

# **Request for Proposals: Assistance Developing a Mechanism for Monitoring Risks and Opportunities of a Regulatory, Ethical and Societal Nature Relevant for Wellcome's Discovery Research Portfolio**

## **1. RFP Background**

Science is essential to solving the world's health challenges. This is why supporting bold & creative research has remained at the core of [Wellcome](#)'s mission since 1936.

Wellcome is spending more money than ever before supporting people and places to undertake curiosity driven [research](#). Our Discovery Research Portfolio is global and diverse, with,

- around 1900 active awards worth £4.4bn ranging from individual awards to funding for networks, institutes and research infrastructure;
- major investments in areas such as genetics and genomics; cell biology development and physiology; brain and behavioural sciences; molecular mechanisms; immune system in health and disease; pathogen, biology and disease transmission; population and public health; and social sciences and the humanities.

In the run up to 2030, Wellcome is committed to spend £16bn on our entire research programmes portfolio, from Discovery Research, to Mental Health, Climate and Health and Infectious Diseases.

By focusing its support for Discovery Research, Wellcome wants to encourage global researchers to be ambitious, take on difficult problems, and adopt creative and innovative approaches to push the boundaries of our understanding of life, health and wellbeing. We are also committed to embedding our beliefs and values across our work, with various activities to support ethical, open, and engaged research that reflects stakeholder interests.

In addition to funding individual research programmes, we are focusing on deepening engagement with research communities, on strengthening partnerships and linkages with current and new investments and on scoping new areas for investments.

## **2. RFP Specification**

However, new scientific approaches and breakthroughs may also challenge the status quo in ways that have implications well beyond the scope of the research itself. For example, new scientific pathways and knowledge may push against the boundaries of existing regulatory and policy frameworks, challenge accepted social norms, or raise ethical questions about appropriate applications of new techniques or translation of findings.

Against a background of accelerating scientific breakthroughs and rapidly shifting public perception, it is increasingly important for Wellcome to be able to scan for, identify and track evolving policy and socially relevant considerations associated with Wellcome's Discovery Research portfolio as effectively as possible.

To this end, we are looking for a supplier to support us with the development of a mechanism that leverages various data sources and inputs, to help us efficiently monitor risks and opportunities of a regulatory, ethical and societal nature that may intersect with the transformative science we seek to support.

### **Overall we need a monitoring mechanism that allows us to:**

- Systematically and continuously assess areas of research that are being proposed, scoped, and/or funded to surface novel issues that may challenge existing regulatory, legal, and policy frameworks; social or ethical norms; or have wider societal and cultural impacts;
- Keep up with relevant changes to the regulatory, ethical and societal landscape;
- Harness our global networks of researchers, advisors, affected communities and any other relevant activity or investment, particularly those in the research ethics space, to inform our understanding and approach on research developments and share back relevant findings.

### **We believe this involves:**

- **Understanding Wellcome's information sources** – Wellcome interacts with discovery researchers and other relevant stakeholders in many different ways. For example, Wellcome processes thousands of grant applications from around the world each year, with the guidance of our independent advisory panels. Wellcome staff have access to detailed information through the stewardship of research grants and have regular interactions with both individual grant holders and some of the world leading institutes we support. However, this information is often spread across different databases, sources, and teams at the organisation. Mapping and understanding our existing information sources, tools, and touch points would maximise efficiency and support a monitoring framework suitable to the sources of information we routinely collect. This may also offer novel ways of collecting and harvesting relevant information to feed into an ongoing monitoring mechanism, as well as enable us to share relevant findings back with our networks;
- **Learning from others** - Reviewing existing approaches and monitoring tools in use by organisations working in the field of emerging technologies (i.e. governments and other regulatory bodies, research funders, research think-tanks, academic and research communities, etc). These may include state-of-the-art tools such as GESDA's [breakthrough radar](#), organisational horizon scanning functions such as the UK Government Office for Science Future's [Programme](#) and lighter touch mechanisms and processes in use by other organisations;
- **Developing proposal(s) for a suitable mechanism** – on the basis of the information collected in previous phases, suppliers will be expected to make proposals for possible measures to be adopted as part of a monitoring mechanisms to be implemented in 2024/25. In doing so, suppliers will need to work collaboratively with relevant teams at Wellcome to fine tune options in line with organisational requirements as well as identifying and exploring solutions to technical and other barriers to the implementation of the different options;
- **Piloting/testing some/all aspects of proposed measures** - these may entail testing level of appetite of members of our research networks to work with us to identify any future legal, ethical or societal implications; piloting new approaches for collecting information from our community of discovery researchers; assessing feasibility and practicalities of the implementation of technical nature of certain measures, etc.

## Deliverables:

- **Progress reports** to be submitted regularly to lead sponsor for this work at Wellcome;
- **Workshops and other events** of a consultative nature as needed, as well as minutes and materials prepared for these;
- **A final report** outlining the findings of this exercise, including recommendations for Wellcome on how to integrate such monitoring mechanism into its operations. This is to be completed by the end of July 2024.

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.

Wellcome will be guided by the supplier as to what is a reasonable budget for this activity as we do not want limit ambition or innovation.

## 3. RFP timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Dates TBA
1	RFP issued on <a href="#">Contract Opportunities</a> webpage	Wellcome	16/10/2023
2	Submission of Expression of Interest and Supplier Q&A	Supplier	30/10/2023
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers and invitation to submit full proposal	Wellcome	6/11/2023
4	Submission of RFP Response (in line with requirements set out in section 5)	Supplier	17/11/2023
5	RFP Evaluation Period	Wellcome	20/11/2023 to 24/11/2023
6	Supplier Presentations	Supplier	4/12/2023 to 8/12/2023
7	Notification of Contract Award	Wellcome	Middle of December 2023
8	Contract Negotiation	Wellcome & Supplier	December 2023/January 2024
9	Contract Start Date	Wellcome & Supplier	January 2024

## 4. Response Format

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

### Expression of Interest and Supplier Q&A

Suppliers are asked to submit a short expression of interest by e-mail to the Wellcome contact in accordance with the RFP timetable, which should contain the following information:

- Ask any questions you have relating to this RFP
- Confirming whether you are submitting a proposal as a registered company or an individual
- If an organisation please provide registered name, address, and registration number
- A non-binding cost estimate as a single figure in GBP

- Outlining relevant subject matter knowledge and previous expertise in working with organisations to develop future-looking/horizon scanning or setting up similar monitoring mechanism and/or functions

Prior to the submission of your full proposal to the RFP, Suppliers are provided the opportunity to submit any questions they have about the exercise and the activity. All questions will be collated, anonymised, answered and returned to all Suppliers who have submitted an expression of interest in the RFP process. 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.

Submitting an EOI is not a binding commitment to submit a full proposal should your organisational priorities change, you will not then be penalised for future opportunities.

Please note, if we have an overwhelming response, we may choose to use this EOI stage as a selective phase, this is at Wellcome's discretion.

## 5. RFP Response

Suppliers are asked to respond to the following areas in their RFP Response:

#	Question	Max words
1	Provide a short outline demonstrating your methodology in achieving the scope of the work.	750
2	Propose a delivery plan outlining project deliverables and timelines.	500
3	Outline the proposed project team with a brief description of their relevant experience.	500
4	Outline your approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in relation to your proposal for the project.	300
5	Provide a detailed budget including breakdown justifying the proposed costs to meet Wellcome's requirements. Please note that we do not provide maximum budget estimates, suppliers are encouraged to come in with a budget required for this work to be delivered effectively while also demonstrating value for money.	N/A
6	What makes you best placed to fulfil the requirements outlined in this RFP? This could include previous experience of conducting similar work for other organisations and outcomes of such work. Please feel free to use any relevant case studies. Please also state whether you are planning to work with any third party in delivering certain parts of this work.	750
7	Outline any major risks and challenges you foresee with meeting Wellcome's requirements. Please include your mitigation strategies for these risk and challenges.	500

### Evaluation Criteria

During the RFP evaluation period the evaluation panel will independently evaluate your proposal against the criteria outlined below. All scores will be collated, discussed and a decision will be agreed on who progresses to the next stage of the procurement exercise.

Criteria	Detail	%
Methodology	<i>Coverage:</i> How well are the desired focus areas (as outlined in the specification) covered in the proposed methodology? <i>Quality:</i> Is the proposed methodology aligned with our needs? <i>Utility:</i> Will the proposed methodology deliver the desired, credible, and useful results?	30%
Experience	<i>Skills and Experience:</i> Does the supplier have the relevant skills, experience, and contextual understanding to deliver this work?	20%
Delivery & Outputs	<i>Communication:</i> Is there a good plan for communicating with the Wellcome team? <i>Delivery plan:</i> Is the proposed delivery plan appropriate and achievable? <i>Feasibility:</i> How feasible is the delivery plan? Are there significant risks associated with the proposed timelines, and how well are they mitigated?	30%
Budget	<i>Value for Money:</i> Is the proposed work within your budget and good value for money?	10%
EDI	<i>Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion:</i> Do they have EDI policies and are these being put into practice in the proposal?	10%
<b>Total:</b>		<b>100%</b>

### Contract Feedback

This section allows Suppliers to provide specific feedback to the contractual agreement which will be used should their proposal be successful. This is the suppliers' opportunity to provide negotiation points on Wellcome's terms and conditions, we will not consider negotiations that are only raised after the contract has been awarded so as not to delay the contracting process. Please ensure you engage with a relevant legal contact if applicable. 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 Standard terms and Conditions [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 8 below).

### Information Governance

Wellcome is committed to upholding data protection principles and protecting your information. The [Wellcome-Privacy-Statement-2023.pdf](#) explains how, and on what legal basis, we collect, store, and use personal information about you. This includes any information you provide in relation to this proposal.

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 will be asked to complete the [TPSRA2](#) assessment before presentation stage to assess how you handle data.

### Supplier Presentations

Following a submission of the proposal, successful proposals will be invited to a virtual meeting which will last 50 minutes in total and will be a PowerPoint presentation followed by questions and answers session.

## 6. About Wellcome

Wellcome improves health for everyone by funding research, leading policy and advocacy campaigns, and building global partnerships. Collaborative research that involves a diverse range of people from different fields of interest is key to progress in health science – and to achieving our aim of fostering a healthier, happier, world. We're taking on the biggest health challenges facing humanity – climate and health, infectious disease, and mental health – to find urgent solutions and accelerate preventions. Find out more about Wellcome and our work at: [wellcome.org](http://wellcome.org).

## 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. Equity, Diversity and 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. We want to cultivate an inclusive and diverse culture, and 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.

## 9. 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.

## **10. 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.

## **11. 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.

## **12. Funding**

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

## **13. 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.

## **14. 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.

## **15. Wellcome Contact Details**

The point of contact for this RFP exercise is indicated below:

Name: Ignacio Vazquez  
Pronouns: He/him

Role: Policy Lead  
Email: [i.vazquez@wellcome.org](mailto:i.vazquez@wellcome.org)