, a self-driving cloud lab, or something else that supports or enables the ecosystem.

What you'll do

As an Activation Partner, you'll leverage our funding to catalyse new activities and do bigger things than you're able to right now. We expect this to have a greater-than-the-sum-of-its-parts impact for both ARIA and the UK and to be in the research areas we're exploring, but of course any activity needs to align with your expertise and incentives.

As part of this, you'll interact with and build ties with the teams we fund as well as the other partners. In line with ARIA's mission, this work must have a UK focus and be undertaken in the UK, but applicants do not have to be based in the UK to be eligible. Our expectation is for these partnerships to run for an initial three-year period, with an option to extend.

We want to be led by your instincts and experience but to spark ideas, here are some indicative examples of things we could imagine our partners doing across our opportunity spaces:

- + Create an entrepreneurial-science or AI for Science talent fellowship
- + Support our Creators with frontier AI for Science models
- + Accelerate projects with AI Scientists
- + Establish a moonshot R&D arm of your organisation
- + Identify/build talent pipelines and design ways to empower them
- + Run a venture creation programme
- + Set up innovation incentives e.g. AI for Science/AI Scientists prizes
- + Spend time with our Programme Directors, helping build network/community and unlock opportunities for wider impact

We'd like to hear from you

As part of our discovery process – we're currently looking for feedback to help shape our approach. If this opportunity sounds interesting, we'd love to hear from you [here](#).

[Sign up to hear when the call goes live.](#)