RESEARCH FOR UNDERSTANDING, MITIGATING AND COUNTERING SECURITY THREATS

Broad Topic Announcement

Call Specification

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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 on 1 October 2015, with funding from the UK security and intelligence agencies. The Centre's mission is to deliver an 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 is available at: https://crestresearch.ac.uk

As part of its activities, CREST is seeking to identify and fund innovative and forward-looking economic, behavioural and social science research that will contribute to our understanding of contemporary security threats, or enhance the UK's capacity to detect and mitigate such threats. Individual researchers and research teams in academic institutions, research organisations, SMEs, and industry are eligible for commissioning funds (see Section 3.2 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 address one of the topics identified in Section 2.2. Applicants are invited to propose one of three kinds of activity to address these topics:

- **Workshops.** Typically, 1 or 2-day event(s) that bring(s) together interested parties from different disciplines and/or different sectors. Such events must have a clear objective and offer more than what might reasonably occur at existing conferences or meetings. Applicants are encouraged to be innovative in the format of the workshop and the deliverables that ensue. They should pay particular attention to ensure

that the outcomes are of value to, and have impact on, an audience broader than the workshop attendees.

- **Short projects.** Lasting no more than 6 months, short projects address a topic in a targeted way. This may be the undertaking of a systematic review, a data re-analysis, or the construction and analysis of a case study. Short projects also provide a useful mechanism for researchers to propose proof-of-concept activities, such as an initial experiment or demonstrator, that may provide the evidence-base for a subsequent proposal of a larger programme of work.

- **Long projects.** Lasting no more than 12 months, long projects provide researchers and research teams the opportunity to undertake a concentrated piece of work that provides, in a cumulative way, evidence that clarifies our understanding and contributes to practice. Original research in this regard is understood broadly to include case studies, methodological innovation, and all forms of qualitative and quantitative analysis.

CREST wishes to support productive programmes of research that develop across multiple funding years. For that reason, applicants are invited to outline 'follow on' years as part of their application. The 'follow on' outline should describe the potential trajectory of development of their proposed work and the likely theoretical and practical impact that will be achieved. On an annual basis, where relevant and where funding allows, CREST will provide an opportunity for applicants who have proposed 'follow on' years to submit an extended proposal for the subsequent year's funding. This proposal will be subject to the same Assessment process as described below.

2.2 Topic focus

Applicants are invited to submit proposals for workshops, short projects and long projects on the following topics. In some cases, the focus of the call is the synthesis of existing research [S]. In other cases, the focus is on original research [R]. For each topic this is marked by an 'S' or/and an 'R' in brackets.

1. Creativity, innovation and learning by terrorists (e.g., in ideology, techniques and/or targeting) [S, R]

2. How those engaged in hostile activity (e.g., crime, espionage, terrorism) conceive and manage their own security, and how they make risk judgments about the actions they wish to take [S, R]

3. Diasporas' understanding of, and reaction to, conflict in their countries of origin [S, R]

4. Post-conflict resilience, transition, and rebuilding among individuals, communities and groups [S, R]

5. Conspiracy theories, particularly how they spread through networks and how this differs across cultures and communities [S]

6. The security implications of cross-cultural and generational differences in the adoption of virtual platforms [S, R]

7. How the effect of influence and interpersonal skills changes in modern communication channels [R]

8. Development of evidence-based, novel and effective measures of rapport in a variety of settings [R]

9. Best practices for culturally or context sensitive communication for gaining cooperation [S, R]

10. How to best support the resilience and welfare of undercover officers in a variety of contexts [S, R]

11. How individuals and teams make sense of incomplete data (e.g., in complex and fast-moving investigations), and what techniques could help [R]

12. Factors that hinder or support the effectiveness of multi-agency and/or multi-disciplinary team-working [S, R]

13. How to get employees to develop a security-savvy mindset (values, beliefs, attitudes) as has been achieved with, e.g., safety culture, in order to promote good security behaviours in the workplace [S, R]

14. Individual and social factors that moderate first line responders' effectiveness. How do first line responders best engage people who want to report information? [S, R]

15. Individual differences in people's ability to spot subtle changes in a variety of environments, including rarely occurring or well hidden objects [S]

2.3 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 £1 million) will be made available to successful applicants. In practical terms this means that HEI researchers should cost their projects using the same process as they would cost an ESRC 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. All costs should be inclusive of VAT and/or any other applicable tax. A guide of fEC and the ESRC's position on its payment is

available at: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/documents/fecFAQ.pdf

The duration of work proposed under this Call should not last more than 12 months and should commence between 1 April 2016 and 1 October 2016. CREST will not commit to funding any proposed follow-on work or programmes of activity that extend beyond 12 months. 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 3.5. However, the following are indicative costs for each activity:

- Workshops: There is no indicative cost for this activity, which will be evaluated on the criteria set out below.

- Short Projects: An indicative cost for this activity is £62,500 at 100% fEC (£50,000 at 80% fEC).

- Long Projects: An indicative cost for this activity is £125,000 at 100% fEC (£100,000 at 80% fEC).

3 Application process

3.1 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 RCUK practices (see section 2.3).

3.2 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. Eligible applicants may submit more than one proposal.

3.3 Submission

Applicants must submit both an electronic and hard copy of their proposal. An electronic copy must be emailed to submission@crestresearch.ac.uk by 17.00GMT on 5 February 2016. The electronic submission must be in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format.

A hard copy must be delivered through a mail carrier, post-marked no later than 5 February 2016. The hard copy should be sent to:

Commissioning Chair
c/o CREST Centre Director
Department of Psychology
Lancaster University
Lancaster, UK
LA1 4YF

Hand deliveries are not permitted. Proposals that do not fulfil the format requirements, or are submitted after the deadline, will not be considered.

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.

3.4 Assessment process

The selection of one or more proposals for award of the commissioning funds will be based on an independent and competitive evaluation process. Once accepted, full proposals will be sent to at least three expert peer reviewers who will be asked to assess the proposal against the Assessment Criteria (see Section 3.5). These assessments will inform the evaluation of proposals by a specially convened Commissioning Panel that comprises CREST's director, a second member of CREST's leadership team, and five external representatives. The external representatives are drawn from the UK and international academic community, as well as from user communities, from across a range of relevant disciplines.

As part of their 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 perceived conflicts of interest and 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 6 for further information).

3.5 Assessment criteria

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

Quality of proposal

- Demonstrated fit to the remit of the call
- Research excellence and contribution to knowledge
- Clear work plan with realistic, testable milestones and clear deliverables
- Grounding in existing knowledge and strong potential addition to the evidence-base

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

Pathways to Impact

- Evidence of well thought-through and realistic engagement and dissemination plans to maximise academic/societal/economic impact
- Commitment to maximise the impact of the work across stakeholders and the public, including engaging with the CREST communications team

Value for money

- Reasonable and fully justified costs for the specified project.

4 Grant Conditions

Applicants who are successful will be required to meet the conditions outlined in CREST's Commissioning Subaward (see:

https://www.crestresearch.ac.uk/commissioning/terms). Applicants should ensure that they 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.

4.1 Engagement with CREST

All commissioned projects will be provided with a partner from CREST Programme Leads. The role of the Leads is to support the applicant's engagement in CREST to ensure that the benefit of CREST's activities for the applicant is maximised. The assigned Programme Lead will be a world-leading researcher in a cognate area and they will also offer topic expertise and advice to the applicant, without impinging on the applicant's independence.

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

4.2 Communication and data-sharing

All deliverables from commissioned projects will be expected to be unclassified, in the public domain, and published and disseminated through the 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's Centre Manager and made public. More details on the UK Data Archive are available at: http://www.data-archive.ac.uk

All publications that are produced by the commissioned projects must comply with the ESRC's policy on Open Access (see http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess/). As far as possible, CREST will support the Open Access publication of work by applicants who do not have access to an RCUK 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 that are produced by the commissioned projects must also be reviewed by a nominated CREST point of contact for the 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.

4.3 Reporting

Applicants must articulate a set of milestones and specific, measurable deliverables as part of their proposal. In addition to these deliverables, successful small and large grant 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.

4.4 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. UK security and intelligence agencies will have the right to copy and use all outputs for any government purposes.

4.5 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. The remit of SREC is to consider issues

particular to security research that may require the 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.

4.6 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's Security Ethics Research Committee to successful applicants.

5 Commissioning Timetable

8 December 2015 – Issue Call for Proposals
5 February 2016 – Deadline for submitting full proposals
4 March 2016 – Commissioning panel meeting
11 March 2016 – Successful applicants informed
1 April 2016 – Award commencement (or as soon as possible thereafter)

6 Further information

Further information is available from:
      Nicola Ronan (Centre Manager)
      Email: commissioning@crestresearch.ac.uk

7 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. Hard copy submissions should be printed on A4 or US Letter paper. 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 (1 page maximum)
- **Project Title.** Provide a succinct title.
- **Principal Investigator.** Provide the Principal Investigator's name and the organization where the Grant will be held
- **Contact details.** Provide a mailing address and email address for the Principal Investigator and Contract Officer (if different)
- **Application Type.** Identify the type of submission within the application as either: Workshop, Short Project, or Long Project
- **Topic addressed.** Identify topic focus using one or more of the numbers indicated in section 2.2 of the Call Specification
- **Proposed start date.** Provide a preferred start date in the format of day/month/year
- **Proposed reviewers.** Provide the name(s), mailing address(es), and email address(es) for up to two reviewers, as per Call Specification

Summary (1 page maximum)
- Describe the proposed workshop or research in simple terms in a way that could be publicised to a general audience [up to 4000 characters]

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
- **Risk mitigation.** CREST is committed to funding excellent research which is also adventurous, speculative and innovative, and with the potential for high scientific and/or user impact. Where there are risks associated with such research, please outline any measures which will be taken to mitigate them.

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. Stakeholders should be understood broadly to refer to security and intelligence agencies, 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.

Timetable and Deliverables (1 page maximum)

- **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 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, 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.

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.
- **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 associated with completing the proposed project.
- **Total cost.** A summary of total proposal cost.

Capabilities and Relevant Expertise (1 page maximum)

- **Past performance.** 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. 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

- **Option year(s).** If desired, provide an account of how the proposed work may be extended over a number of years to deliver a larger programme of work. On no more than 1 page, identify the type of additional work envisaged, including its objectives and likely contribution.

- **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 (Resumé) 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.