

Collective Flourishing

Opportunity space

v1

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CONTEXT

This document describes an early opportunity space from which we believe one or more funding programmes can emerge. We've sketched out some of our early thinking to spark your interest, and invite you to imagine relevant potential programmes with us, or suggest new directions. We'll publish updated versions of this document as our thinking evolves.

Sign up [here](#) to receive those updates and learn about any funding opportunities that emerge from this opportunity space.

An ARIA opportunity space should be:

- + important if true (i.e. could lead to a significant new capability for society),
- + under-explored relative to its potential impact, and
- + ripe for new talent, perspectives, or resources to change what's possible.

SUMMARY

The world is better resourced than ever for us to improve our lived experience. We have more people, more interconnectedness, and more powerful, diverse technologies at our disposal than any time in history. But collective flourishing still feels out of reach – because our tools to navigate the future have not kept pace with its growing complexity. Systemic fog and friction make it impossible to see and actuate a clear path forward, so we risk defaulting into suboptimal futures we did not choose. There is an opportunity and imperative to build the deliberative scaffolding for this challenge – a set of tools and protocols that will allow us to navigate our complex world and build a better future together.

BELIEFS

The core beliefs that underpin/bound this area of opportunity.

1. Navigating towards a better future requires clarity on direction and path → **we need the capability to make systemic complexity legible so we can envision and deliberate over radically different futures.**
2. Simply defining our intent for the future is not enough → **we need a means of negotiating our fragmented values into shared, actionable plans for collective progress.**
3. Our current cognitive, emotional, and social characteristics are not immutable constants → **human capacity can and will change over time, and we need tools to figure out together how we navigate this change.**
4. Capabilities that augment our vision, action, and capacity are powerful and can have unintended consequences → **we must balance the pressing need for these tools with the immense responsibility they entail.**

OBSERVATIONS

Some signposts as to why we see this area as important, under-explored, and ripe.

The Problem

Since 2024 we have witnessed:^[1]

- + the expansion and escalation of conflicts
- + extreme weather events amplified by climate change
- + widespread societal and political polarisation
- + continued technological advancements accelerating the spread of false or misleading information

THE WORLD IS BECOMING MORE VOLATILE,
INCREASING THE RISK OF POLYCRISES.

We are building technology which is incredibly powerful and has the potential to quickly propagate large effects through the world – effects we don't understand.

Our decision systems are built for a simpler world, but we face increasingly interconnected, wicked problems.^[6,7,8,15]

We struggle to understand the systemic logic and emergent properties of complex systems.^[8,15]

Threats aren't simple or linear; they *emerge* from the system, and they change the system.^[8]

We feel powerless, so we build machines to manage the complexity. But these machines only make the world feel more complex and abstract.^[15]

Rare events dominate long-term outcomes, while we plan for averages.^[1,6,15]

Complexity and uncertainty are uncomfortable, so we favour simple stories and confident answers, even when they are wrong.^[6,15,18]

We disagree on how to reach a desired goal, where every path is costly, risky, or triggers new, unintended consequences.^[3,4]

Cynicism, learned helplessness, and high stakes can paralyse us.^[4,18]

Humans, and our institutions, are wired to seek short-term survival over more abstract future rewards.^[6,11,18]

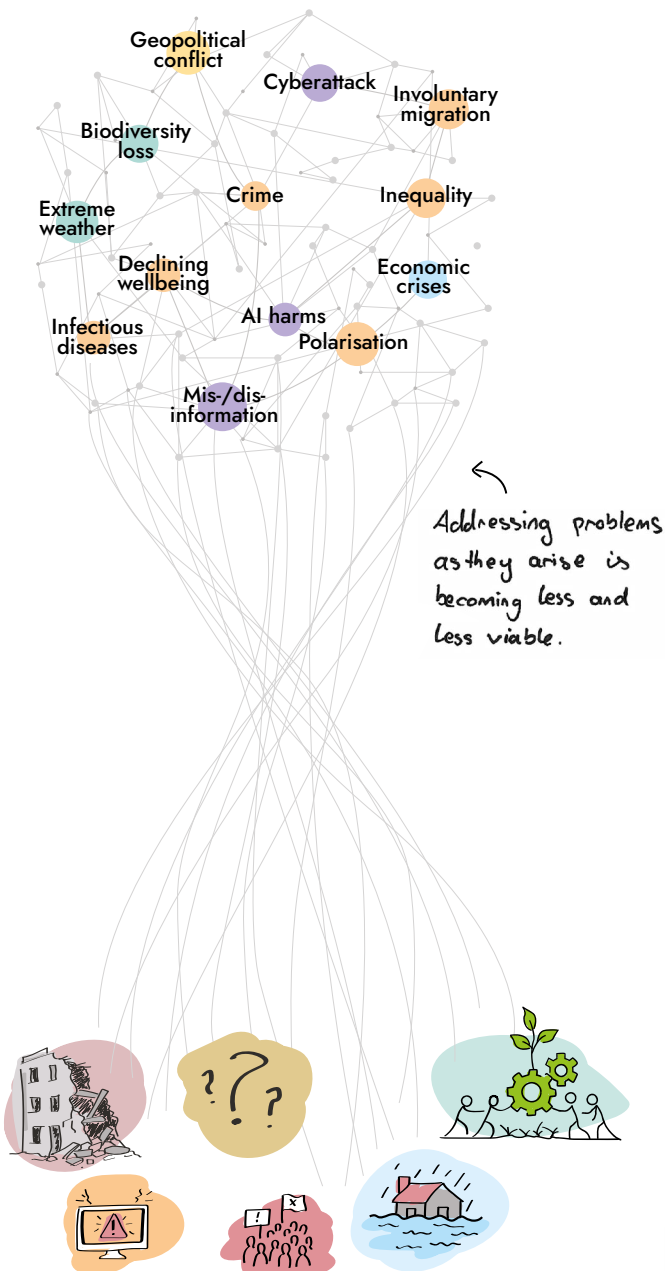
We often possess the right answers, but lack the collective will or systemic foresight to act on them.^[3,4,6]

The known, even if it's bad, often feels safer than the unknown, which might be better.^[20]

We can be crippled by institutional inertia, vested interests, or the inability to sustain public attention.^[1,6,15]

We struggle with large-scale coordination.^[3]

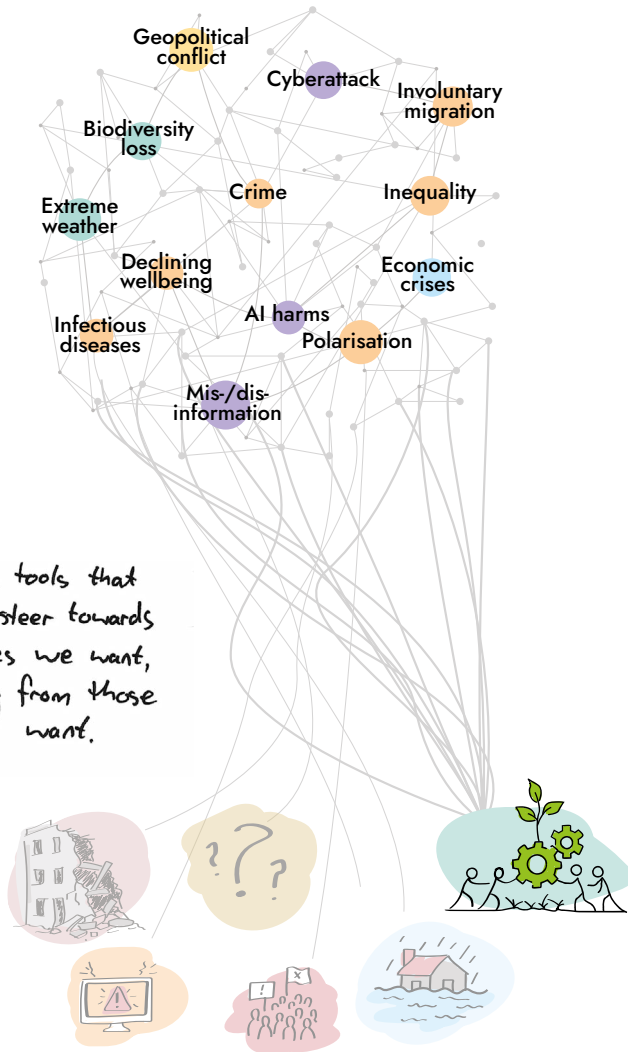
WE HAVE A FUNDAMENTAL DRIVE
TO SEEK BETTER FUTURES,
BUT WE STRUGGLE TO GET THERE.
BETTER CAPABILITIES CAN HELP.



Consciously and Continuously Creating the Future

The future challenge is to shift from reactively correcting the past to **consciously creating the future**—to build systems that integrate a deep understanding of people, profound technical advances in modelling and foresight, and expressive interfaces to help societies **see**, **reason**, and **choose** together.

THE TOOLS WE BUILD WILL NOT REPLACE HUMAN JUDGEMENT;
THEY WILL RESTORE OUR COLLECTIVE AGENCY.



We need tools that help us steer towards the futures we want, and away from those we don't want.

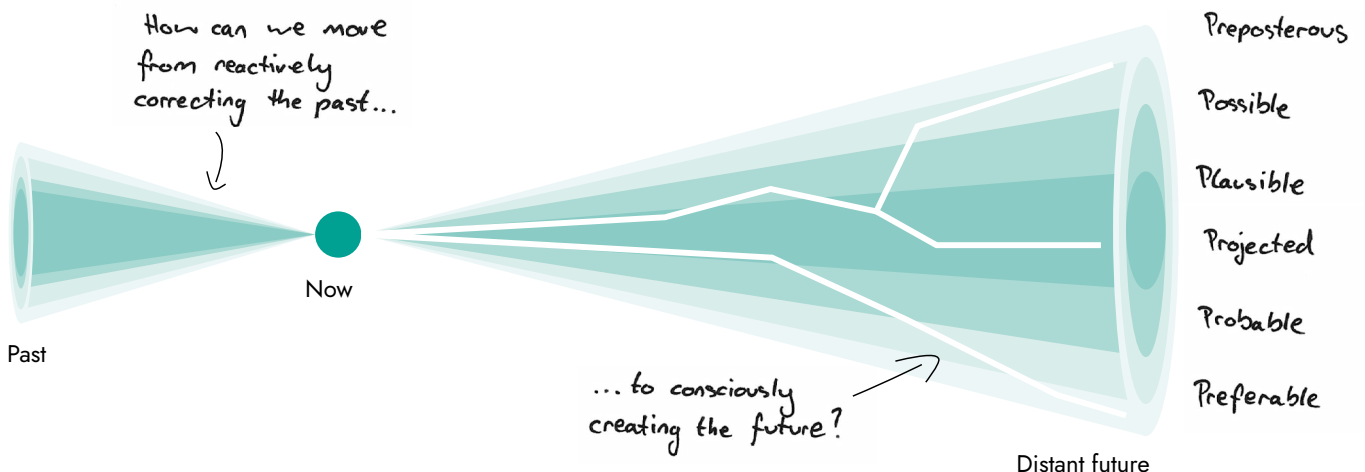
While the foundational technologies and methods below are ripe, the integration layer is under-explored.

- New capabilities in evaluating the trustworthiness of information.^[21,11]
- Improvements in eliciting the beliefs underlying our understanding of the world and questioning them.^[23,24]
- Interactive systems for evidence synthesis and probing.^[26]
- Better ability to model complex, interdependent systems.^[7,8,27]
- Ability to monitor systems in real time and run simulations.^[9,27]
- Technologies that give us new ways to immersively experience potential futures.^[28,29]
- Distributed deliberation and collaboration.^[3,10,30]
- Advancing approaches for how to act under deep uncertainty.^[31,32]
- Improvements in capturing and transmitting "tacit" knowledge.^[33,34]
- New coordination mechanisms and incentive structures.^[10,35]

How can we illuminate how our present is constructed, who constructed it, and how ordinary people, together, can build something new?

How can we coordinate actors in a system to act on the best information available in the moment, quickly and with an awareness of possible outcomes?

How do we balance harmony and coordination with constructive disagreement and diverse values?



SOURCES

A compiled, but not exhaustive list of works helping to shape our view and frame the opportunity space (for those who want to dig deeper).

1. [Global Risks Report 2025](#)
2. [Designing Futures](#)
3. [Big Mind](#)
4. [Why Nothing Works](#)
5. [An ARIA for Social Issues?](#)
6. [Doughnut Economics](#)
7. [Making Sense of Chaos](#)
8. [Complexity](#)
9. [Gaia 2.0](#)
10. [The Collective Intelligence Project](#)
11. [Weapons of Math Destruction](#)
12. [Models of the Attention Economy](#)
13. [Why We Need a Carnegie Moment for the Age of AI](#)
14. [Preparing for the Intelligence Explosion](#)
15. [All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace](#)
16. [Collective Wondering: Enabling Productive Uncertainty in Agroecological Codesign](#)
17. [Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning](#)
18. [The Elephant in the Brain](#)
19. [Mechanism Design Theory](#)
20. [Knowledge, fear of the unknown, opinion, and the pandemic](#)

EXTENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

For a deeper dive...

21. [Birdwatch: Crowd Wisdom and Bridging Algorithms can Inform Understanding and Reduce the Spread of Misinformation](#)
22. [The Black Spatula Project](#)
23. [Mechanisms for belief elicitation without ground truth](#)
24. [Fuzzy Cognitive Maps For Futures Studies - A methodological assessment of concepts and methods](#)
25. [Scoring Rules and Calibration for Imprecise Probabilities](#)
26. [Future of Evidence Synthesis: Automated, Living, and Interactive Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses](#)
27. [Digital twins in safety analysis, risk assessment and emergency management](#)
28. [Integrating Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Mixed Reality, Extended Reality, and Simulation-Based Systems into Fire and Rescue Service Training: Current Practices and Future Directions](#)
29. [Experiential futures through immersive design fiction](#)
30. [Polis](#)
31. [A new decision sciences for complex systems](#)
32. [Decision making under deep uncertainty for pandemic policy planning](#)
33. [PRISM: Capturing the Invisible Art of Scientific Practice](#)
34. [Intergenerational Tacit Knowledge Transfer: Leveraging AI](#)
35. [Designing organizations for bottom-up task allocation: The role of incentives](#)

ENGAGE

Our next step is to formulate a programme that directs funding across research disciplines and institutions toward a focused objective. In order to ensure we select the right first challenge, we want to hear from you. Complete **this form** to provide feedback on the opportunity space, surface breakthrough ideas, and inform the development of our programme thesis – we will read anything you send.