

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Call for Research Proposals

1. What is the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS)?

ARIS is a UK government programme led by the Home Office. ARIS redistributes a portion of recovered criminal assets to agencies involved in the asset recovery process. Launched in 2006, ARIS aims to incentivise law enforcement and other agencies to pursue and recover criminal assets.

2. Why is the National Crime Agency (NCA) issuing this Call for Research Proposals?

We (National Economic Crime Centre¹ and the Home Office) are keen to enhance our understanding of the threat posed by economic crime to support effective policy and law enforcement responses. Our recently published Economic Crime Areas of Research Interest (ARI)² reflects our priorities and ambition. This Call for Research Proposals welcomes innovative ideas that will develop the existing evidence base on asset recovery and explore its effectiveness as a deterrent. It is an opportunity for the NCA to work in partnership with academia, to harness knowledge and expertise, and enhance our capabilities.

3. Who can apply?

This is an open research call, that is seeking to award a research grant to a researcher/research team via a host UK Higher Education Institution (HEI). Researchers may already be affiliated with an institution, or they may seek affiliation. Evidence of affiliation and willingness to host the grant must be obtained and submitted via a Letter of Support from the proposed host institution as part of the application process.

4. Will you help me find a host UK Higher Education Institution?

No. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they have obtained host institution formal approval before applying. A Letter of Support from the proposed host institution is required as part of the application process.

5. Are there any citizenship/nationality requirements for applicants?

No. However, all applicants (e.g. lead researchers, support researchers and supervisors) must have the right to work in the UK prior to applying.

6. Will applicants need UK Security Clearance (SC)? If so, how will this be obtained?

Applicants/researchers may require UK Security Clearance if they wish to access/use sensitive government data for research purposes. Applicants should be aware that SC clearance requires

¹ The NECC is a multi-agency centre established in 2018 to deliver a step change in the UK's response to economic crime. For more information on the NECC, please visit www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk. The NECC is hosted within the NCA.

² <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/755-economic-crime-areas-of-research-interest-ari-report-july-2025/file>

UK residency for a minimum of 5 years. The NCA will review the need for SC based on the research use case, and the availability of the desired data. If SC is required, the NCA will conduct the process, and advise of grant resources required.

7. What costs can be included in the budget?

Current or day-to-day operational expenses for carrying out the proposed research project. This includes directly incurred costs (e.g. personnel costs, fees, travel and subsistence, other costs such as licenses etc.), directly allocated costs (e.g. estates) and indirect costs (e.g. supplies).

8. What costs cannot be included in the budget?

Any costs associated with capital expenditure, or fixed assets and costs incurred during the preparation and submission of a proposal.

9. What reporting requirements will be expected throughout the duration of the grant?

A schedule of outputs is expected as part of a 15-month research plan. Brief quarterly narrative and financial reports will be required, to monitor progress and disburse funds. Templates and support will be provided to ensure timeliness and accuracy.

10. What are the key dates to know?

Stage	Target Date
Call for proposals launch	31 Jul 2025
Deadline for queries	15 Aug 2025
Updated FAQs posted	22 Aug 2025
Proposal submission deadline	30 Sep 2025 [17:00 GMT]
Outcome decided, applicants notified	Week beginning 27 Oct or 3 Nov 2025
Signing of accountable grant with UKHEI	Nov/Dec 2025
Research activities commence	Jan 2026

11. How do I apply?

Applicants should complete the proposal form (Part B) and attach the supporting documentation detailed in Section 7. Proposals should be submitted to NECC-IF-Research@nca.gov.uk by 30 Sep 2025 [17:00 GMT], including 'ARIS Call for Research Proposals' in the subject line. Proposals cannot be updated, once submitted.

12. Can I submit two applications?

No.

13. How will the grant be awarded?

If you are successful, the funding will be awarded through an Accountable Grant³ between the NCA and the host UK HEI for a 15-month period (expected 1 Jan 2026 - 31 Mar 2027).

³ A funding agreement, where the recipient (grantee) is responsible for the management and use of funds as well as the delivery of any agreed outputs or outcomes.

14. Can the grant be extended?

Any extensions beyond the 15-month period (expected 1 Jan 2026 - 31 Mar 2027) are subject to Home Office review and approval.

15. What should the CVs contain?

The format and content of CVs is at your discretion, but should include a list of publications, where available. You do not need to include contact details as these are included earlier in the application form. Please do not include personal information (e.g., gender, date of birth) in the CV. The CV must be uploaded in a single PDF, and the file size should be less than 5MB.

16. How many research grants will be funded under this call?

We expect to award one large grant under this call for the period and amount specified in the Call for Research Proposals Application Form.

17. Will proposals that address asset recovery outside the context of OCGs be considered?

All proposals will be considered. However, applicants are encouraged to consider the focus of the call, the overall theme and proposal evaluation criteria detailed in Table 1 Call for Research Proposals Application Form.

18. Is the "asset recovery" scope for this call restricted to traditional public sector and regulatory processes?

No. However, applicants are encouraged to consider the focus of the call, evaluation criteria and the utility of the proposed research. For example, how will the research advance the existing evidence base and contribute to improving practical responses or informing policy?

19. Who will be responsible for providing data?

This depends on the availability, type and ownership of the data required. Applicants are encouraged to present any desired data types/sources in Section 2 of the Call for Research Proposals Application Form. Data requests pertaining to the NCA will be considered based on the availability of the data and the research use case presented.

20. Who is eligible to access data?

This depends on the type of data required and if security clearance is required to access the same. Please see the response to FAQ no. 6 for more information on instances where security clearance might be required.

21. Who will provide access to interview participants in the Law Enforcement Agencies, UK Financial Intelligence Unit and the Home Office if required?

This project is managed by the NECC's Illicit Finance & Research Insights (IFRI) Team. Access to interview participants, where required, will be facilitated by the IFRI Research Manager.

22. Is the NECC interested in research on other countries' experiences with asset recovery?

Yes, where there is relevant learning related to the overall theme of the call. Applicants are encouraged to consider the focus of the call, evaluation criteria and the utility of the proposed research.

Protecting the public from serious and organised crime

23. Is the NECC interested in research on asset recovery defined broadly - i.e. the confiscation of assets derived from the proceeds of crime or used for criminal activities - or only in cases where the asset is returned to the original owner?

We are interested in all aspects of asset recovery. However, applicants are encouraged to consider how their proposed research relates to the focus of the call, evaluation criteria and its utility - i.e. how will the research advance the existing evidence base, contribute to improving operational responses or inform policy?

24. Is the NECC interested in research that focuses on the use of asset recovery to address or mitigate the impacts of crime? Or is the NECC's sole interest in deterrence?

We are interested in research on the use of asset recovery to address or mitigate the impacts of crime. However, applicants are encouraged to consider how their proposed research relates to the focus of the call, evaluation criteria and its utility - i.e. how will the research advance the existing evidence base, contribute to improving operational responses or inform policy?

25. Can you provide a copy of your standard terms and conditions for this type of award?

We cannot share terms and conditions at this time, however, when issued institutions will have an opportunity to review and clarify any aspects. However, applicants can expect the terms and conditions to be similar to those issued by other UK government bodies for comparable awards.

26. Are non-UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) eligible to apply in partnership with a UK HEI?

Yes. Applicants should however note that the grant must be awarded to the UK HEI.

27. Can inflation costs be included in the budget?

Inflation costs should not be included in the budget. Your proposal should reflect costs at the time of submission. The published funding amount is the total commitment for this grant award. Any factors that impact the deliverability of agreed outputs during the lifecycle of the award, should be discussed and managed with the IFRI management team.

28. Can UK HEIs submit proposals through wholly owned HEI subsidiaries (commercial entities)? If so, is VAT a chargeable cost?

Yes, HEIs may submit proposals through wholly owned subsidiaries. VAT is a chargeable cost - within the overall grant amount.

