



## SPRITE+ Sandpit 2025 in collaboration with SALIENT

TIPS and Resilient Futures

Call for Participants

Closing date 20<sup>th</sup> February

SPRITE+ is pleased to invite Members and Expert Fellows to apply to attend a blended sandpit on the *TIPS and Resilient Futures*. Up to £162k of SPRITE+ funding will be made available to fund up to five interdisciplinary projects arising from this sandpit. In addition, successful projects will be eligible to bid for a subsequent larger grant from SALIENT as part of their project.

### Background

SPRITE+ is the EPSRC-funded Security, Privacy, Identity and Trust Engagement NetworkPlus (grant reference EP/W020408/1). We work with academic and non-academic stakeholders to build and strengthen the TIPS (Trust, Identity, Privacy and Security) community and identify requirements and promising new directions for research in this area. We have a 'pump-priming' budget to fund activities that explore and test new ideas, and that create new collaborations between academic disciplines, and between academic and non-academic partners.

SALIENT is UKRI's Building a Secure and Resilient World: Research and Coordination Hub, it was launched in February 2024 following a funding competition led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in support of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) strategic theme, *Building a Secure and Resilient World (BSRW)*. The University of Manchester was awarded £4.3m to deliver the hub over a 5-year period, in conjunction with the universities of Exeter, Bath and Sussex.

BSRW is one of five UKRI strategic themes to enable working across disciplines and the leveraging of new and existing investment and activity; it seeks to strengthen security and resilience, from individual to national level, across a range of social and economic areas at the heart of daily life.

SALIENT will lead, plan, deliver and manage a devolved funding programme during the life of the hub, thereby creating opportunities in identified areas of knowledge and evidence gaps within the scope of the BSRW strategic theme.

### The research challenge: TIPS and Resilient Futures

Resilience refers to the capacity to adapt and recover from challenges. [The UKRI Building a Secure and Resilient World \(BSRW\)](#) initiative is taking a systemic approach that is human-centred, aimed at strengthening societal and economic resilience, and enhancing security across virtual and physical environments, by improving awareness of risks and threats, preparedness, informed decision-making and response. It will work towards change being understood as a force for good. All these conceptualisations of resilience intersect with holistic ideas about security but also TIPS more broadly. For example, in organizational contexts:

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1. **Building Trust:** Trust can be seen as a central to systemic resilience. When stakeholders—be they individuals, teams, or organizations—trust one another, they are more likely to collaborate effectively and share crucial information, especially during crises. Establishing and maintaining trust is essential for resilience in the face of challenges.
2. **Identity Assurance:** Fully functional identity management systems are increasing central to the digital economy. A robust identity framework minimizes security risks and enhances resilience by ensuring systemic failures are minimised.
3. **Privacy Protection:** Protecting privacy is crucial for maintaining user confidence. When individuals know their personal information is safeguarded, they are more willing to engage with systems and share necessary data. This trust in privacy enhances resilience by facilitating open communication and collaboration.
4. **Security Measures:** Strong security protocols are fundamental to resilience. By implementing comprehensive security strategies, organizations can defend against potential threats and respond swiftly to incidents. Resilient systems can recover quickly from disruptions, maintaining continuity and protecting sensitive information.
5. **Adaptability and Continuous Improvement:** TIPS promotes an adaptive approach to managing trust, identity, privacy, and security. Organizations that continuously evaluate and improve their practices can better navigate evolving challenges and threats, thereby enhancing overall resilience.

Then at the individual level, resilience involves psychological robustness and the ability to cope with stress and adversity. Again, it easy to see how the elements of TIPS—Trust, Identity, Privacy, and Security significantly influence an individual’s personal resilience:

1. **Trust and Psychological Safety:** When individuals feel trusted by others and can trust their environments, it fosters a sense of psychological safety. This trust allows them to express themselves openly, seek support, and take risks without fear of negative consequences. Such an environment encourages individuals to confront challenges and setbacks, ultimately enhancing their resilience.
2. **Identity and Self-Concept:** A strong sense of identity contributes to resilience. When individuals have a clear understanding of who they are and their values, they are better equipped to navigate difficulties. Trust in their own identity—knowing their skills, strengths, and boundaries—allows individuals to draw upon these resources during tough times, reinforcing their ability to bounce back.
3. **Privacy and Autonomy:** The ability to control one’s personal information and maintain privacy is crucial for mental well-being. When individuals feel their privacy is respected, they are more likely to share their thoughts and feelings, which can be essential for processing experiences and building resilience. This sense of autonomy supports their psychological strength, allowing them to cope with stress more effectively.
4. **Security and Stability:** The sense of security—both physical and emotional—creates a stable foundation for resilience. Individuals who feel secure in their environments can focus on problem-solving and developing coping strategies rather than being preoccupied with

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potential threats. This stability promotes a mindset that is conducive to overcoming challenges.

5. **Support Networks:** Trust and security in relationships contribute to the formation of supportive networks. When individuals feel safe and connected to others, they are more likely to seek help and share their experiences. These social connections are vital for resilience, providing emotional support and practical resources during times of hardship.

So, in short, the relationship between TIPS and resilience, is both central and also multifaceted making the topic an ideal focus for a Sandpit.

We expect participants at this sandpit to approach the topic of from many different perspectives. We welcome applications from researchers across STEM, arts and humanities, and social and behavioural sciences, including from those who have not previously worked on the sandpit theme but have an interest in the topic as well as those with an established track record in TIPS topics. We warmly welcome applications from industry, NGOs, government, and the police. Non-academic participants will play a central role in the development of proposals (and in the successful projects).

## Sandpit outputs

Up to £162k of SPRITE+ funding will be made available to fund interdisciplinary projects arising from this sandpit.

Funding might cover the costs of conducting scoping studies, research engagement with organisations and/or the public, feasibility studies, and demonstrators. The aim is to explore promising 'proof of concept' ideas that could be developed into a second stage, more ambitious funding proposal from SALIENT funds.

The timescale for each project will be no longer than four months, and each project funded is expected to be between £13,500 and £40,000 (at 100% full Economic Cost (fEC)), of which SPRITE+ will fund 80% fEC (in line with UKRI rules). In practical terms, this means that SPRITE+ will fund 80% of the total costs outlined in successful proposals. For example, if your proposal is costed at £40,000 (100% fEC), SPRITE+ will fund £32,000 (80% fEC). Project Partners and non-academic Members may contribute in-kind resources.

As a secondary output, the successful sandpit projects will be invited to develop a proposal for submitting to a ringfenced Salient fund of 450K. Up to three of the projects will be funded at up to £150,000 (at 100% full Economic Cost (fEC)), of which SALIENT will fund 80% fEC (in line with UKRI rules).

## Expected commitment from participants

The sandpit will be run online and in person at the following dates and times in June-July 2025:

- Session 1 (online): 3 June, 12:30 – 16:00
- Session 2 (in-person residential at Crewe Hall Hotel): 9 and 10 June from 10:00 on day 1 until 16:00 on day 2
- Session 3 (online): 17 June, 12:30 – 16:00
- Session 4 (online): 24 June, 12:30 – 16:00

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**Participants must attend every session in full and will be expected to engage with each other and with project partners in between the formal sessions, to develop and refine their ideas.** Suggested reading and videos may be provided before and during the workshop and participants are encouraged to explore relevant research and grey literature.

**An application to attend will be taken to mean you are available for these dates and able to engage fully.**

The short application form can be found [here](https://spritehub.org/).

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## Further details

### What can I expect?

Sandpits are intensive, interactive experiences where you will work with fellow participants to create new ideas from scratch. Our Sandpits in 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024 resulted in SPRITE funding nineteen [new short projects](#). Here's some of the feedback from previous participants:

*"The sandpit brought people together which would have never met otherwise. I met fantastic colleagues and am very grateful for this opportunity. It was a focused and well-structured event which was also exceptionally well organised and facilitated. Thank you!"*

*"An excellent experience and one that I would highly recommend. Rather than having months to plan and think about a project it forces you to think creatively and strategically, taking on board other interests and feedback."*

*"Highlights for me are: Forming connections with other people in the area, particularly from other disciplines. Understanding and discussing key issues. Developing project proposals at speed. Getting valuable insight from mentors at every stage of the process. Mentor and funding clinics to get the support we need."*

### How will the sandpit work?

Our approach to the sandpit is similar to the [UKRI Sandpit](#) approach. A sandpit is highly interactive and involves participants from different disciplines and backgrounds exploring and developing innovative approaches to a challenge. Based on our previous experience, we have adopted a blended approach to running SPRITE+ sandpits – combining online and in-person sessions.

After an introductory half day session online, we'll have two days in the beautiful setting of the De Vere Cranage Estate. This is where we'll define the scope of the challenge, share understandings of the challenges, and explore the expertise brought by the participants to the sandpit, form teams and start to shape the projects.

A week after the in-person sessions we'll convene for another half day online to present the developing projects and receive peer review feedback from other participants. We'll also offer optional funding clinics for project teams to discuss the practicalities of funding and the grant conditions (e.g. what expenses are allowed, managing the project).

The following week, participants will present their proposals to a funding panel which will draw on members of our [Advisory Board](#), [Expert Fellows](#) group, [Project Partners](#), and other stakeholders. The Panel will recommend proposals for funding and those involved will be given time to prepare a final version of their project proposal covering their intended activities, with costings (at 80% fEC). The deadline for submission of written proposals generated at the sandpit will be by midnight on 6 July 2024. Further guidance on this part of the process will be available at the sandpit event.

After satisfactorily completing normal contract and due diligence procedures with the University of Manchester, projects can start. All grant holders will be expected to complete a short end of project report within 1 month of project completion. Project teams may also be invited to present their findings at a future SPRITE+ event.

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### Who should attend?

We anticipate that approximately two thirds of places will be filled by academic researchers and one third by non-academic research users.

We want to bring people together who would not normally interact and particularly welcome applications from individuals who have not previously engaged in the 'TIPS' community. We encourage applications from individuals working in SMEs and third sector organisations, and from academic researchers from all disciplines, including engineering, physical sciences, life sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and humanities. Participants from academia are welcomed at any stage of their research career if they meet UKRI eligibility requirements to receive grant funding. If you have any questions about your eligibility, please get in touch at [spriteplus@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:spriteplus@manchester.ac.uk).

### What funding is available?

Up to £162k of SPRITE+ funding will be made available to fund interdisciplinary projects arising from this sandpit. The timescale for each project will be no longer than four months, and each project funded is expected to be between £13,500 and £40,000 (100% FEC figure).

Whilst we expect proposals to be co-created with non-academic stakeholders for maximum impact, funding can only be allocated directly to eligible academic researchers as described in [UKRI's Eligibility Guide](#). This means that although costs associated with the contributions of non-academic partners can be included in proposals, non-academic participants cannot lead projects.

Funds will be awarded at 80% FEC in accordance with normal UKRI practices. In practical terms, this means that SPRITE+ will fund 80% of the total costs outlined in successful proposals. Funds awarded will be subject to standard [UKRI grant terms and conditions](#), which are non-negotiable.

The duration of work funded by this sandpit should not last more than four months and should commence no later than 1 November 2025 and finish no later than 28 February 2026.

**Please note that attendance at the Sandpit does not guarantee funding.** Teams with projects that are not funded from SPRITE+ funds may nevertheless decide to develop their proposals into bids to other funding calls. For instance, in 2020, one of the unfunded Sandpit projects went on to do very well in another funding call.

### What costs do you cover for participation?

For academic participants, SPRITE+ will cover travel, accommodation, and meal costs for the in-person days of the sandpit. According to UKRI expenditure rules, most non-academic participants are liable for their own costs. Please contact us at [spriteplus@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:spriteplus@manchester.ac.uk) if you wish to discuss further.

We recognise that some participants may face barriers to participation, including poor connection speeds, childcare/babysitting costs, or the need for BSL interpreters, captioning, or audio description. We are committed to doing what we can to help participants overcome such barriers. Successful applicants will be eligible to apply for support through our [SPRITE+ Access Fund](#) to help them participate fully and effectively in sandpit activities. Please contact [spriteplus@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:spriteplus@manchester.ac.uk) to arrange a discussion (in confidence) if you want to explore what could be available to you.

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## Key dates

Date	Action
8 January 2025	Applications open
18 February 2025, [16:00]	Applications close
By 4 March 2025	Applicants notified of decision
3 June 2025	Sandpit session 1 (online)
9 and 10 June 2025	Sandpit session 2 (in person)
17 June 2025	Sandpit session 3 (online)
24 June 2025	Sandpit session 4 (Funding panel, online)
3 July 2025	Funding Panel give in-principle decision
24 July 2025	Deadline for written proposals
August – October 2025	SPRITE+ team will work with the PIS' research support offices to complete contractual work. Projects can start as soon as contracts are in place.
1 November 2025	Latest date by which projects should start
28 February 2026	Deadline for project completion
Within 1 month of project completion	Submission of end of project report

## How to Apply

Applications are invited from SPRITE+ Members and Expert Fellows from:

- Academia (applicants must be eligible to receive UKRI funding, please see the [UKRI Eligibility Guide](#))
- Professional practice (non-academic)

All applicants should be registered members of SPRITE+. You can apply for membership (which is free of charge) [here](#).

Applicants should complete the [short application form](#) by **16:00 (GMT) 20 February 2025**.

## Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed against the following selection criteria:

- The ability to develop novel and adventurous research ideas
- The potential to contribute to research at the interface between disciplines
- The ability to work in a team
- The ability to engage productively with people from a range of backgrounds within and outside your sector

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Please note:

- We do not assess your academic publication or research track record as part of the process. We are more interested in your ability to engage creatively and constructively in a multidisciplinary environment to generate novel ideas, and the way in which you demonstrate an appreciation of the TIPS challenges of Living in an Inauthentic World.
- You should approach the sandpit without a specific research project in mind. Novel ideas are co-created by sandpit participants from scratch.
- We will select participants based on the information in the application form and will endeavour to achieve a diverse spread of participants from across disciplines, experience, and backgrounds.

### Privacy notice

SPRITE+ is fully compliant with GDPR. We will treat proposals as confidential and share only with the Management Team and peer reviewers. Copies of all applications will be deleted from our systems within 3 months of the sandpit. A record of the decision-making process will be kept until the three months after the end of the current SPRITE+ grant (30<sup>th</sup> November 2027). A record of Anonymised statistics will be recorded to inform the organisation of future Sandpits and to monitor efforts to attract applicants from diverse backgrounds.

Please note that the information you provide in your application form will not be shared with other participants.

For details of how SPRITE+ handles Members' data more generally, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

### Further information

If you have any further questions regarding this call, please contact [spriteplus@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:spriteplus@manchester.ac.uk).

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a sandpit?

We use a process for our sandpits adapted from [the EPSRC's model](#). We hold four highly interactive sessions, including three online sessions and a two-day, in-person workshop.

‘Sandpits have a highly multidisciplinary mix of participants – some active researchers and other potential users of research outcomes – to drive lateral thinking and radical approaches to address research challenges.’

‘Sandpits are intensive discussion forums where free thinking is encouraged to delve into the problems on the agenda to uncover innovative solutions.’

Ultimately, these discussions will lead to the development of research proposals, which will be pitched to the funding panel at the end of our sandpit process.

For further details see [here](#).

### Can I apply if I'm an ECR?

Yes, we encourage applications from Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Applicants will be selected based on their approach to the sandpit rather than their background or publication track record. Participants from academia are welcomed at any stage of their research career if they meet [UKRI eligibility requirements](#) to receive grant funding.

### Can I apply if I'm based outside the UK?

Yes, but, funds can only be awarded directly to 'lead investigators' based at [eligible organisations](#) (academics from UK research organisations). This means that although costs associated with non-UK based colleagues can be included in successful proposals (for academics this will be as 'Visiting Researchers' as outlined in the [EPSRC funding guidance](#)) only UK based academic researchers can lead projects.

### Can I apply if I'm not a university academic?

Yes. We hope that about one third of places will be allocated to non-academic research users. See 'Who should attend?' above for details. Whilst we expect non-academics to be part of successful proposals, funds can only be awarded directly to 'lead investigators' based at [eligible research organisations](#). The costs associated with non-academic partner services can be included in the budgets for successful proposals and should be administered via the formal procurement process audited by the lead investigator's institution.

### Should I bring an idea for a project to the sandpit?

No, the ethos of the sandpit is that participants will work together to create proposals and bid for funds. You should come to the sandpit prepared to share ideas and work as a team to create projects from scratch. We will not fund pre-existing project proposals.

### How will decisions be made?

Applications to attend the sandpit will be reviewed by an expert panel. Participants will be selected based on the information provided in the application form. The selection criteria are set out in the

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call document. In addition, we'll be aiming for a balance of participants from across diverse sectors, disciplines, organisations, career stages, backgrounds, and geographical locations.

Note that we do not assess your academic publication or research track record as part of the process. We are more interested in your ability to engage creatively and constructively in a multidisciplinary environment to generate novel ideas, and the way in which you approach the research challenge.

#### How will funding be allocated via the sandpit?

During the sandpit, research teams will form to develop highly innovative projects to address the sandpit theme. We expect that the research teams will include both academics and non-academic stakeholders representing a diverse range of disciplines and experiences. Each research team should identify an [eligible](#) Principal Investigator (PI) as the project lead.

At the end of the sandpit, research teams will present their proposals to a funding panel who will assess the proposals for novelty, relevance to the challenge theme, potential impact, capability of the team, and involvement of end users. We anticipate that no more than five projects will be funded.

Please note that funding can only be allocated directly to academic researchers as described in the [UKRI Eligibility Guide](#). The costs incurred to non-academics and team members based outside the UK can be covered and will need to be included in the overall budget and administered by the lead organisation.

Funds will be awarded to successful proposals at 80% FEC in line with standard UKRI practice. In practical terms, this means that SPRITE+ will fund 80% of the total costs outlined within successful proposals.

#### How will payment be received?

In line with standard UKRI funding practices, the PI's institution will receive payment directly from the University of Manchester following the submission of itemised bills based on 100% FEC and then invoices at 80% FEC.

Funds, contracts and award documentation will be issued to the PI's institution only as per standard UKRI funding practices. Funds will be awarded under standard non-negotiable [UKRI grant terms and conditions](#). It is the responsibility of the lead institution to organise sub-contracts with collaborating institutions and non-academic organisations if appropriate. The PI must ensure that all funds are spent in line with UKRI guidelines and for any subcontractors involved in the project, including payments.

#### Who owns any IP generated?

If activities generate new research, this will be subject to standard [EPSRC guidelines](#). These state that the IP generated through the grant rests with the research organisation that holds the grant. However, awardees will be expected to share the IP generated with the wider SPRITE+ community, for wider public benefit and for the purposes of achieving our objectives. There will be no payments for this use of IP. If working with a non-academic stakeholder, it is the responsibility of the lead institution to issue an appropriate collaboration agreement, including details regarding IP.

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### How will my data be treated?

SPRITE+ is fully compliant with GDPR. We will treat proposals as confidential and share only with the Management Team and peer reviewers. Unsuccessful applications will be destroyed after the evaluation process. Copies of successful applications will be destroyed within 3 months of the Sandpit. Anonymised statistics will be recorded to inform the organisation of future Sandpits and to monitor efforts to attract applicants from diverse backgrounds.

For details of how SPRITE+ handles Members' data more generally, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

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