

[REDACTED] - Original Request

3 December 2025

"What Scottish airports and authorities are these cooling flights running from. Why was this experiment halted in America."

18 December 2025

Dear [REDACTED],

Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR") Request

We are writing in response to your recent request for information to the Advanced Research + Invention Agency ("ARIA") dated 3 December 2025 in which you asked:

“What Scottish airports and authorities are these cooling flights running from. Why was this experiment halted in America.”

Response to EIR request

ARIA is not funding the deployment of climate cooling approaches, nor are we funding research to facilitate the deployment of such technologies. For clarity, ARIA has no plans to fund any experiments that would cause a noticeable effect on the weather or any lasting environmental impact. In addition, no toxic material will be released into the atmosphere in the course of any ARIA-funded experiment.

ARIA is funding five projects that will undertake carefully controlled outdoor experiments to responsibly gather crucial real-world data about the feasibility and risks of climate cooling approaches. Any outdoor experiment will only go ahead once an independent environmental impact assessment has been made, and if the results of this suggest that the experiments will be safe (the impact assessment will also be made publicly available before experiments start). These experiments will only go ahead after a period of meaningful public engagement with local communities, and will all be subject to oversight by the programme's independent oversight committee.

The outdoor experiments being funded by ARIA's Exploring Climate Cooling programme are as follows:

- One project will explore the efficacy of rethickening arctic sea ice.
- Two projects will explore the effects of seawater spray on cloud reflectivity.
- One project will explore the effects of electric charge on cloud reflectivity.
- One project studies how milligram quantities of mineral dusts age in the stratosphere. In this controlled experiment, none of these materials will be released; all are returned to the ground for analysis by scientists.

Whilst we do expect that several of these experiments may take place in the UK, no locations for these have yet been selected. When sites are provisionally selected, public engagement with the communities local to the experiment sites will be undertaken. No flights or other outdoor activity related to the programme has yet occurred in Scotland. ARIA is not involved in any experiments that may have been halted in America.

For more information about the Exploring Climate Cooling programme, including details of the funded projects, teams, amount of funding and locations, please see our website: [Exploring Climate Cooling](#). For your convenience, we have enclosed a copy of this information at **Annex 1**.

Yours sincerely,

ARIA

You can ask us to review our response. If you want us to carry out a review, please let us know within 40 working days by emailing eir@aria.org.uk.

If you are still dissatisfied after our internal review, you may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for further investigation who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Annex 1: Exploring Climate Cooling

Overview

Oversight + Governance

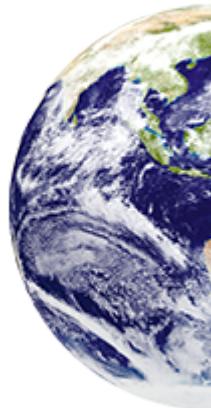
Funded projects

FAQs

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Opportunity space: Future Proofing Our Climate and Weather

Programme: Exploring Climate Cooling



Exploring Climate Cooling

This £56.8m programme aims to build a robust evidence base to explore – with independent oversight – if climate cooling approaches could ever be feasible, scalable, safe, and governable.



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Our goal

To build an evidence base to support the effective governance of emerging climate cooling approaches. We are funding transparent, public-good research — from ethics to real-world experiments — so the world can make better-informed decisions about this field.

Why this programme

Cutting emissions is the only sustainable solution to the climate crisis. However, ever-rising global temperatures are driving a surge of interest in approaches designed to cool the climate on timescales faster than decarbonisation.

This new field is evolving fast, attracting venture capital and giving rise to new private companies. Yet our understanding of the impacts, risks, governability, and even the basic feasibility of these approaches is poor.

We lack the deep technical and societal understanding required to govern this field responsibly: to reduce risk in a way that is ethical, legitimate, and inclusive.

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How we're doing it

Our international research portfolio is comprehensive, funding everything from computer modelling, to ethical frameworks, and observations of natural analogues of climate cooling approaches (like volcanoes). Where essential questions cannot be answered by models, we also fund a limited number of small-scale, carefully controlled outdoor experiments, with stringent requirements for safety, respectful engagement, and transparency.

The world has a critical window of opportunity to build this evidence base, ensuring that robust safeguards can be developed while this field is still at a nascent stage. We are committed to sharing our results openly for the common good, and to working in partnership with others with the same goals.

[Read the programme thesis](#)

[Read the accessible version of the programme thesis](#)

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We're funding 22 research teams uniting specialists across diverse disciplines – from atmospheric physics, chemistry, and climate modelling to chemical engineering, systems analysis, and oceanography, alongside crucial expertise in governance and ethics – reflecting the programme's holistic approach.

[Discover more](#)

Meet the programme team

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Mark Symes

Programme Director

Mark is an electrochemist with a 15-year career developing sustainable fuels in the drive towards net zero. He joined ARIA from the University of Glasgow, where he is Professor of Electrochemistry and Electrochemical Technology.

George Horner

Technical Specialist

George has a background in atmospheric physics, holding a PhD from Imperial College London, where he was researching how clouds evolve over time and how they may be impacted by aerosol particles.

Mike Farrar

Programme Specialist

Mike is a condensed matter physicist by training and joined ARIA from his postdoc in Oxford, where he conducted research on novel photovoltaics. Prior to this, he was responsible for the set-up of several high volume, thin-film deposition operations across the globe for the world's largest electronics original equipment manufacturers. Mike supports ARIA via PACE.