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Tender

Opportunity Seed Funding Call: Nature Computes Better

ADVANCED RESEARCH AND INVENTION AGENCY

F02: Contract notice

Notice identifier: 2024/S 000-000983

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-042c6a

Published 11 January 2024, 3:03pm

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

ADVANCED RESEARCH AND INVENTION AGENCY

96 EUSTON ROAD,

LONDON

NW12DB

Email

tenders@aria.org.uk

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKI31 - Camden and City of London

Justification for not providing organisation identifier

Not on any register

Internet address(es)

Main address

https://www.aria.org.uk/

I.3) Communication

The procurement documents are available for unrestricted and full direct access, free of charge, at

https://www.aria.org.uk/seeds-nature-computes-better

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted electronically via

https://www.aria.org.uk/seeds-nature-computes-better

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

General public services

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Opportunity Seed Funding Call: Nature Computes Better

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 73110000 - Research services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

Breakthroughs require finding people who think differently about what's possible - and empowering them to follow their vision.

To support scientific and technological breakthroughs, outside of programmes, ARIA Programme Directors can award opportunity seeds to support ambitious research aligned to the opportunity spaces they've identified. To understand how opportunity seeds work within our model, see how we're working here (https://www.aria.org.uk/how-were-working/).

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £1,600,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This funding call specifically relates to our Programme Director Suraj Bramhavar's

programme (https://www.aria.org.uk/what-were-working-on/#suraj).

In Nature Computes Better
(https://www.aria.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ARIA-Nature-computes-better-v1.0-1.pdf), we're looking to fund high potential proposals with between £10k and £500k each. We initially expect to fund up to 10 opportunity seeds in this space.

We're looking for bold ideas that could challenge assumptions, open up new research paths, or provide steps towards new capabilities. If you have an important idea you're obsessed with, but you don't currently have the resources or support to take it forward, we'd like to hear from you.

Ideas could come from anywhere, so we welcome applications from individuals and teams who are early in their career or who have atypical backgrounds. We care more about your idea and your intrinsic motivation than we do about your CV.

To help you decide if this is the right funding call for you, here's some guidance on the scope:

In scope:

+ Ideas that sit within the Nature Computes Better opportunity space. By this, we mean your proposal should show how your idea either aligns with or challenges the assumptions of the Summary, Beliefs, or Observations in the opportunity space document (https://www.aria.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ARIA-Nature-computes-better-v1.0-1.pdf).

+ Ideas that could change the conversation about what is possible or valuable.

+ Ideas that range from early stage curiosity-driven research through to pre-commercial science and technology.

Out of scope:

+ Ideas that target Suraj Bramhavar's goal of Unlocking AI Compute Hardware at 1/1000th the Cost, as described in his programme thesis (https://www.aria.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ARIA-Unlocking-AI-compute-hardware-v1.0-1.pdf). We expect to release a programme funding call in the coming months. If you are unsure whether your idea fits into Suraj's Programme thesis, ask us by submitting a question using the messaging function within ARIA's application portal (https://public.deepstreamtech.com/requests/658428a1b0e7f12e03818b5c/aria-opportunity-seed-nature-computes-better).

+ Ideas that are undifferentiated or that are likely to happen without ARIA support.

+ Commercial or close-to-commercial stage products.

Beyond this scope and our evaluation criteria outlined in the full opportunity seed call document on ARIA's website (https://www.aria.org.uk/seeds-nature-computes-better), we don't have preconceptions about what ideas you might send our way. You don't need to contort your project to fit our goals: we want to hear what you really want to do.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Price is not the only award criterion and all criteria are stated only in the procurement documents

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

Duration in months

36

This contract is subject to renewal

No

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

If funded research projects show compelling results, whether during or at the end of the project, ARIA may invite funding recipients to apply for additional funds without further competition.

II.2.14) Additional information

The estimated total value is the maximum budget available. We expect to fund multiple applicants.

Section III. Legal, economic, financial and technical information

III.1) Conditions for participation

III.1.1) Suitability to pursue the professional activity, including requirements relating to enrolment on professional or trade registers

List and brief description of conditions

See ARIA website here (https://www.aria.org.uk/seeds-nature-computes-better).

III.1.2) Economic and financial standing

Selection criteria as stated in the procurement documents

III.1.3) Technical and professional ability

Selection criteria as stated in the procurement documents

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Competitive procedure with negotiation

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

IV.2) Administrative information

IV.2.2) Time limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate

Date

15 March 2024

Local time

4:00pm

IV.2.4) Languages in which tenders or requests to participate may be submitted

English

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.1) Information about recurrence

This is a recurrent procurement: No

VI.3) Additional information

This call for opportunity seed proposals will initially be open for 2 months, and may be extended to add additional rounds. During this period, we will review each application on a rolling basis, with two funding decision points in February and March as detailed below.

As this is our first opportunity seed call, we may update timelines based on the volume of responses we receive or other learnings.

Round 1

+ Create account on application portal: 15.02.24 (16:00 GMT)

+ Round 1 cut off: 19.02.24 (16:00 GMT)

+ Round 1 - Shortlisted / unsuccessful applicants notified. Shortlisted applicants invited to meet with Programme Director: w/c 26.02.24

+ Round 1 - Final award decision; successful / unsuccessful applicants notified: w/c 04.03.24

+ Round 1 - Agreement negotiation & signature target: by 28.03.24

Round 2 - Estimated dates

+ Round 2 submissions due: Early March

+ Round 2 - Shortlisted / unsuccessful applicants notified. Shortlisted applicants invited to meet with Programme Director: March

+ Round 2 - Final award decision; successful / unsuccessful applicants notified: March

+ Round 2 - Agreement negotiation & signature target: April

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

Not Applicable, see the ARIA Act 2022

London

Country

United Kingdom