



## **Request for Proposal (RFP) for research into language-based equity in African health science research**

### **1. RFP Background & Objectives**

This research will form part of Wellcome's Priority Area 'Research Ecosystems in Africa and Asia', which aims to drive self-sustaining research ecosystems that generate knowledge and improve health, including through promoting independent research leadership in Africa. It will address a critical barrier: the impact of English being one of the dominant global languages of science on researchers in Africa whose first language is not English. This is specifically focused on health science research, though it may be applicable to other domains.

In Africa there are an estimated 1,250 to 2,100 native spoken languages.<sup>i</sup> Of the 1.33 billion people in Africa,<sup>ii</sup> only 6.5 million are native English speakers. Across 24 countries in Africa where English is an official language, around 700 million people speak English as a non-native language.<sup>iii</sup>

English has been referred to as the dominant global language of scientific communication and publication,<sup>iv</sup> raising immediate efficacy and equity concerns. Efficacy concerns centre around the communication and uptake of research, either by policymakers or the wider scientific community, affecting global health outcomes and the advancement of scientific discovery. Equity concerns relate to the way scientists whose dominant language is not English face critical barriers to inclusion. The issue of English as one of the dominant languages of science is also part of a wider context of inequality, both in terms of the historical legacy of colonialism and inequalities in contemporary health science research systems and structures, including gender, class and race. The widespread use of English may also have implications for cultural approach to science. Although the specific focus of this research is language barriers, it should be considered in these broader contexts.

### **2. RFP Specification**

This section sets out the specification of services for this RFP exercise. Suppliers should use this section to fully understand Wellcome's requirements and to inform their response.

This project is intended to provide evidence on practical ways to address language barriers facing African health science research in the short- and longer-term. This includes barriers to cross-language knowledge and understanding, scientific collaboration, and research uptake. The research outcomes will include recommendations on how language barriers should be considered alongside broader issues of inequality in health science research in Africa in which it is embedded. The research is intended to feed into the approach taken by Wellcome to support equity in funding approaches; to provide guidance on further research needed to better understand the impact of language barriers; and to contribute to the wider body of knowledge on language-based equity and its interdependencies in African health science research.



## **Research areas**

The research should address two areas of background to determine the validity of the research, and provide three principle research outcomes:

Context and background:

1. Whether use of English is a barrier to the advancement of health science researchers individually, either nationally or internationally, and to the advancement of health science more widely.
2. Whether use of English is contributing to wider structural inequalities within health science research.

Principle research outcomes:

3. A review of previous and existing interventions to tackle language barriers in health science research, including the costs and benefits of interventions and evidence base for each.
4. Whether and how any of the interventions could contribute to improving equity and/or break down systems and structures of inequality in the longer-term.
5. Remaining evidence gaps that should be addressed by future research.

## **Scope of the research**

- This research is limited to the African context.
- This research is specifically in the context of health science research.
- Evidence and data used in this research should be representative of the 54 countries of Africa, in regard to language, geography, and health science research capacity.
- Stakeholder engagement should include non-native English speakers.
- Answers to the background question on barriers to individual and scientific advancement (1) may include, for example, societal (including gender-based), institutional, individual, attitudinal or financial barriers.
- The interventions reviewed (3) may include specific interventions, such as language training, translation services, exchanges or placements, or specific technology; integrated approaches; or interventions with different targets, such as researchers, institutions or policy.
- The cost-benefits analysis (3) should include consideration of sustainability, context-specificity, and replicability.

## **Budget**

This project is envisaged as a combination of desk and participatory stakeholder research. All research is expected to be conducted virtually or remotely, in light of current travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are no anticipated travel or material costs. The budget can include:

- Fees
- Publication costs (design, layout, translation into appropriate languages)
- Other costs deemed reasonable



## Deliverables

Three deliverables are expected from this research:

1. A detailed methodology setting out the approach to stakeholder engagement and the data collection and analysis. The methodology should indicate how you would collaborate with and seek guidance from the LMIC research community.
2. A published report in all appropriate languages (maximum 20 pages, plus relevant annexes including the methodology) detailing the research findings and recommendations.
3. A two-page policy brief summarising the research and providing clear proposals to systemically address language barriers in health science research in Africa.

## Reporting

The supplier will provide monthly updates on the progress of the research, ahead of the draft report, final report and policy brief.

## 3. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issue to Suppliers	WT	08 Oct 2020
2	Submission of expression of interest to RFP, and submission of Supplier Q&A to Wellcome Contact	Supplier	17:30 BST 20 Oct 2020
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers	WT	23 Oct 2020
4	Submission of RFP Response	Supplier	17:30 GMT 29 Oct 2020
5	RFP Evaluation Period	WT	30 Oct 2020 – 05 Nov 2020
6	Supplier presentations	WT & Supplier	06 Nov 2020 – 10 Nov 2020
7	Notification of contract award	WT	13 Nov 2020
8	Contract negotiation	WT & Supplier	13 Nov 2020 – 27 Nov 2020
9	Contract duration	WT & Supplier	01 Dec 2020 – 30 April 2021
10	Detailed methodology shared with WT	Supplier	14 Dec 2020
11	Draft report to WT	Supplier	30 March 2021
12	Final report to WT	Supplier	30 April 2021



#### 4. Response Format

The following headers support the timetable by providing further detail of the key steps.

##### Expression of Interest

Suppliers are asked to submit a short expression of interest by e-mail to the Wellcome Contact in accordance with the RFP timetable.

##### Supplier Q&A

Prior to the submission of your RFP response, Suppliers are provided the opportunity to submit any questions they have about the exercise. All questions are to be submitted to the Wellcome Contact by e-mail in accordance with the RFP timetable.

Suppliers Name:	

Please email: [internationaloperations@wellcome.org](mailto:internationaloperations@wellcome.org) by **17:30 BST on 20 October 2020**.

##### RFP Proposal

Supplier proposals should include responses to each of the specific points detailed below:

1. Please provide a summary how you propose to approach the objectives, including an outline of your methodology, its parameters and scope.
2. Please outline any risks or issues anticipated.
3. Please provide organisational chart detailing proposed team, titles and roles for this project. Please include profile data of their relevant experience.
4. Please provide 3 cases studies of directly relevant experience you have in delivering reviews of this nature. Note: where you have had previous engagement with Wellcome please include details of this in addition.
5. Please set out your experience in engaging with LMIC and/or African research communities.
6. Please describe how you would ensure that the quality of the service delivered would meet the expectations of Wellcome.
7. Please set out how you propose to consider ethics as part of this research.
8. Please set out how you would ensure this research is conducted sustainably and responsibly.
9. Please provide a proposed timetable of activities.
10. Please provide your detailed costing for the review, with a brief supporting narrative per budget line.
11. Please provide a summary of any GDPR risks and how you will mitigate against them.
12. Provide details of any existing restrictions that may impact your ability to meet Wellcome's requirements. These should include (but not be limited to):
  - a. Conflicts of interest with other clients
  - b. Conflicts of interest with internal Wellcome staff



Please email your completed response as a single pdf (including any appendices)\* to: [Internationaloperations@wellcome.org](mailto:Internationaloperations@wellcome.org) by **17:30 GMT on 29 October 2020**.

\*Responses to the Third Party Risk Assessment Form (TPSRA2) should be submitted separately, as per online instructions (see link below under 'Information Governance').

### **Contractual Agreement**

This sets out the T&C's from which a successful supplier from this RFP would contract upon:

- Suppliers submitting proposals as a registered company should review this [document](#).
- Individuals submitting proposals as a sole trader (not registered) should review this [document](#).

Individuals submitting proposals through their own personal services company please highlight this to the Wellcome contact immediately (see point 7 below).

**This document is for information only.**

### Contract Feedback

Suppliers are asked to review the documents linked in the above section 'Contractual Agreement' and feedback on clauses they wish to negotiate within their embedded response below. **Note:** This is your opportunity to provide feedback on the contract as part of your RFP response.

**This table below is for completion by the supplier.**

This section allows Suppliers to provide specific feedback to the contractual agreement which will be used should their proposal be successful. Contract feedback is to be incorporated into your proposal as an annex and in the following format;

<b>Clause #</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Solution/Comment</b>

Individuals submitting proposals through their own personal services company please highlight this to the Wellcome contact immediately (see point 7 below).

### Information Governance

Suppliers are asked to complete the [TPSRA2](#) assessment before the RFP submission deadline for Wellcome to assess how you handle data.

## **5. About Wellcome**

Wellcome exists to improve health by helping great ideas to thrive. We support researchers, we take on big health challenges, we campaign for better science, and we help everyone get



involved with science and health research. We are a politically and financially independent foundation. Find out more about Wellcome and our work: [www.wellcome.org](http://www.wellcome.org).

## **6. Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality**

Prospective Suppliers should be aware that inappropriate publicity could have a serious effect upon Wellcome's business. The information contained within this document or subsequently made available to prospective suppliers is deemed confidential and must not be disclosed without the prior written consent of Wellcome unless required by law.

## **7. Prospective Suppliers Personnel - IR35 and Off Payroll Working Rules**

Before the RFP response deadline, Prospective Suppliers must make the Wellcome Contact aware if they are intending to submit a proposal where the services will be provided by any individuals who are engaged by the Prospective Supplier via an intermediary i.e.

- Where the Prospective Supplier is an individual contracting through their own personal services company; or
- The Prospective Supplier is providing individuals engaged through intermediaries, for the purposes of the IR35 off-payroll working rules.

## **8. Independent Proposal**

By submission of a proposal, prospective Suppliers warrant that the prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, agreement or understanding for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices, with any other potential supplier or with any competitor.

## **9. Funding**

For the avoidance of doubt, the output of this RFP exercise will be funded as a **Contract** and not as a Grant.

## **10. Costs Incurred by Prospective Suppliers**

It should be noted that this document relates to a Request for Proposal only and not a firm commitment from Wellcome to enter into a contractual agreement. In addition, Wellcome will not be held responsible for any costs associated with the production of a response to this Request for Proposal.

## **11. Sustainability**

Wellcome is committed to procuring sustainable, ethical and responsibly sourced materials, goods and services. This means Wellcome seeks to purchase goods and services that minimise negative and enhance positive impacts on the environment and society locally, regionally and globally. To ensure Wellcome's business is conducted ethically and



sustainably, we expect our suppliers, and their supply chains, to adhere to these principles in a responsible manner.

## 12. Accessibility

Wellcome is committed to ensuring that our RFP exercises are accessible to everyone. If you have a disability or a chronic health condition, we can offer adjustments to the response format e.g. submitting your response in an alternate format. For support during the RFP exercise, contact the Wellcome Contact.

If, within the proposed outputs of this RFP exercise, specific adjustments are required by you or your team which incur additional cost then outline them clearly within your commercial response. Wellcome is committed to evaluating all proposals fairly and will ensure any proposed adjustment costs sit outside the commercial evaluation.

## 13. Diversity & Inclusion

Embracing [diversity and inclusion](#) is fundamental to delivering our mission to improve health, and we are committed to cultivating a fair and healthy environment for the people who work here and those we work with. As we learn more about barriers that disadvantage certain groups from progressing in our workplace, we will remove them.

Wellcome takes diversity and inclusion seriously, and we want to partner with suppliers who share our commitment. We may ask you questions related to D&I as part of our RFP processes.

## 14. Wellcome Contact Details

The shared mailbox for this RFP exercise for all communications is as indicated below:

Mailbox: International Operations  
Email: [internationaloperations@wellcome.org](mailto:internationaloperations@wellcome.org)

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<sup>i</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages\\_of\\_Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Africa). Accessed 10 March 2020.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/africa-population/>. Accessed 10 March 2020.

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/english-speaking-countries-in-africa.html>

<sup>iv</sup> For example, on publication: David G. Drubin, Douglas R. Kellogg 'English as the universal language of science: opportunities and challenges'. *Mol Biol Cell*. 2012 Apr 15; 23(8): 1399. doi: 10.1091/mbc.E12-02-0108. PMID: PMC3341706; Altbach, Philip G. (2013) *The Imperial Tongue: English as the Dominating Academic Language* in *The International Imperative in Higher Education. Global Perspectives on Higher Education, Volume: 27*. Brill, Sense. 'On communication: Montgomery S. 2004 Of towers, walls, and fields: perspectives on language in science'. *Science* 303, 1333–1335. doi:10.1126/science.1095204, cited in Amano Tatsuya and Sutherland William J. 'Four barriers to the global understanding of biodiversity conservation: wealth, language, geographical location and security'. 280. *Proc. R. Soc. B*. Noting, however, the percentage increase in Chinese-language publications as evidenced by Xie, Qingnan & Freeman, Richard. (2019). *Bigger Than You Thought: China's Contribution to Scientific Publications and Its Impact on the Global Economy*. *China & World Economy*. 27. 1-27. 10.1111/cwe.12265.