



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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All MPs

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Dear Colleague,

Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA)

The UK has a proud history of scientific excellence. Throughout history, our scientists - from Ada Lovelace to Alan Turing - have been responsible for phenomenal discoveries which have led to new technologies, new industries, and huge numbers of new jobs.

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, now more than ever, the strategic importance and public value of investing in UK science. As we build back better from the impacts of coronavirus, and begin our future outside the EU, we must safeguard the UK's status as a science superpower and remain at the forefront of the cutting-edge research that will fix the problems of tomorrow, as well as today.

We are therefore pleased to inform you of the Government's plans for the **Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA)**. ARIA will deliver the Government's manifesto commitment to create a **new funding agency focused on high-ambition, high-reward research**.

The agency's sole focus will be to fund ground-breaking research - research that sparks transformational societal change through the creation of new technologies and new industries – for the UK's benefit.

With £800 million committed to ARIA up to 2024/25, this new agency will support our efforts to build towards 2.4% of GDP into research and development (R&D) by 2027. ARIA will also form a central part of delivering on our R&D Roadmap, published in July 2020, designed to ensure the UK is the best place for scientists, researchers, and entrepreneurs to live and work, while helping to power up the UK's economic and social recovery.

To develop ARIA, the Government has discussed how to create the right conditions for paradigm shifting science and technology at length with the scientific community, as well as how to adapt international models and maximise the opportunities such an agency can bring to the UK. Success stories include DARPA in the US, whose predecessor, ARPA, was instrumental in creating transformational technologies like the internet and GPS. More recently, DARPA has been behind precursors to technologies such as Apple's SIRI.



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UKRI has a broad remit as the principal R&D funder in the UK, and as part of this, has funded important high-risk, blue skies research. It is therefore crucial that ARIA complements existing funders, and makes a distinct contribution to UK R&D. ARIA will do this by working in partnership with UKRI and across the wider landscape, and its key features will be:

- **A singular focus on high-risk, high reward research.** ARIA will provide support for transformational, long-term science and technology. ARIA will not be restricted in whether it funds pure science, applied science, or technological development – in fact, often it will do aspects of each within a single programme.
- **A high tolerance for risk and failure.** Failure is part of the scientific process, and particularly central to finding the technological breakthroughs that have the potential to create the industries and jobs of the future. ARIA will not shy away from high risk, in the pursuit of high rewards.
- **Minimal bureaucracy.** The recent approach to COVID rapid response funds and the Vaccine Taskforce has led to a cultural shift around funding and decision-making - towards a more lean and agile system, and ARIA will continue this trend. It will have an innovative approach to funding, with the ability to use mechanisms such as seed grants and prizes to ensure the best support for the best ideas. ARIA's programme managers will be able to pull in scientists on projects within in a matter of weeks. ARIA will need unique, but proportionate, freedoms to reduce administrative burdens on such a small and agile agency.
- **To empower exceptional talent.** ARIA will be run by exceptional scientists who have the expertise to identify the most exciting and ground-breaking research to invest in. Government will invest in these exceptional individuals, empowering them to use their expertise to identify what research to back rather than providing a research focus for the organisation, and giving them the freedom to start and stop projects quickly and redirect funding efficiently.

This Government will be introducing a Bill as soon as parliamentary time allows to create ARIA as a unique and discrete addition to the UK R&D ecosystem.

During the passage of the Bill, we will recruit a visionary CEO and experienced Chair. They will build ARIA by setting the agenda, shaping the culture, and building an exceptional team for the agency. They will be supported by a board, which will include the Government Chief Scientific Advisor, to ensure strategic oversight and good governance across ARIA's activities.



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Should you have any questions regarding ARIA or the Bill, please do not hesitate to contact either of us, or our officials who can be contacted on the following email address: aria@beis.gov.uk. We are keen to work closely with all members of the House as we deliver ARIA.

We hope you will share our belief that ARIA will ensure we remain in step with the global standards for innovation. By funding research and brilliant ideas across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, this exceptional new agency will ensure the most ground-breaking science can happen in the UK.

Yours sincerely,

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