



## Request for Proposal (RFP) for Data Diversity in Human Genomics Global Landscaping

### 1. RFP Background & Objectives

The recent report from WHO on [“Accelerating access to genomics for global health: promotion, implementation, collaboration, and ethical, legal, and social issues”](#) highlights the use of genomic technologies as critical for improving the health of people in all parts of the world. However, it is widely acknowledged that genomics projects and datasets worldwide are heavily skewed towards populations with European ancestries, usually based in the Global North, with detrimental consequences for biological understanding, clinical insight, and for equitable, inclusive scientific reference data and practice. The lack of diversity in global genomic data reflects a complex set of inter-related factors including, but not limited to, structural barriers (e.g. imbalanced geographical distribution of research funding, infrastructure and capacity) and differing levels of trust due to abuse of power and research engagement across communities and populations. Consequently, there are two main groups of under-represented populations in genomics studies: residents based in lower-resourced settings, and minoritised and indigenous groups around the world. Even in high resource settings, large-scale research cohorts do not always reflect the diversity of the populations they seek to enrol. It should also be noted that how populations are defined in genetic terms is a topic of active scientific research, given the complexities of human migration and admixture, and the gap between the ways in which genetics and genomics researchers analyse or conceptualise populations in statistical terms, and the identities and social meanings people hold.

Wellcome Trust has substantially invested in genomics and genome-related research over many years: from large-scale investments in the Human Genome Project and the Wellcome Sanger Institute, to supporting an array of research teams, resources and projects to tackle different scientific challenges within the UK and globally. Over the past decade, we have also targeted support to several programmes that will enrich global genomics capacity and enhance the diversity of genomic data, such as the NIH-Wellcome Human, Heredity and Health in Africa (H3A) initiative.

In order to better understand how Wellcome can ensure that genomic datasets are more representative of the global population, and where any future funding or partnership efforts should be directed, we plan to commission an external Supplier/s to explore the current global landscape of “data diversity in genomics”, referring to the inclusion of genomic data from participants that span multiple axes of diversity, including ancestral genetic variation, geographical and environmental variation, and socio-economic status. Wellcome is a global funder, which necessitates a global perspective, as different regions will encounter different challenges, and present different opportunities.

The work and the corresponding report would be carried out by **either a single external Supplier or a multi-regional group of Suppliers** with the requirement of having experience of working in relevant geographies, and cover 4 parts:

- 1. Mapping what Wellcome has so far supported in the genomic data diversity space** (suggested methodology: qualitative interviews, data analysis of historic and current Wellcome funding portfolio).
- 2. Mapping the current nature and representativeness of genomic datasets globally, and their impact on communities** (suggested methodology: desk-based research).



- 3. Mapping opportunities through which the current genomic data diversity landscape can be enhanced. The aim is to identify the area/s where Wellcome can have significant impact** (suggested methodology: a mix of qualitative interviews, desk-based research and case studies of similar initiatives).
- 4. Provide recommendations related to and supported by the analysis and case studies identified in part 3.**

The final report will include the resulting recommendation and will be the result of a reiterative process towards which the Wellcome team is inputting via regular interactions. The Supplier/s would also be required to set up an advisory board (with external and Wellcome members) to ensure that strong technical expertise is incorporated into the final recommendation.

**Parts 1 and 2 would be conducted in parallel as their outcome should inform Part 3.**

## **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.

The goal of this work is to outline Wellcome's past and present contributions to genomic data diversity, summarise the broader external landscape, and identify where Wellcome can have a significant impact in future. The final report should highlight different routes for strategic impact, including areas for potential future investment, such as new large-scale data collection efforts focused on under-represented geographies or populations, new infrastructure or training programmes, the development or revision of national/international frameworks, standards or protocols for collecting and sharing genomic data, partnership working and support to strengthen relevant external activities, community engagement and collaboration to understand barriers to inclusion.

Once the report is finalised, we will share with the leadership of Wellcome's Discovery Research and Data for science and Health teams, convene a discussion across Wellcome's Research Programmes department, and formulate recommendations for discussion in the Senior Leadership Team. The final recommendations will also place any opportunities for Wellcome in the context of other current activities, such as Longitudinal Population Studies, the African Population Cohort Consortium, our major initiatives including UKBiobank and Sanger, the Global Alliance for Genomics and Health and the HIROs sub-group for Advancing Genomics in Africa.

### Examples from Wellcome Portfolio:

Some examples of Wellcome's current efforts towards increasing genomic data diversity at data collection level are as follows:

- **Longitudinal Population Studies (LPS):** Some of the LPS Wellcome funds have or are looking into collecting genome-derived information. This includes both UK and LMIC-based resources, with some covering non-white UK and LMIC populations (a few examples include East London Genes &



Health, Born in Bradford, South Asia Biobank and Lollipop, Malawi Healthy Lives, etc.) and socio-economically diverse populations (Children Growing up in Liverpool).

- **International HundredK+ Cohort Consortium (IHCC):** This consists of large cohorts (100K+ participants) from across the globe, including LMICs, that Wellcome co-funds with NIH.
- **H3Africa:** This initiative was set up in 2010 as a partnership with NIH, with the goal of investing in the human resources, research and infrastructure to strengthen genomics capacity (infrastructure and research) on the African continent.
- **Wellcome Sanger Institute:** This is Wellcome’s flagship investment in genomic research and has contributed to several important projects aimed at increasing genomic data diversity, such as 1,000 Genomes.
- **Open mode funding:** Wellcome supports a significant portfolio of genetics and genomics research via open mode funding, specifically legacy Science schemes and Discovery Research funding streams.

**We’d like to emphasise that the remit of the landscaping activities we propose will be global (i.e. beyond a regional focus on the UK or African continent), while still reflecting on and synergising with existing efforts. As indicated above, to get the most holistic outcomes at a global level, we’d welcome either a single external Supplier or a multi-regional group of Suppliers.**

### 3. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issued to Suppliers	WT	w/c 30 January
2	Submission of Supplier Q&A to Wellcome Contact	Supplier	10 February
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers	WT	24 February
4	Submission of RFP Response	Supplier	10 March
5	RFP Evaluation Period	WT	13-17 March
6	Supplier Presentations	Supplier	27-30 March
7	Notification of Contract Award	WT	6 April
8	Contract Negotiation	WT & Supplier	End April
9	Contract Start Date	WT & Supplier	End May - end November



#### 4. Response Format

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

##### ***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 and the activity. All questions are to be submitted to the Wellcome Contact in accordance with the RFP timetable. All questions will be collated, anonymised, answered and returned to all Suppliers. Please make sure you ask all questions at this stage - once Wellcome have responded to all questions, if you have any additional questions after this deadline these will not be answered to ensure that this is a fair and equitable process. 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 questions:

##### **RFP Questions**

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

#	Question	Max
1	Please provide the following details about your organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legal name</li><li>• Address</li><li>• Entity number</li></ul>	N/A
2	Outline your approach for delivering the activities and objectives of this RFP. Please include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Methods that will be used for Parts 1-4.</li><li>• Stages and timeframes in which you propose to meet the requirements.</li></ul>	750 words
3	Describe your approach to managing the breadth of the topic, making specific reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How you plan to define what is meant by genomic data and data diversity? Please indicate at a high-level what will be in and out of scope as part of this landscaping work.</li><li>• How you plan to get a global perspective on the topic?</li><li>• How you plan to gain insights into the drivers of the lack of diversity in data sets?</li></ul>	750 words
4	If applying as a multi-regional group of Suppliers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outline your previous experience of working in this way.</li><li>• Clarify who will act as lead Supplier.</li></ul>	300 words



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain why each Supplier is a suitable choice.</li> <li>• Provide team member bios (as an appendix).</li> </ul> <p>If applying as a single Supplier, please explain how the membership of your team will ensure to draw global insights?</p>	
5	<p>Explain how you would set up and run the advisory board including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed Terms of Reference (ToR).</li> <li>• Suggested members.</li> <li>• Comms methods you would employ.</li> </ul>	200 words
6	Provide 2-3 examples of previous work where you have successfully completed a similar project.	200 words for each
7	Explain how you will address environmental sustainability considerations within the project delivery plans.	200 words
8	Provide a cost proposal excluding VAT, which details and justifies the proposed costs to meet our requirements, as well as your preferred currency for payment.	200 words
9	Highlight to us any risks you foresee with meeting Wellcome's requirements and describe your approach to risk management.	200 words

***Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:***

<b>Methodology 40%</b>	<p><i>Coverage:</i> How well are the research questions covered in the proposed methodology addressed?</p> <p><i>Quality:</i> Are concepts clear? Is the proposed methodology aligned with our needs?</p> <p><i>Utility:</i> Will the proposed methodology deliver the desired, credible, and useful results?</p>
<b>Experience 25%</b>	<i>Skills and Experience:</i> Does the Supplier have the relevant skills, experience, and contextual understanding to deliver this work?
<b>Delivery and Outputs 25%</b>	<p><i>Communication:</i> Is there a good plan for communicating with the Wellcome team?</p> <p><i>Delivery plan:</i> Is the proposed delivery plan appropriate and achievable?</p> <p><i>Feasibility:</i> How feasible is the delivery plan? Are there significant risks associated with the proposed timelines, and how well are they mitigated?</p>
<b>Budget 10%</b>	<i>Value for Money:</i> Is the proposed work offering good value for money?

**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;

Clause #	Issue	Proposed Solution/Comment

Suppliers submitting proposals as a registered company should review Wellcome's Terms and Conditions which can be found [here](#).

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).

#### **Wellcome Data Protection Compliance**

Under [GDPR/Data Protection law](#), Wellcome must keep a record of all personal information it is processing (i.e., collecting, using, and sharing). This record will be made available to the Information Commissioner's Office upon request.

This is Wellcome's record of data processing activities which meets GDPR article 30 requirements.

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

#### **Supplier Presentations**

Following submission of proposals, shortlisted Suppliers will be invited to an online meeting which will last 1 hour in total and will be a PowerPoint presentation followed by a question and answer session.

### **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, climate and infectious diseases. Find out more about Wellcome and our work at: [wellcome.org](http://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/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: Alyce O'Connor  
Role: Procurement Officer  
Email: [RFP@wellcome.org](mailto:RFP@wellcome.org)