

Trust Everything, Everywhere: Pre-programme discovery Call for 3-month research project proposals

Date: 15 October 2025

V1.0

SCOPE

In July 2025, we released the '[Trust Everything, Everywhere](#)' opportunity space which laid out a vision for the future of trust in an increasingly programmable, cyber-physical, and autonomous world.

Before releasing a full programme thesis and potential solicitation, we are providing an early funding opportunity to inform our direction and build community. We anticipate the work from this pre-programme call will be valuable as input for the eventual programme we design, as well as early artifacts for the community we are aiming to bootstrap. All project outputs will be open-sourced to promote transparency and collaboration.

We welcome proposals that use one or a combination of the tracks listed below. We have included some specific examples, but these should not limit your imagination.

In scope:

- + **Track 1: Systemisation of knowledge** - In-depth analyses of topics relevant to the opportunity space. Some of our topics of interest include:
 - + A review, or definition of emerging intersectional fields relevant to the Opportunity Space, including 'Nature cryptography'/physical cryptography.
 - + An evaluation of relevant past R&D adversarial challenges and competitions, identifying what made them succeed or fail, their structure and content.
 - + A review of multi-agent security for embodied agents
 - + A review of one, or multiple, cyber-physical applications bottlenecked by the lack of robust and scalable trust infrastructure
 - + 'Translation' pieces like 'Embodied AI for Cryptographers', or 'Synthetic Biology for Security Researchers'
- + **Track 2: Applied agentic challenges** – Design and prototype implementation of games to help us measure the current state of the art in multi-agent coordination and surface new agentic capabilities. We are especially interested in coordination enabled by the use of security primitives (cryptography primitives, secure hardware). This might include:
 - + Design and/or prototype novel agentic coordination games
 - + Design and/or prototype novel embodied agents coordination games
 - + Development of game assessment tools (e.g. automated red-teaming, automated scoring, security benchmarks for multi-agent security)

- + **Track 3: Ethical and risk analysis** – Analyses of ethical considerations and risks we should be mindful of as we consider funding tools and infrastructure for multi-agent coordination. This might include:
 - + Implications of enabling AI access to cryptography/security tools
 - + Risks of multi-agent cartelisation
 - + Concerns with respect to enabling cyber-physical autonomous systems without robust interpretability
- + **Track 4: Community building in the UK, and beyond** – What unique capabilities and communities can be mobilised in the UK? What kind of efforts could be started today to grow a multi-disciplinary community in and beyond the UK? This might include:
 - + Events for early-career researchers
 - + A video series explaining the opportunity space to various audiences in order to establish a shared language
 - + Series of events, workshops, and/or roundtables to bring together groups of experts, researchers, and practitioners from diverse fields.

You should note that any events are expected to follow ARIAs core principles regarding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Out of scope:

- + Development of new security primitives
- + Development of new protocols
- + Development of new hardware
- + Refining or improving existing analyses
- + Foundational research on agent
- + security/trustworthiness

Budget and timelines

We're looking to award successful proposals up to £20,000 each (inclusive of taxes and all other costs). We expect projects to begin in early December 2025 and projects to last up to a maximum length of 3 months. To streamline the process, we will not negotiate this.

Who can apply

We welcome proposals from across the R&D ecosystem, including individuals, universities, research institutions, companies of all sizes, charities, and public sector research organisations. We are looking for applicants who:

- + Demonstrate deep problem knowledge and intrinsic motivation to help shape this research programme in this opportunity space.
- + Have the ability to clearly express their ideas and to constructively consider diverse opinions.
- + Are at any career stage.
- + In most cases, pause their regular work activities for the duration of the project.
- + May have backgrounds in, but not limited to, AI security, multi-agent learning, complex systems, cybersecurity, game theory, distributed systems, technical AI governance, robotics, quantum communication engineering, secure hardware, biosecurity, synthetic biology, neural interfaces, physical world models, cyber-physical security, hacking.

Note that we are happy to connect you with experts from fields you may not be familiar with, to facilitate meaningful cross-disciplinary work.

If you are an overseas applicant you should note that our primary focus will be on funding those who are based in the UK. . Funding can be awarded outside the UK if we believe the proposed project can significantly benefit the UK.

Approach to Intellectual Property (IP)

Our standard funding model lets the funding recipient own any Intellectual Property (IP) generated as a result of our funding (you can find more on our normal approach to our FAQs [here](#)). This call is different, we are pursuing a highly open approach to IP, as such and IP created by projects funded shall be:

- + Published under a [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC-BY\)](#) licence, if not software
- + Dual-licenced under an [MIT licence](#) and an [Apache 2 licence](#), if software
- + Subject to a patent non-aggression pledge ([example](#)), if patented

The intent of the dual-licence requirement above is to provide users with a concise selection of licensing options in order to maximise the openness of the source code. This approach

offers users the flexibility to select either the MIT or Apache 2 licence downstream of the initial development. By doing so, a broader spectrum of users can benefit from the material because it expands the compatibility with various other licences, while also affording users the freedom to choose based on their preferences and needs.

Project management

Research projects will be carried out remotely with applicants using their own IT and infrastructure where needed. Successful applicants will be early members of the community and will be required to share updates on their work throughout the project via forums agreed with ARIA. All work must be openly accessible (i.e. without a paywall). We may host a final event for participants to present their work.

THE APPLICATION

Part 1: Technical Proposal

Applicants are required to provide a 1 page proposal that outlines:

- + Your background and motivation for helping to shape a large research programme in the [‘Trust Everything Everywhere’](#) opportunity space.
- + A description of the intended project, including the approach, and planned output.
- + Details on the proposed individual/team, explaining how your time will be structured alongside any pre-existing obligations.

Please note: Supporting data, preliminary data, journal articles, blogs, code or other materials are not required, but may be referenced or linked to in the submission if they directly support your application. However, ensure that your proposal stands on its own.

How to Format your proposal

- + Page count: 1 page (including diagrams, excluding references)
- + Single line spacing, standard character spacing (neither expanded nor condensed)
- + Font: Arial. Colour: black. Size: 11-point font or larger
- + Margins: At least 0.5" margins all around
- + File Type: PDF

Part 2: Timeline, budget and administrative questions

This part consists of questions about the execution and delivery of your proposed project.

Application questions	Guidance
How long do you expect your project to take (in months)?	<i>There is no minimum duration for a proposed project. The maximum duration is 3 months.</i>
How much funding do you need?	<i>To answer this question, please provide a cost breakdown by completing the table in the application portal.</i> <i>Prior to completing this template you should review ARIA's Eligible cost guidance here.</i> <i>Note: Funding will be provided via a service contract (not a grant) so please ensure you include VAT where applicable.</i>
Does your proposal depend on background (pre-existing) IP?	<i>If yes, give us an indication of:</i> • <i>What background IP is required</i> • <i>Whether you currently have rights to that IP</i>
Have you already secured funding for related ideas or projects or are you currently in the process of seeking support from other funding sources for the same idea?	<i>If yes, tell us more about the funding you already have or are applying for.</i>
Are there any other factors or restrictions that might impact your freedom to operate and deliver the idea?	<i>These might include, for example: potential conflicts of interest; import/export restrictions; legal and regulatory restrictions that you are aware of.</i>
Are you planning to give a portion of the work to external subcontractors?	<i>If yes, let us know what work you plan to give to a subcontractor.</i>

	<i>Subcontractors are any proposed third parties that you plan to enter into a contract or agreement with for services necessary for the delivery or management of the project.</i>
Where are you currently operating and are you proposing to perform the majority of the proposed project outside of the UK?	<i>Our primary focus is on funding those who are based in the UK.</i> <i>We can also award funding to applicants whose projects will primarily take place outside of the UK, if we believe it is unique/compelling and/or the UK would miss out if not funded.</i> <i>If you're planning to carry out the majority of the project outside of the UK, we'd like to know your location and your perspective on how the funded project would benefit the UK either immediately or in the long term.</i> <i>Benefits may include:</i> • <i>enhancing economic growth in the UK</i> • <i>fostering scientific innovation in the UK</i> • <i>enhancing the quality of life in the UK (or both in the UK and internationally)</i>
Have you read and understood our funding terms?	<i>Our goal is to ensure your research projects can get going quickly, so we want to ensure a fast negotiation and award process. We would like to have agreements signed within 1 week or sooner, which we recognise can be much faster than standard at some organisations.</i> <i>Before proceeding, please confirm that you have read and understand our funding terms for this project.</i> <i>Note: Funding will be provided via a service contract (not a grant). ARIA will not negotiate these terms and conditions.</i>
Additional questions about you/your organisation that can be found in the application portal.	

SELECTION CRITERIA

Once you have submitted your application, it will pass through an initial review to ensure it is within the opportunity space identified above. At this stage we will carry out some checks to verify your identity and review any national security risks.

If a submission is not considered to be within the [scope](#), it will be rejected prior to a full review.

In evaluating your proposal, we'll consider the following criteria:

- + **Fit** – The proposal aligns with or challenges ideas related to [Trust Everything, Everywhere](#).
- + **Credibility & Feasibility** – The applicant demonstrates intrinsic motivation, skills/knowledge in the subject matter and the proposal is credible and feasible (including cost).
- + **Portfolio fit** – consider how your proposal & expertise complement those of others we are funding and the diversity of applicants across the portfolio.
- + **Location/Benefit to the UK** – If you're not currently operating in the UK we'll also assess the extent to which the proposed work will benefit the UK (see further guidance [here](#)).

TIMELINE

This call for proposals will be open for applications as follows (we may update timelines based on the volume of responses we receive):

Applications open	15 October 2025
Application deadline	12 November 2025 (14:00 GMT)
As part of our review we may invite applicants to meet with the Programme Director or another team member to discuss any questions prior to final selection — this discussion can happen virtually or we may seek clarification on certain aspects of your proposal via email.	
Successful/Unsuccessful applicants notified	26 November 2025

At this stage you will be notified if you have or have not been selected for an award subject to due diligence.

Please note, for those applicants not selected for shortlisting or award we will not provide feedback.

Award

05 December 2025

Please note, contracts must be signed on, or before, this date for the project to be funded by ARIA, the offer of funding may be withdrawn if contracts cannot be signed by this date. For the sake of ensuring the timeliness of these projects, ARIA will not negotiate the [terms and conditions](#).

HOW TO APPLY

Before submitting an application, please read this call for proposals in full.

Please read the [portal instructions](#) and create your account before the application deadline.

[APPLY HERE](#)

If you have any questions, please email clarifications@aria.org.uk.

If you are disabled or have a long-term health condition, we can offer support to help you engage with ARIA, navigate our funding application process, or carry out your project, you can find more information [here](#).