



Request for Proposal (RFP)

New forms of social data for life, health and wellbeing research

1. RFP Background & Objectives

Wellcome is seeking to commission a landscape report with the following objectives:

- Describe the unique value of social data resources for research on life, health and wellbeing across population and public health, social sciences, and humanities.
- Understand the challenges/barriers to be tackled in order to significantly enhance approaches to using new forms of social data (“smart data”) in research on life, health and wellbeing in the UK and globally.
- Detail the approaches, capabilities, technologies, and data that could contribute to solving the challenges/barriers to maximise this research.
- Define the opportunities for transformative life, health and wellbeing research that would be enabled by working towards the goal of significantly enhancing approaches to using new forms of social data.

1.1. Wellcome & Discovery Research

Wellcome is a politically and financially independent charitable foundation. In 2021, Wellcome established the Discovery Research programme that aims to transform understanding of life, health, and wellbeing through curiosity-driven research across a diverse range of perspectives and contexts.

Wellcome is the largest funder of health-related Humanities and Social Sciences discovery research in the UK. We have invested in social, economic and political research into life, health and wellbeing for many years, including supporting an array of individual and team research, projects and networks in the UK and globally. Our [Discovery Research strategy](#) has reiterated our commitment to supporting a broad and diverse range of life, health and wellbeing research, and to supporting the key research infrastructures, capabilities, resources, and tools and technologies in the UK and globally.

Wellcome’s population and public health, social sciences, and humanities portfolio encompasses a wide range of data, methods, and tools. Our goal is to increase the diversity of perspectives and approaches across this portfolio to further understanding of life, health and wellbeing. We want to support diverse, bold, creative and high-quality transformative research, underpinned by cutting-edge tools, tech and capabilities.

To this end, we want to explore the landscape of new forms of social data to better understand the challenges, barriers and opportunities in accessing and utilising them for research across population and public health, social sciences, and humanities. By doing so, we hope to raise visibility and awareness of these social data resources and determine what further actions are necessary to unlock their ambitious, creative, and innovative potential for researching life, health, and wellbeing.

1.2. New forms of social data for life, health and wellbeing research

“New forms of social data” (also known as “smart data”) are broadly defined as generated through engagement with digital systems, devices, and sensors. This includes everything from data produced through digital transactions to interactions with social media to data generated through the physical environment and mobility. “Social data resources” are, in



turn, platforms and tools that gather and analyse data generated through interaction with the digital world. This data includes metadata like date, time, and duration. The advantage of these data is that they provide structured information, which can be systematically arranged and examined. Social data resources collect smart data with a certain level of organisation that can be therefore investigated and analysed in research to provide rich insights into life, health, and wellbeing – from pandemic preparedness to health inequalities.

There are various funding agencies and others currently attempting to collate and curate these new forms of data so that they are preserved and made accessible for research use. In the UK, the principal actor in the research space is UKRI, which has recently launched a new strategic initiative – Smart Data Research UK – to improve the acquisition, curation and access to these new forms of social data for research purposes. These, and other local and global initiatives are important pieces of the current landscape, but Wellcome is keen to understand more about the potential for this data to unlock new life, health and wellbeing research, and what barriers exist to that happening.

For example, there is a need to ensure that the development and use of new forms of social data are equitable, diverse and inclusive and that key ethical, conceptual, and methodological barriers to their research use are appropriately addressed. Wellcome seeks to understand these challenges, which might stand in the way of new forms of social data fully realising their potential in generating new knowledge about life, health and wellbeing. These barriers and challenges might include ensuring consistent metadata standards and data interoperability, appropriately handling private and sensitive data, developing suitable software and methods for data processing and analysis, and addressing skills limitations to support researchers in effectively examining the data.

1.3 Landscaping requirements

Wellcome is now commissioning an external supplier/s to explore the current global landscape of the use of new forms of social data in research on life, health and wellbeing, as well as the overview of social data resources in a global context. We want to understand how this research utilising “smart data” and critical resources can be best supported to help deliver our Discovery Research strategy. We seek to understand how these data can be effectively used by researchers across population and public health, social sciences, and humanities to produce innovative and creative questions about life, health and wellbeing.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are integral to our ambitions in this work, both in terms of the people and perspectives to be included in this work, and the research challenges, barriers and opportunities to be explored.

Scope: We are interested in the role of resources and enabling capabilities for discovery research in particular as described within the [Discovery Research](#) remit – research which will generate new understanding and with the potential to improve life, health and wellbeing. We are keen to explore the global landscape with a particular interest in geographies where Wellcome Discovery Research currently targets funding (UK, Republic of Ireland and Low- and Middle-Income Countries). We aim to identify broad areas to understand the capabilities of data resources and their use for discovery research but are not focusing on opportunities to develop new core infrastructure.

Exclusion: Studies that are not within the Discovery Research remit are out of scope for this review. This includes research on large-scale clinical trials; tools, technologies or



methodologies predominantly to be used for diagnosis, treatment or improving clinical care; and studies involving animals.

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.

Wellcome is seeking a Supplier or group of Suppliers for up to a 6-month contract to produce a comprehensive report covering the current and future potential landscape and challenges, and what Wellcome's role might be in ensuring that new forms of social data are able to be fully utilised for life, health and wellbeing research, and where any future funding or partnership efforts should be directed.

As set out above, the objectives are to:

- Describe the unique value of social data resources for research on life, health and wellbeing across population and public health, social sciences, and humanities.
- Understand the challenges/barriers to be tackled in order to significantly enhance approaches to using new forms of social data ("smart data") in research on life, health and wellbeing in the UK and globally.
- Detail the approaches, capabilities, technologies and data that could contribute to solving the challenges/barriers to maximise this research.
- Define the opportunities for transformative life, health and wellbeing research that would be enabled by working towards the goal of significantly enhancing approaches to using new forms of social data.

The delivery of the final report may involve various qualitative and/or quantitative data collection methods, such as desk-based research, interviews, surveys, focus groups, workshops, and case studies.

The commissioned work has the following four parts:

- i. **Mapping the challenges and opportunities in the current use of new forms of social data for life, health and wellbeing research in the UK and globally.** To include:
 - a. A representative range of disciplines, geographies and methodologies.
 - b. Key enablers and barriers (e.g., tools and technologies, knowledge and skills, access and discoverability).
 - c. Examples of significant, collaborative and funded initiatives.

Suppliers will identify a variety of examples and case studies to provide insights into these aspects and consider the effective use of new forms of social data in research on life, health, and wellbeing from different disciplines and geographical locations. We would be interested in seeing the potential of these data, for example within longitudinal population studies, in addressing health inequalities and enhancing pandemic emergency preparedness.

- ii. **Mapping the current nature, initiatives and ambitions of data repositories that hold or seek to hold key new forms of social data for life, health and wellbeing research.** To include:
 - a. A representative range of organisations and geographies.



- b. Key enablers and barriers (e.g., tools and technologies, knowledge and skills, access, integration and prioritisation).
- c. Examples of significant, collaborative and funded initiatives.

Suppliers will identify case studies of social data resources that provide insights into these aspects. They should come from across geographies and different parts of their thematic landscape.

- iii. **Mapping future-looking initiatives and opportunities through which the current new forms of social data and data resources landscapes can be enhanced for life, health and wellbeing research, including potential synergy with other funders. The aim is to identify the area/s, and options/priorities, where Wellcome and others can have significant impact.** To include:
 - a. A range of disciplines, data resources, emerging research areas, and methodologies.
 - b. Key enablers (e.g. tools and technologies, knowledge and skills, access and discoverability).
 - c. Activities of other actors and funders in this space, and collaborative opportunities.
- iv. **Provide recommendations related to and supported by the analysis and case studies identified in part iii.**

This part includes offering relevant recommendations to advance the accessibility, use, and understanding of new forms of social data for research on life, health, and wellbeing across the population and public health, social sciences, and humanities and geographical locations (UK and beyond). These recommendations should fit a wide range of stakeholders, particularly research funding organisations and resource repositories. Specific recommendations for Wellcome should also be developed, identifying areas where Wellcome can facilitate further work to address our Discovery Research strategy.

Parts i and ii would be conducted in parallel as their outcome should inform Parts iii and iv.

Key deliverables to be included:

- i. Inception report – To include the detailed scope of the work, a detailed outline of the methodology that will be used to address the landscaping requirements outlined above, and a detailed timeline for completion of the work.
- ii. Initial findings presentation – A summary of the findings from Parts i and ii will be presented to the Wellcome team for discussion and feedback during one of the touchpoint meetings.
- iii. Workshop – Wellcome is collaborating with Smart Data Research UK, delivered by ESRC UKRI, to ensure that the final report of this commissioned work benefits the wider research community and builds on the work currently underway in that initiative. To achieve this, a workshop led by the supplier will be held in collaboration with ESRC to explore the opportunities and challenges of health-related research based on new forms of social data and data resources. This workshop aims to share insights into the problems and activities involved, ensuring that the Supplier's work aligns with Wellcome Discovery Research's strategy and priorities while also benefiting other research funders.



- iv. Final report delivered in two stages:
 - A) A **draft final report**, which will be shared with Wellcome 4 weeks (minimum) in advance of the end date to allow Wellcome staff and other stakeholders involved in the work to give feedback, raise questions, and make recommendations for further improvements.
 - B) A **final report**: a clean and final copy which will be delivered after incorporating feedback on the draft report from Wellcome. We anticipate that the report will be made available publicly.
- v. Slide decks of summary findings.
- vi. Presentation of the findings to the Wellcome team, to be delivered virtually or in person, with time for Q&A from the Wellcome team.

Additional information for the Suppliers:

- The Supplier/s would be required to set up an advisory board (with external and Wellcome members) to ensure that strong technical expertise is incorporated into the final recommendations. We expect the setting up of this board to be an iterative process with Wellcome.
- The work would be carried out by either a single external Supplier or a group of Suppliers. The Supplier/s could be consultancy organisations or research groups, so long as they have the required expertise, partners, and track records to undertake the work outlined above.
- The Supplier/s would be required to evidence that they have the right expertise in the team or the ability to contract it in to ensure that strong technical expertise is incorporated into the final recommendations.
- Wellcome intends for this piece of work to equally cover both the UK/HICs and LMIC landscape, addressing the different needs in both settings. We anticipate that the selected organisation will engage with experts/researchers and have experience in working within and/or with LMIC researchers. The Supplier/s would be therefore required to evidence of how they will deal with the global scale and LMIC contexts of the RFP specification.
- At the selection stage, Suppliers' data will be shared with a representative from SDR UK, who will be taking part in the selection process. This reflects our close working relationship with UKRI across a number of activities where we aim to leverage our shared knowledge and ambitions.
- This project will require close working with Wellcome throughout the life of the project. We will expect regular, weekly meetings with the Supplier throughout the project.
- Wellcome will be guided by the supplier as to what is a reasonable budget for this activity as we do not want to limit ambition or innovation. Proposals will need to account for any VAT requirements – at 20% if you are based in the United Kingdom, or if you are not based in the United Kingdom, please allow 20% for reverse VAT charges that Wellcome will need to self-account for.



3. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issued on Contract Opportunities webpage	Wellcome	5 June 2024
2	Submission Supplier Q&A	Supplier	19 June 2024
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers	Wellcome	28 June 2024
4	Submission of RFP Response	Supplier	25 July 2024
5	RFP Evaluation Period	Wellcome	26 July - 3 September 2024
6	Supplier Presentations	Supplier	September 2024
7	Notification of Contract Award	Wellcome	October 2024
8	Contract Negotiation	Wellcome & Supplier	October 2024
9	Contract Start Date	Wellcome & Supplier	November 2024

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 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 a Q&A is not a binding commitment to submit a full proposal should your organisational priorities change, you will not then be penalised for future opportunities

RFP Response

Suppliers submitting a full proposal should cover the following areas in their response:



RFP Questions

#	Question	Max [Words/Pages]
1	<p>Experience: Outline your experience in the area (e.g. case studies where you successfully provided similar services to those described in this RFP) and whether/how you will work with experts to cover the gaps in your knowledge. Include any relevant experience completing qualitative research and landscaping analyses. We expect the supplier's team to be diverse in membership and inclusive in practice. We also expect the supplier to meaningfully and ethically involve and collaborate with diverse stakeholders in the design and delivery of the project, as relevant to the deliverables.</p>	1500 words
2	<p>Methodology: Detail your methodology for completing this analysis, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach and methodology, and how you will address the RFP specification. • Plan for equity, diversity, and inclusion (how you will ensure that the research conducted will be inclusive and representative of different resource settings/groups and that your methodology does not introduce bias). • Plan for engagement with stakeholders. 	1500 words
3	<p>Workplan (delivery & output): Describe your proposed project plan and timelines with key milestones and deliverables against each of these. This should also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management plan, including the role of team members. • Project deliverables (including a landscaping workshop stated in the RfP). • Plan for engagement with Wellcome during the contract. • Plan for production of the final report, including copy editing, formatting and graphics. • Anticipated risks and challenges, ways to mitigate them, and quality assurance efforts for your work. 	500 words
4	<p>Equity diversity and inclusion (EDI): Outline your EDI policies and how you will ensure equity, diversity and inclusion considerations are embedded throughout the planning, development and delivery of the project.</p>	500 words
5	<p>Budget - Provide a detailed budget including all costs and expenses, specifying all day rates of individuals involved, the</p>	N/A



	allocation of days between members of the team, and the cost of activities.	
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Detail	%
Experience	<i>Skills and Experience:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant skills, experience, and contextual understanding to deliver this work. Demonstrated ability to address potential gaps in knowledge and experience if necessary. 	30%
Methodology	<i>Coverage:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well the proposal meets the RFP specification. How well the proposed methodology aligns with our equity, diversity and inclusion goals. 	30%
Delivery & Outputs	<i>Delivery plan:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed delivery plan is appropriate and achievable. Any risks are identified and mitigated. <i>Communication:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good plan for communicating with the Wellcome team. 	20%
EDI	How well equity, diversity and inclusion considerations are embedded throughout the development and delivery of the project.	15%
Budget	<i>Value for Money:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed work represents good value for money. 	5%
	Total:	100%

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.

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 6 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 up to an hour in total and will be a PowerPoint presentation followed by a questions and answers session.

1. 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](https://www.wellcome.org).

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

All our content should be WCAG 2.2. AAA compliant. Any documents being provided to Wellcome must pass accessibility requirements. If you are unable to produce accessible documents, budget must be set aside to employ a suitable agency to do this work.

6. 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.

7. Funding

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

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. Wellcome Contact Details

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

Name:	Sabrina Al-Khafaji
Pronouns:	She/Her
Role:	Procurement Officer
Email:	RFP@wellcome.org