

Q&A from the DARE UK Real-world Research Exemplars Funding Call Applicant Webinar Chat

Question 1: To what extent are the tools already available to support a federated pipeline as part of a proposal?

The answer depends on which TRE partners would be involved in the project. Our early adopters are examples of TREs who are already deploying and understanding some of the TREvolution and other DARE UK products. Other TREs may be interested to try some of these ideas out as part of a research exemplar project. The key will be partnering with an enthusiastic TRE.

Question 2: Is it expected that we come ready with a model that we test on an existing federated pipeline, or can/should we be developing models within the remit of the grant?

It depends. We have no fixed view on the types of analysis pipeline that could be developed. What will be possible will be down to the TRE partner(s) and what pieces of technology they are happy to support.

Question 3: Is there a list of TREs for partnership?

There currently is no definitive, public "directory" of UK TREs.

The DARE UK Early Adopters have around ~10 TREs actively engaged to pilot, test, and refine TRE capabilities; you can find information on the TRE early adopters here: [DARE UK early adopters - DARE UK](#). This opportunity is not restricted to these TREs only, so long as your TRE partner(s) can convince the funding panel they have the necessary maturity with regards to the adoption of one or more of the TREvolution capabilities.

In terms of a TRE list to support exploring partnerships, though it is a little outdated the DARE UK 2023 landscape review could be a useful starting point: [Paving the way for a data-driven future: DARE UK's infrastructure landscape review - DARE UK](#).

Question 4: Do projects have to test at least one of the tools Jim Smith mentioned?

Yes, one or more of the capabilities outlined in the [TREvolution programme's work](#).

This opportunity is looking for projects which will comprehensively 'kick the tyres' of the DARE UK Phase 2 infrastructure capabilities being actively developed by TREvolution and matured by the [TRE early adopter cohort](#). However, there is scope alongside that to explore, for example, how a machine-learning technology like flower.ai (for example) could fit into a "TREvolution-enabled" set of TRE partners.

We are aware of the challenges in getting formal approval to work with real-world datasets within a 12-month timeframe. While the funding panel would view applications working with real-world data more favourably, provided a research exemplar is looking at a genuine research question and "real-world methods" then the funding panel would be comfortable to see projects using synthetic or other "dummy" data to test the utility of the emerging TREvolution capabilities.

Question 5: Are organisations wanting to set up TREs eligible to be partners? Or just those with existing TREs, and who defines what this is?

We could imagine that a project looking to 'kick the tyres' of, for example, SATRE and K8TRE could well start from scratch, at least on an infrastructure level. However, the proposal would have to tell a strong story around the non-technical aspects of standing up a TRE and the utility for real-world research that would need to be convincing to the funding panel. The funding panel will determine whether the TRE(s) partner(s) in any application are appropriate.

Question 6: Can we contact DARE UK for advice on how to set up international partners properly?

We encourage you to look over UKRI's terms of how to bring in international partners into your application: [International partnerships – UKRI](#) as well as [MRC Industry Collaboration Framework \(ICF\) – UKRI](#)

Question 7: Is working with TREs across UK devolved nations a requirement, or viewed favourable?

Applicants are required to partner with one or more TREs and provide a statement that demonstrates engagement and co-designing of application with partner TRE(s). For more information, please see 'Trusted Research Environment (TRE) Engagement' in the 'How to apply' section of the UKRI application. Partner TRE(s) are encouraged to participate as co-leads [eligible for UKRI funding](#), alternatively partner TREs may participate as sub-contractors.

The technical maturity and feasibility of TRE partners in terms of their readiness for provisioning the capabilities introduced through the TREvolution programme to research teams will be critically assessed. TRE partners that have already installed and tested the TREvolution capabilities will be viewed favourably.

Question 8: Is there a place/shared area/video demo, etc. we can see the federated learning functionalities explained by Jim / or try them, so that we can define a project to either deploy or extend them for an approved TRE? Is this a recommended proposal for this call? Please advise

We encourage you to explore the [TREvolution website](#) and engage with the TREvolution team. Further you can attend the [Collaboration Cafe](#), where you can further explore such potential partnerships around TREs.

Question 9: How does this call fit in with the recent 'DARE UK next-generation trusted research environment capabilities' call?

The 'DARE UK next-generation trusted research environment capabilities' call supports innovative, early-stage projects that will prototype new components, services, and tools to support a secure, interoperable national infrastructure for sensitive data research in the UK. It is intended for early development, piloting, and/or proof-of-concept projects. This DARE UK real-world research exemplars opportunity is for testing capabilities that are close to 'production readiness', that is to say ready for use by data researchers in TREs rather than early-stage exploration/experimentation.

Question 10: It's not clear to me how a researcher/Project Lead engages with this - where is the information on the existing UK TREs and the associated leads of those?

This call is about advancing research using sensitive data in TREs. There is an existing community of researchers in this space doing just that. Given the need for partnership with mature TRE(s) coupled with the 12-month delivery period, we would expect applicants to already have existing relationships with the relevant TRE(s) to support their work. Caveated with not knowing the details of specific applications, we imagine it would be a challenge to put in a competitive application without those relationships with existing TRE(s) already established to some degree.

Learn more about the DARE UK Early Adopters here: <https://dareuk.org.uk/how-we-work/ongoing-activities/dare-uk-early-adopters/>