



CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND
EVIDENCE ON SECURITY THREATS

RESEARCH FOR UNDERSTANDING, MITIGATING AND COUNTERING SECURITY THREATS

Fifth Broad Topic Announcement

Call Specification

Version 1.1

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1 Introduction

The UK Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats wishes to commission a programme of activities that addresses some of the current security threats facing the UK. This Call Specification outlines the programme goals, the type of funding available, and the process by which eligible bodies may apply.

1.1 Background

The Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST) was commissioned by the Economic and Social Research Council, with funding from the UK Home Office and UK security and intelligence agencies. The Centre's mission is to deliver a world-leading, interdisciplinary portfolio of independent research that maximises the value of economic and social science research to countering UK and international security threats. More information on the scope and purpose of CREST, and the Centre's ongoing research activities, is available at: <https://crestresearch.ac.uk>

CREST is seeking to identify and fund innovative and forward-looking economic, behavioural and social science research and research syntheses that will contribute to our understanding of contemporary security threats in twenty areas. Individual researchers and research teams in academic institutions, research organisations, SMEs, and industry are eligible for commissioning funds (see Section 4.2 for full eligibility details). Successful applicants will become part of CREST's larger research programme, benefiting from resources for translating and communicating evidence for impact, and opportunities for sustained interaction with the user community.

2 Invitation

2.1 Types of proposals and duration

Applicants should propose a programme of work that addresses **one** of the Topics identified in Section 2.2. It is anticipated that applications which simultaneously address multiple Topics will be too broad in scope to be effective. Applicants may submit more than one proposal. Applicants are invited to propose projects that last no more than 12 months and address a topic in a targeted way. We anticipate funding work that addresses a broad range of Topics, but we do not anticipate funding projects in all the Topics.

Projects may include costs for workshops or other innovative dissemination activities that have clear objectives and offer more than what might reasonably occur at existing conferences or meetings. Where possible, the outcomes of these events should be of value to, and have impact on, an audience broader than the workshop attendees.

Details of successful projects from previous rounds of our commissioning are available on the [CREST website](#).

2.2 Topic focus

Applicants are invited to submit proposals for projects on the following Topics. In some cases, the focus of the call is the synthesis of existing research. In other cases, the focus is on original research. The focus is stated in each topic description. Proposals that offer a focus not requested (e.g., original research when a synthetic review is requested) will be considered out of scope. **In all cases a successful proposal should give consideration to issues of ethics and application within the topic area.**

2.2.1 Identifying Social Media Influencers and their Impact

CREST is interested in reliable methods for identifying and understanding influencers of information dissemination online. The rapid growth of online communication platforms makes it increasingly difficult to identify who is influencing the dissemination of information and what roles they are playing. Existing solutions tend to be based on Western sources of information and focused on the scale of an influencer's connections rather than metrics that capture how she or he operates across multiple platforms and audiences. We are interested in the latter level of analysis, as well as how influencers are shaped by differences in languages and cultures (e.g., how users of languages other than English gain influence on platforms such as Instagram).

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) original research, including but not restricted to the development of automated methods.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- consider the various roles influencers play (e.g., curators, gatekeepers) and seek to model those roles and their effects
- consider 'minority' voices and when these achieve influence
- step beyond existing solutions to consider new measures, platform interdependency, and/or the influence of language and culture
- draw only on heavily studied social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, when the focus is on non-English language users.

2.2.2 Evidence Base of Data-driven Personalised Advertising

CREST is interested in understanding the evidence-base of using data-driven 'psychological' profiling to segment an audience and personalise advertising, particularly when the target audience is small (i.e., you're seeking to influence a handful of people, not a consumer aggregate). What evidence is there that such an approach, and the underlying tools and techniques of micro-targeting, can influence a targeted recipient? How can we deter or disrupt such forms of advertising when used by hostile actors? What individual and contextual factors moderate the success or otherwise of such targeting? How can we identify the circumstances under which targeted advertising to niche groups will fail to work? We are interested in knowing what is possible now, how what is possible can be deterred, and to what extent this threat may develop in the future.

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) synthetic review; or ii) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- review or produce data on the effectiveness of the approach rather than review 'stories' of what is possible
- focus on the case of influencing a target audience of one or a few (i.e., the small-*n* use case)
- evaluate the generalisability of methods across languages and cultures
- help us understand what data should be protected in order to disrupt delivery of this approach.

2.2.3 Culture and Effective Messaging Overseas

Part of the UK's effort to dissuade hostile actors occurs overseas, which requires sympathetic conversion of our message so that it resonates with the receiving community. CREST is interested in synthesising expertise and evidence on how best to achieve this conversion. Are there important psychological principles to be learned from popular and effective advertising campaigns that appear globally? Is there any evidence of Western advertisers successfully translating their advertising approach for non-Western audiences? Are there different measures of reach on non-western platforms that should be considered? We are interested in understanding how the psychological factors that help with audience reach change across languages and cultures.

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) synthetic review.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- evaluate the generalisability of methods across languages and cultures
- provide recommendations for approaches, or features of approaches, that have had a successful impact when implemented in different languages and cultures
- as far as possible provide a framework that guides message construction to maximise its effectiveness.

2.2.4 Predicting Narcissism and Risk Appetite from Language Data

The ability to infer a person's narcissistic beliefs and their willingness to engage in risky behaviour can help mitigate challenges in workforce security and help with decisions relating to potential threats. CREST is therefore interested in novel methods of inferring a person's narcissism and narcissistic behaviours, and their risk appetite and risk taking, from linguistic data. We are interested in any language data, from interviews, to autobiographies, to social media content, and invite proposals with novel corpora. Our interest is not only on the direct inference of narcissism and risk appetite from language, but also inference of underlying factors such as personality traits that may lead to greater risk taking, or contextual factors that may promote narcissistic beliefs. CREST is particularly interested in the relationship between narcissism and risk appetite. Do individuals with narcissistic tendencies have a greater appetite to take risks and if so, to take quantifiably greater risks than non-narcissists?

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) original research. A proposal may address narcissism or risk appetite. Alternatively, it may address both, so long as strong evidence is produced for both models.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- provide a theoretically-grounded, person-level prediction model that is generalisable across data and domains
- include behavioural measures as well as subjective measures of narcissism/risk appetite to ensure any model or approach derived can predict behaviour.

2.2.5 The Effects of Communication Medium on Working Relationships

CREST seeks to understand more about the relative effectiveness of different mediums for online and virtual working. This includes understanding the

impact in scenarios where there has been little prior opportunity to build trust and working relationships (e.g., security 'vetting' interviews with job candidates). Does turning off video undermine meeting efficacy? Can we still interpret an interlocutor's feelings in audio-only communication? Do audio-only meetings result in less information provision? Is there any evidence that video calls frustrate or reassure people and, if so, under what conditions? Are people more confident and open in their communications when video cameras are turned off? What are the effects of variable formats, for example, when one person has video on and the other is audio only? How do computerised voice moderation/filtering, or similar techniques, impact on the quality of communications?

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) synthetic review; or, ii) original research that builds on a synthetic review to elucidate our understanding of a key element.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- address most but not all of the questions posed above, in a systematic way that combines available evidence and novel research
- determine 'why' as well as 'when' differences emerge across mediums, so that we can consider mitigation
- proposes and tests a theoretically-grounded mitigation that improves efficacy.

2.2.6 Joiners to Online Communities: How do People Build Trust, Credibility and Influence?

CREST wants to better understand how people build trust, credibility and influence within online communities. We are interested in analyses that uncover how people engage with, adapt to, and shape community norms: the behaviours, rules of engagement, trust expectations, relationship forming and identities of the community. We are also keen to understand what determines disengagement from groups, as well as attitudes towards strangers online, particularly in non-Western cultures. We are interested in communities that are open and closed in nature, and are interested in understanding variations across communities, including variations underpinned by language and cultural factors.

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- use empirical analyses to derive detailed evidence of how the process of successful joining occurs
- provide a framework that helps investigators infer the factors that are important for securing trust within a given online community
- consider how culture and language change the importance of factors, particularly with respect to joining in non-English communities
- build on CREST's published review of some of the influencing factors.

2.2.7 Evaluating the Cumulative Impact of Targeting Hardening

UK efforts to prevent terrorist attacks use multiple interventions to deter activity against a given target. CREST is interested in developing knowledge and models that help decision-makers understand the cumulative impact of this multi-layer approach. Is the sum greater than the parts? How can we disambiguate attack vectors so that interventions are combined in an efficient manner? Can we anticipate displacement and address this by intervening across the board? What does target hardening mean for collocated business; do they need additional consideration? We are interested in understanding the factors that are important to consider when seeking to evaluate a proposed approach, as well as the metrics that could be captured post-implementation to identify areas of concern.

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) synthetic review; or, ii) original research that builds on a synthetic review to elucidate our understanding of a key element.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- use empirical analyses to derive evidence of when and why cumulative target hardening works
- consider how variations in context affect these results (e.g., how do they apply to a location with significant CCTV coverage vs. a location with limited CCTV coverage)
- provide a framework that helps decision-makers better evaluate the 'holistic' picture of proposed interventions in light of the evidence, with the goal of delivering the most effective combination of actions.

2.2.8 Evaluating Security Interventions in Public Locations

The UK government provides a range of protective security guidance and resources to help keep the public safe from terrorism in publicly accessible locations (often referred to as 'crowded places'). These resources can range

from physical security measures (e.g., CCTV, fencing), to training for security personnel, to communication and measures designed to raise public awareness and vigilance. CREST is interested in developing novel methods for evaluating the efficacy of such interventions, with the goal of developing a framework or methodology that supports effective planning in the future. How can decision makers best evaluate the collective contribution of measures, in order to identify opportunities for improvements and efficiencies? What data should be collected to gain a better picture of whether and how the intervention measures have 'worked' in terms of both delivery and uptake? How can we ensure greater consistency in assessing the delivery of activities and our evaluation of the outcomes or changes they seek to bring about?

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- provide recommendation for, or develop directly, a standardised framework or methodology for evaluating the collective efficacy of interventions at a specific location and context
- provide outputs suitable for use by operational partners and practitioners who design and assure the delivery of activities
- provide use case(s), or a proof-of-concept simulation in collaboration with stakeholders, that illustrates the utility of their framework for all stakeholders.

2.2.9 Evaluating the Cumulative Impact of HMG's Counter-Terrorism Communications

UK Counter-Terrorism communications use multiple messages and channels to deter adversaries and support public vigilance. To date, most evaluations of these interventions have considered specific outcomes and impacts associated with a single campaign. CREST is interested in developing knowledge and models that help decision-makers understand the cumulative impact of the multi-channel approach. Is the sum greater than the parts? What are the successes, barriers and limitations of different collective strategies? To what extent does the messenger of a campaign influence its effectiveness? We seek to learn lessons about the 'holistic' impact of current Counter Terrorism communications that can inform an updated strategy. As part of the above work, or as a separate focused project, CREST is interested in identifying the cumulative impact and effectiveness of post-incident communications. Our interests include understanding optimal approaches and specific language use,

how this should change over time, how best to reach across different minority communities, and the role of messaging in helping social cohesion.

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- use empirical analyses to derive evidence of when and why cumulative messaging is effective and when it is limited
- provide a framework that helps decision-makers better evaluate the 'holistic' picture of proposed interventions in light of the evidence
- consider efficiency of delivery in relation to factors such as target, budget, duration, scope, with a view to helping decision-makers achieve value for money with maximum public reassurance and adversary deterrence
- focus on the content of delivery and not critique the case for undertaking such communications.

2.2.10 Determining the Right Balance of Information Provision/Overt Communications to Achieve Effective Deterrence

The UK government uses overt communication with the public to provide information and deter terrorist attacks. An example is the "See it, say it, sorted" campaign. CREST is interested in better understanding how to optimise the positive impact of overt communications over time. How can we establish what is 'too much' communication and avoid exacerbating grievances? Is there a point where the public reaches saturation and disregards the messaging? To what degree can a 'refresh' of messaging help retain efficacy? Can interventions reach a point where they become 'ingrained' in public behaviour such that communications become redundant? We are particularly interested in improving the quality of reporting (rather than quantity) and are open to research that considers historic as well as ongoing campaigns. Where possible, CREST will facilitate access to these campaigns.

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) synthetic review; ii) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- use empirical analyses to evidence how different balances of information are received by members of the public
- consider multiple measures of campaign success, including reach, behavioural impact, and sustainability

- provide a framework that helps decision-makers assess a proposed campaign against best practice and articulate the consequence of deviation. The framework would usefully articulate efficiency of delivery in relation to factors such as target, budget, duration, and scope, with a view to helping decision-makers achieve value for money with maximum deterrence.

2.2.11 How to Support and Enhance Community Deterrence

Effective deterrence requires engagement and actions from all members of a community. CREST is interested in further understanding how to encourage community deterrence (e.g., within a business district) and strengthen existing resilience. To what extent do community norms act as preventative factors and when does this break down? Are lessons learned from focused deterrence strategies in policing of serious violent crime applicable to counter terrorism? What are the barriers to communities adopting a security mindset and how can we remove these? We are interested in studies of UK and overseas communities, though we would seek conclusions that have relevance to the UK context.

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) synthetic review; ii) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- consider the interplay between social norm and contextual factors and how this could be understood systematically
- use past cases and/or data to infer how best to enhance community deterrence in the future
- provide recommendations on how we can support and enhance community deterrence.

2.2.12 Evaluating and Improving the Learning from Multi-Agency Counter-Terrorism Exercises

As part of regular efforts to ensure emergency preparedness, the UK government runs simulations and exercises to rehearse operational and tactical responses. The exercises provide frontline practitioners and government stakeholders the opportunity to enact emergency procedures in real-time, affording insights into how current protocols work and can be improved. CREST is interested in improving what these exercises achieve in the long-term. How are lessons collected and assessed at each stage of the exercise process? Do they deliver preparedness and long-term changes to the behaviours,

knowledge, or attitudes of those who take part? What promotes or inhibits lessons identified from exercises being implemented in multi-agency responses to real-life incidents? We are interested in evaluating the pedagogic efficacy of exercises, with a view to understanding how to improve both exercise delivery and exercise learning in the future.

A project addressing this topic should take a retrospective and forward-looking view. Its retrospective assessment should consider existing exercises and the post-exercise perceptions and recall of participants, including how lessons are identified and assessed at each stage of the exercising process. Do they 'value' different components or exercise types more than others? What factors are associated with better results, outcomes, and implementation of lessons learnt? Where possible, CREST will facilitate access to relevant materials, noting some access may require undergoing a national security clearance. Its 'forward-facing' assessment should focus on upcoming exercises, and CREST will support teams in accessing such exercises where access is not already in place. An example of a forward-facing assessment would be using a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) exercise, which involves the repeated physical simulation of a firearms attack on a building, as an evaluation proof-of-concept. This exercise affords insights into how, by adapting the response of victims and responders, the impact of MTAs can be reduced, thus serving as a useful platform for testing hypotheses and methods relating to evaluation and improvement.

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to do some or all of the following:

- capture the efficacy of the exercise provision and its outcomes in a way that can support recommendations for reflection and improvement
- define a research protocol that maximises the data capture opportunities in a manner suitable for the complex, evolving nature of the exercise
- considers a range of participants (e.g., first responders, senior decision makers) across the participating agencies
- demonstrate awareness of the sensitivities of exposure to the exercise.

2.2.13 Counter-Terrorism Appraisal Guidance

Over the past 5 years, work has been done across academia and government to develop an understanding of the economic cost of terrorism. CREST is interested in research that critically appraises the currently held information with a view to identifying gaps and next steps for future development. We are particularly interested in evaluating if and how terrorism economic appraisal

can follow a more structured framework and reach a 'gold standard' (e.g., DfT's WebTag, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transport-analysis-guidance-tag>). How can new tools and cost estimates be best developed to provide a similar appraisal framework for counter terrorism? The kinds of questions an evaluation might address are: What is an achievable standard and what is needed to achieve it? What literature reviews should be prioritised? Should the existing models be adapted? Might it be possible to develop a bank of unit costs?

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) original evaluative research. Note, CREST will facilitate access to the existing information and those responsible for its delivery and development. The successful bidder will be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement regarding specific cost metrics.

A successful proposal is likely to do all of the following:

- identify a 'gold standard' for economic evaluation that would be widely accepted by peers and use this as a benchmark for assessment
- recognise the multi-faceted nature of activities (e.g., CT communications; PREVENT community initiatives) as well as the necessarily imprecise nature of appraisal in this space
- demonstrate awareness of the sensitivities of exposure to the data and how such sensitivities would be addressed in outputs.

2.2.14 Prosecution Landscape for Extremist Actors

CREST is interested in better understanding what determines whether extremist actors within the UK are prosecuted and/or charged under terrorism offences or under related offences, such as violent crime or hate speech. What is the prevalence of the offence types relative to the publicly reported motivations for those acts (e.g., in the media, from state officials, etc.)? Are there systematic differences in prosecutions across different ideological and political forms of extremist violence (e.g., Islamist-inspired vs far-right extremisms)? What are the factors that are causing these sentencing choices? Is there any evidence of a change over time?

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- examine relevant legal research databases and media reporting in a systematic manner to map offence type against act

- identify patterns in the nature of prosecutions for different terrorism related acts including making inferences about what might be causing them
- provide recommendations on how to address any apparent biases or underuse of the law.

2.2.15 Contagion of Extremism

CREST is interested in understanding the transmission of extremist ideas across community and country boundaries. Does extremism in one country always/often lead to similar extremism in another? For example, could we have predicted a rise in right-wing terrorism in the UK from the rise in right-wing terrorism overseas? Are certain types of extremism more like to 'spread' in certain ways? Is there a way to map the spread of extremism over time and infer how this is likely to be affected by regional factors across the UK? We are keen to learn more about when and how extremism spreads so that future security risks can be predicted, prepared for, and responded to in a more effective way. We are interested in models that help with immediate threats, but also models that help with inferences about what is likely to be seen in the coming years.

We will consider proposals that include one or more of the following: i) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- recognise the many channels of spread and the social and contextual factors that will shape community receptivity and resilience to extremist messages
- provide a model that allows inferences about emerging forms of extremism are their likely spread into the UK and around communities of the UK.

2.2.16 LASIT Analytical Framework

CREST is interested in synthesising what is known about Left-wing and Anarchist Single Issue Terrorism (LASIT) with a view to identifying gaps in knowledge and better understanding the similarities and differences with other forms of more commonly researched terrorism. We are interested in personal, social and contextual drivers for LASIT terrorism as well as factors that discourage engagement. We seek a review that combines available literature with the tacit knowledge of experts within the field. A successful bid will outline

in detail how they will access and evaluate these two forms of data to provide an integrated review.

We will consider proposals that provide i) a synthetic review.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- accompany the review with knowledge exchange event(s) (e.g., half-day workshop) to provide highlights of the syntheses, ensure government staff are up-to-speed with new and emerging research and provide opportunities for researchers to engage with practitioners
- Identify gaps and opportunities for future social and behavioural science research in these areas, relevant to the CONTEST CT strategy
- show an understanding of current security policy and practice to work out where the new research findings might have maximal impact.

2.2.17 Rapid Reviews for Knowledge Sharing

CREST is interested in providing up-to-date syntheses of open-source social and behavioural science research on priority areas across the CONTEST strategy pillars (Prepare, Protect, Prevent, Pursue). We are seeking a team with strong knowledge of the literature on counter-terrorism, but more importantly, the ability to generate comprehensive and accessible evidence reviews for policymakers. We wish to bring together evidence in digestible formats, succinctly highlighting key findings and evidence gaps, and importantly relating all of these to policy-focused implications.

We will consider proposals that provide ten comprehensive, cross-disciplinary synthetic reviews, which draw out insights for security contexts. A successful proposal is likely to:

- accompany the reviews with knowledge exchange events (e.g., half-day workshop) to provide highlights of the syntheses, ensure government staff are up-to-speed with new and emerging research and provide opportunities for researchers to engage with practitioners
- identify gaps and opportunities for future social and behavioural science research in these areas, relevant to the CONTEST CT strategy
- show an understanding of current security policy and practice to work out where the new research findings might have maximal impact.

2.2.18 Environment and Interventions

When exploring the causes of terrorism at the level of the individual, it has been useful to adopt a perspective that views risk as arising from the mutual

interaction between an individual's susceptibility and their social environment. CREST is interested in better understanding how adopting such an approach to the drivers of terrorism could aid the design and implementation of interventions intended to reduce terrorism risk. How do we move from the theoretical propositions of Situational Action Theory applied in this context to practical recommendations concerning the interaction between person and their environment? We are particularly interested in research that defines and explores key environment factors and actors' exposure to such factors. How can decision makers understand and influence environments and exposure? Why are certain people exposed to such settings while others are not? What interventions can be designed and implemented to influence these environments? How can the efficacy of environment-altering interventions be assessed?

We will consider proposals that provide i) a synthetic review or ii) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- help decision makers operationalise key environmental factors to aid the determination of risk. This would usefully include ways to evaluate when a factor is or is not relevant to a particular case
- provide a (quantitative or qualitative) framework for allowing a systematic assessment of the environmental factors that may be contributing to an individuals' vulnerability, with a view to improving the efficacy of interventions intended to influence such factors
- evaluate any framework through accessible analyses, such as illustrative case studies.

2.2.19 Conspiracy Theories and Extremism

Increasingly, evidence suggests that belief in conspiracy theories and extreme ideologies are rooted in a similar underlying psychology. For instance, recent findings indicate that a stronger conspiracist mentality may be associated with increased violent extremist intentions, an effect found to be stronger for individuals with high self-efficacy. CREST is interested in understanding the overlap in, and interplay between, extremist belief and conspiratorial belief. We are keen to understand commonalities in the psychological roots and formation of such beliefs, and the risk and protective factors that mitigate against them. Our goal is to derive an evidence-based understanding to support decision-makers in considering conspiracy and extremist beliefs in an integrated manner. This will build on previous work that has typically explored conspiracy theories held by extremists, and will it support the development of interventions intended to address both. Relevant questions include: What

function do conspiracy beliefs play within extremist groups? What mechanisms underpin each and are there commonalities? What are the links between group social identity and the likelihood of believing and spreading conspiracy theories? What risk and protective factors exist for each and are there commonalities between them, particularly with respect to critical thinking and media literacy skills?

We will consider proposals that provide i) original research.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- examine the commonality and differences in the mechanisms that underlie extremist and conspiracy beliefs
- provide a framework to enable co-consideration of conspiracy and extremist beliefs with a view to supporting the development of interventions intended to mitigate risk and/or build protective factors.

2.2.20 Online-offline Hybrid Intervention

The false dichotomy between online and offline spaces is widely discussed in relation to radicalisation and extremism. However, most work on interventions has tended to focus on either offline or online activities. CREST is interested in understanding what is possible when an intervention operates both online and offline. What makes an intervention that has online and offline elements successful? How can the online and offline elements of such 'hybrid' interventions best complement one another? Can they be aimed at the same target audience and, if so, what determines the interplay between online and offline elements? We are interested in learning from hybrid applications in diverse domains beyond countering terrorism, radicalisation and extremism. We are keen to learn from best practices elsewhere with a view to informing the design of interventions within the counter-radicalisation space.

We will consider proposals that provide i) a synthetic review.

A successful proposal is likely to:

- consider what can be learnt from pre-existing frameworks that consider the online-offline relationship in terms of (non-violent) behaviours
- draw conclusions about online and offline spaces and experiences for audiences of concern within a counter-radicalisation context
- make recommendations about how this can guide the delivery of hybrid interventions intended to tackle radicalisation.

3 Funding

It is intended that the total amount available for this Call will be up to £1.25m at 100 per cent full Economic Cost (fEC), of which 80 per cent fEC (i.e., up to £1m) will be made available to successful applicants. In practical terms this means that UK HEI researchers should cost their projects using the same process as they would cost an UKRI grant. All other applicants must recognise that an application to CREST's commissioning programme requires a commitment to provide the remaining 20% of full Economic Cost from their own resources. That is, CREST will pay 80% of the total costs outlined within the proposal. All costs should be inclusive of VAT and/or any other applicable tax. A guide to fEC and the ESRC's position on its payment is available at: <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-291020-guidance-to-fEC-grant-terms-and-conditions.pdf>

The duration of work proposed under this Call should not last more than 12 months and should commence after 1 October 2021, and finish by 31 December 2022. CREST will not reimburse costs associated with the development or submission of a proposal.

All projects will be assessed on an individual basis against the Assessment Criteria in Section 4.5. However, the following are indicative costs for each activity:

- Short projects/research synthesis : An indicative cost for this activity is £62,500 at 100% fEC (£50,000 at 80% fEC).
- Long projects/original research: An indicative cost for this activity is £125,000 at 100% fEC (£100,000 at 80% fEC).

4 Application process

4.1 Response format

Applicants must ensure that their proposal conforms to the format specified in Appendix A of this Call. Proposals must be costed and approved by the applicants' organisation authority before submission. The costings submitted should represent the 100% full Economic Cost (fEC) of completing the project, but applicants should recognise that they will receive only 80% fEC in accordance with normal UKRI practices (see Section 3). The costings submitted should be sufficiently detailed to enable the assessors to make informed judgements about the project's value for money.

4.2 Eligibility

The Call is open to Higher Education Institutions, research organisations, charities, commercial companies, and individuals from the UK and overseas who can demonstrate a capability to deliver a high-quality programme of research. Interested partners without such experience should consider partnering with established research institutes. We strongly encourage applications from researchers in all disciplines of the economic and social sciences, conceived broadly. We also encourage proposals that are interdisciplinary and that involve collaborations between stakeholders and researchers. Researchers who have not traditionally worked in the security domain, but believe their expertise may provide insights or new applications to the area, are particularly encouraged to apply.

4.3 Submission

Applicants must submit an electronic copy of their proposal. An electronic copy must be emailed to submission@crestresearch.ac.uk by 16:00GMT on 5 May, 2021. The electronic submission must be in a single document of PDF format.

Proposals that do not meet the format requirements (see Appendix A), or are submitted after the deadline, will not be considered. This includes proposals that are over length or submitted as multiple documents.

CREST will treat all proposals as competitive information and will disclose their contents only for the purpose of the commissioning assessment process. Copies of unsuccessful proposals will be destroyed at the conclusion of the evaluation process. Full details of submission requirements can be found in Appendix A.

4.4 Assessment process

The selection of one or more proposals for award of the commissioning funds will be based on a transparent, competitive evaluation process. Once accepted, full proposals will be sent to: (1) at least three expert peer reviewers who will be asked to assess the proposal against the Assessment Criteria (see Section 4.5); and (2) an expert user reviewer, from the funding organisations, who will be asked to assess the proposal against the Pathways to Impact criterion of the Assessment Criteria.

These assessments will inform the evaluation of proposals by a specially convened Commissioning Panel that comprises CREST's Director and five external representatives drawn from the UK academic and stakeholder communities, from a range of relevant disciplines. (We may increase the

number of external representatives should the number of submissions require it). Representative(s) from the funding organisations will also attend as non-voting member(s) of the panel to offer advice and guidance on 'impact' and the fit of proposals to their requirements.

As part of a submission, applicants are invited to nominate up to two academic peer reviewers, however, only one nominated academic reviewer will be approached. Applicants must ensure that nominated reviewers have no known conflicts of interest. **Applicants must ensure that they seek the reviewer's permission before nominating them.** Applications that do not nominate reviewers will not be disadvantaged.

We reserve the right to reject proposals that are deemed to fall outside the remit and scope of this call, without reference to peer review. Applicants are advised to contact CREST if they are unsure whether or not their proposal will be suitable for the call (see Section 7 for further information).

4.5 Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed by reviewers and the commissioning panel on the following criteria:

Quality of proposal

- Research excellence and contribution to existing knowledge
- Identifies questions central to the remit of the Topic and addresses these directly
- Clear work plan with realistic, testable milestones and clear deliverables.
- Addresses risks to and management of the project over its lifespan
- Commits to research transparency and integrity, such as engagement with Open Science practices.

Pathways to Impact

- Likely importance and timeliness of research to potential users
- Effectiveness of plans to involve potential stakeholders and users, as well as other CREST researchers and CREST's communication mechanisms
- Evidence of well thought-through and realistic dissemination plans to maximise academic/societal/economic impact.

Track record of applicants

- An outstanding track record of research and research application in the relevant field. This may be a field outside of security research (i.e., this call is not only open to researchers in security studies)
- A track record of successful project completion.

Value for money

- Reasonable and fully justified costs for the specified project.

5 Grant Conditions

Applicants who are successful will be required to meet the conditions outlined in CREST's Commissioning Subaward. To facilitate contracting, this contract is available at: <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/opportunities/commissioning/2021/>.

Applicants should ensure that they and their organisation are able to meet the conditions of this agreement prior to applying for funding. For transparency, we outline some of the conditions in this Section.

5.1 Engagement with CREST

One of the unique elements of CREST funding is that we work actively with researchers to support the 'translation to impact' element of their proposal. All commissioned projects will have a designated CREST point of contact and support from our core team of communication, events, and programme delivery specialists. They will also be provided with a nominated Research to Practice Fellow who will offer topic expertise and stakeholder experience to advise the applicant on how best to deliver the research. This occurs without impinging on the applicant's independence. CREST actively encourages inter-project activity with other CREST researchers and support will be provided to enable this where appropriate.

There is an extensive network of stakeholders associated with the Topics proposed in this Call. Apart from the Home Office and UK security and intelligence agencies, who are the directly-intended users of this work, other stakeholders include UK and overseas security and intelligence agencies, government departments, police, businesses and organisations involved with the critical national infrastructure, not-for-profit organisations, and think-tanks. Applicants will be encouraged and should be willing to understand and engage with our stakeholder community. CREST runs a series of activities that enable researchers to engage with this network. Applicants will be encouraged to take part in such events.

5.2 Communication and data-sharing

All deliverables from commissioned projects will be expected to be unclassified, in the public domain, and published and disseminated through normal academic and other publication channels. In addition, applicants are encouraged to present their work at conferences, workshops, networks, and other dissemination events, and costs associated with doing so may be budgeted in the proposal.

As per normal ESRC practices, all data collected as part of a commissioned project must be made available at the UK Data Archive (unless a case for exception is made). A record of available data (but not the data themselves) will also be kept by CREST. More details on the UK Data Archive are available at: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>

All academic publications that are produced by the commissioned projects must comply with the ESRC's policy on Open Access (see <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/open-access-policy/>) As far as possible, CREST will support the Open Access publication of work by applicants who do not have access to an UKRI OA block grant. This will be accomplished outside of the Commissioning process and costs associated with publication charges should not be included within the application.

All publications, presentations and public dissemination produced by the commissioned projects must also be reviewed by a nominated CREST point of contact for the Home Office and UK security and intelligence agencies. This is intended to be a light touch and rapid turnaround process and there will be no obligation to make amendments unless draft publications contain information that is in breach of the Official Secrets Act or any confidentiality agreements, or could have a detrimental impact to national security through the disclosure of sensitive, classified and/or personal information.

5.3 Reporting

Applicants must articulate a set of milestones and specific, measurable deliverables as part of their proposal including indicating where stakeholder input will be critical to the success of the project. In addition to these deliverables, successful projects will also be required to complete a quarterly update report. This report, which takes the form of completing a brief template, is to allow for the early identification of problems so that we can work constructively and quickly to find solutions. A final invoice must be submitted to CREST within 3 months of the end of contract.

5.4 Intellectual Property

All Commissioned projects will be subject to ESRC's standard terms and conditions in relation to Intellectual Property. These state that the intellectual property (IP) generated through the grant rests with the research organisation that holds the grant. However, wherever reasonable, researchers should expect to share the IP generated with CREST members and other commissioned projects, for wider public benefit and for the purposes of achieving the aims and objectives of CREST. There will be no payments for this use of IP. Our funding organisations will have the right to copy and use all outputs for any government purposes.

5.5 Ethics

Applicants must ensure that the proposed research will be carried out to a high ethical standard. They must clearly state how any potential ethical issues have been considered and addressed, and they must ensure that all necessary approvals are in place, and that all risks are minimised, before the project commences. All applicants must comply with the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/framework-for-research-ethics/index.aspx>).

In addition, the applicants' proposed research will also be reviewed by CREST's Security Research Ethics Committee (SREC). The remit of SREC is to consider issues particular to security research that may require expertise not available on institutional ethics boards. These issues relate, inter alia, to: (1) the potential misuse of the research; (2) the risks and benefits of public sharing, especially to national security; (3) the best way to promote public consumption and ensure transparency; and, (4) the wellbeing and security of personnel. SREC will offer recommendations to the applicant in a constructive process. An applications' proposed research must be approved by SREC before it is conducted.

5.6 Security issues

Applicants should demonstrate an understanding of any potential personal, cyber- and physical security risks that may stem from their proposed work. This includes paying due regard to overseas travel advice provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Applicants should outline a risk mitigation strategy in their 'Case for Support', outlining both why the risk is necessary and what steps will be undertaken to mitigate its potential. Further guidance on issues relating to security will be provided by CREST to successful applicants.

6 Commissioning Timetable

28 April, 2021 16:00 GMT – Deadline for questions and queries. (Note questions sent during the Easter break (25 March – 7 April) will be responded to after 7 April)

5 May, 2021 16:00 GMT – Deadline for submitting full proposals

w/c 7 July, 2021 – Commissioning panel meeting

w/c 14 July, 2021 – Successful applicants informed

September, 2021 – Pre-start meeting and Q&A

1 October 2021 – Award commencement (or as soon as possible thereafter).

7 Further information

A list of questions and answers is available at:

<https://www.crestresearch.ac.uk/opportunities/commissioning/faqs>. If you have questions not already answered, or require further information, please email Nicola Ronan (Centre Manager), commissioning@crestresearch.ac.uk

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A

All proposals under this Call must be completed using the requirements outlined in this Appendix. CREST reserves the right to reject any submission that does not conform to these requirements.

All sections outlined below are mandatory, and applications must not exceed the maximum length of each section. Applicants should include the section with the entry 'Null' if they do not believe it is relevant to their submission. Applications should have at least 2cm margins and use a minimum sans serif font size of 11pt. The use of diagrams, tables, and other graphics that aid comprehension is encouraged.

The following sections must be included in the proposal which should consist of no more than 12 pages (excluding additional references and CVs, see below):

Cover Page (2 page maximum)

You must complete the provided cover page which can be found in Appendix B or available as a downloadable PDF at <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/opportunities/commissioning/2021/>. Applicants must adhere to the specified word count.

Summary (1 page maximum)

- Describe the proposed workshop or research in simple terms in a way that could be publicised to a general audience

Pathways to Impact (1 page maximum)

- **Academic impact.** Describe the anticipated and/or potential contribution of the proposed work to academic knowledge and how the proposed work will ensure that this will be achieved. Such contributions may include significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application, both across and within disciplines.
- **Stakeholder impact.** Describe the anticipated and/or potential contribution of the proposed work to enhance stakeholder understanding of, and their capacity to, mitigate or counter security threats. Make a case for the importance and the timeliness of the research for potential users. Describe plans for dissemination, stakeholder involvement and production of any resources that includes how you anticipate these activities having a positive effect on practice and/or policy.

Stakeholders should be understood broadly to refer to UK security and intelligence agencies, UK Home Office, law enforcement, other government departments, industry, charities and not-for-profit organizations, and, where relevant, the public. It is not anticipated that all proposals will have impact with all stakeholders. Rather, applicants should demonstrate a considered understanding of who is the target audience for their work and what impact it will have.

Case for Support (4 page maximum)

- **Introduction.** Describe the aims and objectives of the study in context, briefly outlining the main work on which the research will draw, with references. Any relevant policy or practical background should be included
- **Research questions.** The detailed research questions to be addressed should be clearly stated
- **Design and method.** Give a full and detailed description of the proposed research methods, or workshop design. Where data collection is involved, the data, materials or information to be collected should be clearly stated, and the procedures for achieving this explained and justified. Where access to people or archives is needed, indicate clearly the records, population or samples to be consulted and the steps that have been taken to ensure this access (bearing in mind that all outputs from commissioned projects must be unclassified). Particular care should be taken to explain any innovation in the methodology or where you intend to develop new methods

Project Management, Timetable and Outputs (2 page maximum)

- **Work package descriptions.** Identify a breakdown of the work proposed and provide objectives and scope for each work package.
- **Timetable.** Give a clear and structured account (e.g., using a Gantt chart) of the timing of activities that will take place over the period of the grant. Within this timetable identify clear milestones against which the Work Packages will be delivered, and progress may be judged.
- **Deliverables.** Identify the deliverables of the project and justify the choice of medium. Deliverables may include, but are not limited to, academic publications, training materials, briefing notes, reports, technology demonstrators, multimedia presentations, and toolkits. Applicants are encouraged to be innovative in the deliverables they offer, giving particular attention to what will be useful for stakeholders. They should also consider how they engage with existing CREST delivery mechanisms, such as CREST Guides and CREST Security Review. Examples of these mechanisms are available at the CREST website.

As part of delivery, all projects will produce a final report whose structure reflects that of a typical academic publication. Using a CREST template, the report should include but not be limited to the following sections (1) one-page abstract/executive summary; (2) two-page key-point summary/discussion; (3) introduction/background; (4) methods/approach; (5) results; (6) discussion; (7) Images, figures, graphs and data tables; (8) references; and (9) appendices.

- **Risk mitigation.** CREST is committed to funding excellent research, which is also ground-breaking and innovative, and has the potential for high scientific and/or user impact. Describe the anticipated and/or potential risks to the research including ethical and management issues. Please outline any measures which will be taken to mitigate them.

Summary of Resources Required (1 page maximum)

- **Staff costs.** Identify each contributing member of staff and how many hours per week they will work on the project, the cost of this contribution in GBP (£), and an outline of what they will contribute.
- **Travel and subsistence.** Identify each trip proposed, provide the cost in GBP (£), and provide a short justification for this trip and its costing. This should include trips associated with engaging with stakeholders for start-up meetings and development of the final deliverable(s). This may involve undertaking meetings in London or similar.
- **Other costs.** Identify at the per item level other costs that are being requested under the application (e.g., for equipment, licensing, fees), provide the cost amount in GBP (£), and provide a short justification for this item and its costing.
- **Indirect costs.** Identify the indirect costs in GBP (£) associated with completing the proposed project.
- **Total cost.** A summary of total proposal cost in GBP.

Capabilities and Relevant Expertise (1 page maximum)

- **Past performance and related work.** Describe a record of performance by the applicants in completing activities (either workshops or research) relevant to the proposed work. Include details of current and complementary work and how this project may connect with this work, as well as how this work will be distinct from any related work. We welcome applications from researchers at all career stages. Early career applicants may include additional costs for the time of a co-investigator's mentoring/support where doing so will help them develop their project leadership experience. Applicants may also describe existing connections with stakeholders that will be leveraged to ensure the proposed work has impact.

- **Synergies and added value.** Describe how this project interrelates with, or adds value to, other ongoing or recently completed research. Identify how this project will be distinct from past or current work. If this proposal will receive support in kind from other organisations or the host institution(s) of the applicant(s), then this should be outlined in this section.
- **Security and ethics.** Describe the applicants' capability for ensuring the ethical integrity of the proposed activity, and the applicants' capability to manage any security risks that may stem from their proposed work.

Additional

- **Reference list.** Provide a bibliography for the references cited in the proposal. There is no formal page limit for this additional material, though typically no more than 2 pages of references will suffice.
- **Investigators' Curricula Vitae.** Provide a CV (Résumé) for each named investigator and research staff, including consultants. Each CV should be no more than two pages. It should give full name, degrees and postgraduate qualifications, academic and professional posts held, a list of relevant and recent publications, and a record of all relevant research funded by the ESRC and other bodies.

8.2 Appendix B

CREST Commissioning Call Cover Page

PROPOSAL DETAILS	
Title of proposal	
Topic addressed (as per section 2 of call specification)	
Proposed start date	
Cost (100% FEC of project in GBP including all taxes)	

CONTACT DETAILS	
Contact details for Principal Investigator	
Name	
Address	
Post Code	
Email	

CONTACT DETAILS	
If you have chosen to nominate a reviewer, please provide contact details below. Please leave blank if not applicable.	
Proposed reviewer 1 Please provide name, institution and email address	
Proposed reviewer 2 Please provide name, institution and email address	

ADDITIONAL CONTACT DETAILS	
Please provide the for contracting	
Name of contract officer	
Email address	
Name of press officer	
Email address	

SUBAWARD AND SPECIFICATION DETAILS	
Query	Response
<p>As per page 1 point 2, of the subaward, please provide the correct text for the following section:</p> <p>"[INSERT NAME OF PARTY] an [educational body created by Royal Charter/limited company registered in England and Wales under Company Number #####] of [insert address] (the "Contractor")"</p>	
<p>As per section 11, page 12 of the subaward, please provide response to the following section:</p> <p>"The Contractor's representative for the purpose of receiving reports and other notices shall until further notice be:"</p> <p>"[INSERT NAME OF PARTY] of [insert address and email address]"</p>	