



## Request for Proposal (RFP) for landscaping environmentally sustainable health research

### 1. RFP Background & Objectives

The impact of climate change on health is a core focus of [Wellcome's new strategy](#). As such it is crucial we stride towards an environmentally sustainable world in all aspects of our work.

Science does not exist in a bubble, the health research we fund can have significant negative impacts on our climate and environment. The high energy demands of much health research are partially responsible. A sizeable proportion of our research portfolio directly funds lab work, with laboratories [consuming 5-10 times more energy per metre squared](#) than typical academic spaces. Data science is transforming how science solves urgent health challenges, and the number of initiatives we support in this space continues to grow. However, the pace of data-driven innovation raises concerns that digital technology could outpace the world's renewable energy sources. For example, training one of the largest AI language models (i.e. GPT-3) [generated over 78,000 pounds of CO2 emissions in total](#) - more than the average American adult will produce in two years. Beyond energy consumption, health research uses up natural resources and can produce large quantities of waste. It has been estimated that the [life sciences alone account for 2% of the plastic](#) produced worldwide. It is therefore our responsibility to address the environmental impact of our funding activities.

As a global funder, Wellcome has the ability to move health research in an environmentally sustainable direction, but we currently lack the expertise to incorporate sustainability into our work. This programme of work will help us along our journey to shift the health research landscape towards a more sustainable path by answering two key questions:

1. What tools and methods are critical to improving the environmental sustainability of health research and how could they be used?
2. How might we go about integrating environmental sustainability into our decision making?

There are four objectives to this activity:

1. **Landscape** the existing tools and methods being utilised to measure and improve the environmental sustainability of health research.
2. **Understand** how Wellcome might use tools and methods like the ones identified and what the implications of their use might be for our funding decisions.
3. **Make recommendations** on whether there's a role for Wellcome to fund work that will be beneficial to the field in a manner that aligns with our strategic goals.
4. **Drive engagement** in this space by identifying like-minded actors and producing a high-quality public facing report of the results of this work.



At its core this activity is concerned with the ethical implications of research, by trying to address the negative impact health research can and does have on the environment. A decision to include in the scope of this work not just carbon emissions caused by energy intensive research activities, but wider environmental impacts of health research (like harmful waste disposal practices), was taken to try and account for the needs of those most affected. We know that the detrimental health consequences that result from unsustainable waste disposal for example, especially affect individuals in low- and middle-income countries, where waste from the Global North is typically exported to. In addition, a key question the proposed work is trying to answer is, how might we embed environmental sustainability into our funding decision making and expectations of grantholders, in a way that is not regressive towards other strategic considerations such as researcher equity, which requires reflection on issues inclusive of the diversity of the researchers we fund.

To be explicit, the scope of this exercise will therefore be global, it will not be limited to CO2 emissions but environmental impact more broadly and it must be anchored in Wellcome's Research Environment goals.

## 2. RFP Specification

We seek to identify a Supplier who will have the following responsibilities:

- **[Objective 1 and 4]** Landscaping exercise: identify existing tools and methods being used by researchers and institutions to measure and reduce the negative impacts of health research on the environment. Questions the Supplier should address include:
  - What are the tools and methods currently being used across health research to make it more environmentally sustainable?
  - What gaps currently exist?
  - Where are the opportunities to catalyse innovation in sustainable health research?
- **[Objective 2 and 4]** Qualitative research: speak with key stakeholders in health research (i.e. researchers, universities, funders, private sector actors) to develop a more detailed understanding of work being carried out to advance environmentally sustainable health research. Questions the Supplier should address include:
  - How are tools or methods developed/implemented?
  - What impact has a tool/method had?
  - What challenges have been faced (i.e. barriers to uptake) and how have they been overcome?
  - As a global funder, are there specific considerations around environmental sustainability we need to be aware of?
  - How are trade-offs between environmental sustainability, equity, social justice and innovation navigated when they arise?
- **[Objective 3]** Wellcome research: gain an understanding of Wellcome's strategy and funding processes to make recommendations for how we may advance environmentally sustainable health research as a funder. Questions the Supplier should address include:
  - How can Wellcome catalyse innovation in sustainable health research?



- What are the risks and opportunities associated with including environmental considerations in our funding decision making?
- How might we assess environmental impact of a proposal in a way that isn't regressive towards our other strategic goals, such as equity?
- How can we encourage our grantholders to pioneer new more environmentally sustainable research methods?
- How might considerations around environmental sustainability change our open-source grant conditions?

**Scope:** There are two broad categories of tools and methods we're interested in:

- 1) Those that can be used to asses/evaluate the environmental impact of health research
- 2) Those that can be implemented to reduce the environmental impact of health research.

Both categories will include tools and methods more readily usable by different actors within health research, from the post-doc on the lab bench to a grants manager at a research funder. Highlighting where these points of intervention exist for each tool and method described is of value to the objectives of this work. In addition, information on the practicality, acceptability, and any cost/benefit analysis of the tools and methods identified is of interest, though it is not in the scope of this RFP for the Supplier to conduct such analysis themselves.

Suppliers are encouraged to include Deliverables in their proposal that advance the project objectives listed above. Once a supplier is selected, there will be a process collaboration with Wellcome to finalise the specifics of each Deliverable. The following Deliverables should be included in the proposal at minimum:

1. A high-quality public facing report including details of the results of the landscaping and research in line with objectives 1 and 2. The report should include case studies and the Supplier should support in the dissemination of the report with the stakeholders they have engaged throughout this programme of work.
2. A series of key learnings and recommendations to help discern the role Wellcome could have in advancing environmentally sustainable health research, to be used internally in line with objective 3.
3. A database of key contacts at organisations working in this space and areas of work identified throughout the landscaping and research exercise for use internally by Wellcome.
4. A presentation of findings to teams at Wellcome.

The proposal should outline how the Supplier will ensure that it complies with GDPR and PECR in relation to the Deliverables.

We anticipate the work will take around 6 months to complete but are flexible as long as the timeline is justifiable based on the work being proposed. This is an outcome specification and Suppliers should request the budget needed to deliver the required outputs.



We are open to receiving collaborative bids, in which organisations would partner with each other to deliver this work.

### 3. RFP Timetable

| #  | Activity   | Responsibility | Date                        |
|----|--|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1  | RFP issue to Suppliers   | WT             | Tues 3 May                  |
| 2  | Submission of Expression of Interest to RFP and Supplier Q&A to Wellcome Contact | Supplier       | 17:00 BST<br>Thurs 12 May   |
| 3  | Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers  | WT             | Tues 17 May                 |
| 4  | Submission of RFP Response   | Supplier       | 17:00 BST<br>Mon 6 Jun      |
| 5  | RFP Evaluation Period  | WT             | Mon 6 -<br>Fri 10 Jun       |
| 6  | Notify Suppliers whether they have been invited to present                       | WT             | 17:00 BST<br>Fri 10 Jun     |
| 7  | Supplier Presentations   | WT & Supplier  | Mon 20 -<br>Fri 24 Jun      |
| 8  | Notification of Contract Award   | WT             | Tues 28 Jun                 |
| 9  | Contract Negotiation   | WT & Supplier  | Weds 29 Jun -<br>Fri 22 Jul |
| 10 | Contract Start Date  | WT & Supplier  | End of July                 |

### 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 (EOI) by e-mail to the Wellcome Contact in accordance with the RFP timetable. The EOI should include:

- the legal name of the Supplier (company or individual(s))
- company number
- company address
- preferred currency for payment
- a statement of intention to submit a full proposal
- a list of any questions the Supplier has about the procurement exercise and project (see Supplier Q&A).



All Suppliers who submit an EOI are invited to submit a full proposal. We are not using the EOI step to assess potential Suppliers, but rather to gauge interest in order to allocate proper resource to processing proposals internally. We therefore request potential Suppliers submit an EOI to the Wellcome Contact ideally 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. All questions are to be submitted to the Wellcome Contact by e-mail as a part of the EOI submission in accordance with the RFP timetable.

Please note all questions will be collated and anonymised before being passed to the project team. All questions will be answered and shared with all Suppliers who have submitted an EOI. There will be no adverse consequences for any Supplier who doesn't feel the need to use the Supplier Q&A process.

### **RFP Proposal**

Suppliers are required to submit proposals which respond to the following sections;

#### Contract Feedback

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> |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
|                 |              |                                  |

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).

#### Information Governance

### **Wellcome's Data Protection Compliance**

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



## RFP Questions

This section requests responses from Suppliers specific questions in relation to this RFP exercise.

| # | Question   | Max Words |
|---|--|-----------|
| 1 | Outline your approach for delivering the activities and objectives of this RFP.<br>Please include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Methods that will be used for landscape mapping and research</li><li>• Stages and timeframes in which you propose to meet the requirements.</li></ul> | 1000      |
| 2 | Describe your approach to managing the breadth of the topic of interest, making specific reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How you plan to define what is meant by 'health research'</li><li>• How you plan to get a global perspective on the topic.</li></ul>              | 250       |
| 3 | Explain how you will address environmental sustainability considerations within the project delivery plans.  | 250       |
| 4 | Provide a cost proposal excluding VAT, which details and justifies the proposed costs to meet our requirements.  | 250       |
| 5 | Highlight to us any risks you foresee with meeting Wellcome's requirements and describe your approach to risk management.  | 250       |
| 6 | Please provide 2-3 examples of previous work where you have successfully completed a similar project.  | 250       |

## **5. About Wellcome**

Wellcome supports science to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone. We support discovery research into life, health and wellbeing, and we're taking on three worldwide health challenges: mental health, infectious disease, and climate and health. Find out more about Wellcome and our work at: [wellcome.org](https://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. Disability Confident

The Wellcome Trust is proud to be a Disability Confident Employer (DC Level 2) and we encourage all our partners and Suppliers to do the same. More information about this can be found on the government website [Disability Confident employer scheme and guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/disability-confident-employer-scheme). Disability Confident is creating a movement of change, encouraging employers to



think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

### **13. 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.

### **14. 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.

### **15. Wellcome Contact Details**

The single point of contact within this RFP exercise for all communications is as indicated below;

Name: Donna James  
Role: Procurement Officer  
Email: [RFP@wellcome.org](mailto:RFP@wellcome.org)