



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Request for Proposal (RFP): Partner organisation to distribute small grants to UK-based Black-led researcher initiatives

#	Supplier Question	Wellcome response
1	<p>Budget</p> <p>Can you please inform me of the programme budget for distribution of funds</p> <p>Is there a maximum budget or range that suppliers should consider when estimating costs?</p> <p>Will the amount for part 1 be provided as a grant to be included alongside the £1m allocation</p> <p>Does \$1 million include the organisational management fee and grants team? We want to know if Wellcome will cover other associated costs or if the one million is solely for onwards grants.</p>	<p>We are not setting a specific budget externally at this point, but value for money is a consideration in our evaluation of proposals.</p> <p>Suppliers should provide a breakdown of costs per annum over the course of the project and should consider any potential additional costs.</p> <p>The first part is provided as a contract, to manage the ~£1million grant allocations.</p> <p>The £1 million is the amount of money that will be distributed in grants to Black-led initiatives. The costs of the organisational management fee and grants teams will be managed by the contract and should be included in the requested supplier costs.</p>
2	<p>Process</p> <p>Do we receive indication of whether our cost estimate would be accepted before submitting a proposal on January 31st?</p>	<p>We will not be providing feedback on cost estimates ahead of proposal submission.</p>

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3	Is the intention that the grants distributed only fund Black academics or would applications from Black community researchers – i.e. researchers in the community space and sector who are not currently employed at a Higher Education institution - be eligible?	This work aims to support the activities and sustainability of Black-led initiatives that aid the careers of researchers rather than supporting individual researchers directly. Therefore, if there is a Black-led initiative that is doing work to support community researchers who align with Wellcome’s mission it could be possible. However, the aim of this work is to tackle the underrepresentation of and lack of belonging that Black researchers experience in Higher Education by supporting existing initiatives who are already working to tackle this issue.
4	Can Wellcome provide more detail on the specific outcomes or key performance indicators expected for this grant distribution programme?	Wellcome would like to support the sustainability of existing, Black-led initiatives focused on improving conditions for Black researchers in Higher Education. As we have stated in the RFP, our focus through this grant programme is to provide easy to access, accessible and flexible funding that is open to incorporated and unincorporated initiatives, and provides more than funding. Therefore, a key success is the manner the programme is delivered as well as providing resources to the Black-led initiatives we aim to support. Another key indicator would be a collaborative relationship with Wellcome, significant interest in the funding scheme and strong support for the awardees.
5	Is there an expectation for the chosen supplier to partner with specific organisations or networks outside of those proposed in the EoI?	We do not have an expectation of the chosen supplier to partner with specific organisations or networks outside of those outlined in the proposal. However, there are other organisations in the research and innovation sector who are also exploring how to best support the work of Black-led initiatives which it may make sense to align this work with to better serve the Black-led initiatives we are aiming to support. This is why we have stated that the supplier should be willing to work with any community events planned by the Wellcome team.

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		We have not pre-defined any specific organisations or networks who should be funded in this scheme. However, we are looking to support existing, Black-led initiatives who are trying to support the careers of Black academic researchers.
6	Will the supplier have autonomy in developing the grant distribution criteria, or will these be predefined by Wellcome?	The supplier will take the lead in developing the distribution approach and method. We do not have predefined distribution criteria. We are very open to innovative approaches that Wellcome would not traditionally consider or be able to deliver. However, we are looking to support Black-led initiatives that support the careers of Black researchers in a manner that is flexible, easy to access, tailored, goes beyond funding, that aligns with our vision of improving human health. Therefore, the final criteria will need to be signed off by the Wellcome team.
7	Will Wellcome provide any initial training or ongoing support for the grant management process, or is the supplier expected to develop and execute all processes independently?	The Wellcome team is looking for an organisation that has experience in grant giving to deliver this programme of work. Therefore, we do not have plans to provide any initial training or ongoing support for the grant management process. We would expect this to be done independently by the selected supplier. We will of course be able to answer any questions and provide insights and feedback as necessary, especially in the earlier design stages.
8	<p>Check ins</p> <p>What level of detail and frequency is expected for progress and financial reporting during the contract period?</p> <p>How often will progress meetings occur, and what is the expected structure and format of these sessions?</p> <p>How will Wellcome handle feedback or suggested changes during the project lifecycle?</p>	<p>This will be confirmed in the contract. We will be led by what a supplier suggests in their proposal, but regular check-ins and payment schedule will be confirmed as part of the contract. Check-ins with a supplier are usually planned twice a month, most likely online and the frequency may reduce as the project becomes more established.</p> <p>This will be confirmed at the contract negotiation stage.</p>

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9	Does Wellcome have specific guidelines or priorities for ensuring equitable access to these grants for underrepresented Black-led initiatives?	Wellcome does not have any specific guidelines or priorities for ensuring equitable access to these grants. However, as stated in the RFP we want to ensure they are accessible to small, incorporated and unincorporated, Black-led initiatives. We want to make sure equity, diversity and inclusion have been considered in the methodology and overall approach.
10	Are there any anticipated risks or challenges Wellcome foresees in implementing this programme that suppliers should account for in their planning?	Risks can vary throughout the lifecycle of the project and could include limited uptake from Black-led initiatives, lack of trust from Black-led initiatives, or awardees feeling unsupported in the application and award process. A risk could be a disconnect between the offer to Black-led initiatives and what they need, or a too structured approach that is not tailored enough to the Black-led initiatives who generally run these organisations on the side of their academic careers and therefore cannot commit to this work full-time.
11	Following the conclusion of the grant distribution period, will the supplier have any role in assessing or supporting grant recipients, or does this responsibility end at programme completion?	<p>If by grant distribution period this means after grant recipients have been selected, the answer is yes. We are contracting the selected supplier for up to 5 years with the hope that they will do more than simply provide funding. We want them to provide support and funding in a manner that fits with our design principles of being flexible, reliable, tailored, easy to access and providing support that goes beyond funding.</p> <p>If by the grant distribution period, this means after the contract is completed and the grants have run out, then the answer is no. There is no expectation to continue working with the grant recipients.</p>
12	Is Wellcome open to a participatory grantmaking approach?	Yes, Wellcome is very open to different grantmaking approaches. However, it is worth noting that many leaders of these Black-led initiatives are time-poor balancing these initiatives alongside full time academic careers. Please keep

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		this in mind if you are designing a participatory grantmaking approach.
13	Is there a separate budget-line for support activities, or will coordination and any support activities come from the topline budget?	Wellcome is planning to distribute up to £1 million in grant funding. Any suggested support activities are in a separate budget-line and should be included in the supplier's requested costs. However, our project budget is not indefinite so if extensive support activities are suggested, we may reduce the topline grant funding budget to accommodate them. This is why we have specified we will fund up to £1 million to give us flexibility in the programme if required.
14	Governance and Compliance What specific mechanisms or support does Wellcome recommend for managing compliance while maintaining the accessibility and flexibility of the grants?	Wellcome does not have any specific recommendations for managing compliance while maintaining the accessibility and flexibility of the grants. We will leave it to the supplier to lead on how they would be able to do this. This can also be worked on and finalised during the design stage with the selected supplier.
15	Reputational Risk: What measures or protocols does Wellcome have in place to mitigate reputational risk, and how will they support the supplier in handling any reputational challenges?	The supplier is expected to lead the design and delivery of the scheme, with Wellcome contributing expertise and experience in check-in meetings and providing final programme sign off. If reputational risks present themselves, Wellcome has access to experts, including legal experts that may be able to help navigate tricky reputational challenges if they arise.
16	Programme Scope and Flexibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any flexibility on the grant management costs if a supplier does not have an inhouse grants portal or team? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally, Wellcome is looking to contract a supplier with experience in grant-giving. Any costs to do with the delivery of the grant such as creating grant management portals or teams should be costed into the supplier's requested costs. This cost is separate to the grant allocation of up to £1 million.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How flexible is the budget allocation for varying numbers of awards or award values? • Can the supplier recommend adjustments to the maximum award value based on application demand or emergent community needs? • When will Wellcome and/or the supplier decide the actual programme of support? This will most likely affect supplier costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellcome does not have a pre-set idea of the number of awards or award values, this can be included in the supplier's proposal but will be finalised in the design stage of this project. The only stipulation we have placed is a maximum award of £60,000 over three years. • Yes, the supplier may be able to recommend adjustments to the maximum award value based on application demand or emergent community needs. How this would be approached and managed can be outlined in the supplier's proposal and will be decided in the design phase of the project. We have set a maximum to ensure more initiatives can be supported, therefore the reasoning for the adjustment would need to be extremely clear. • The supplier will be expected to take the lead on the programme design so the submitted proposal should be close to what the supplier hopes to deliver. Therefore, the supplier's costs should be finalised in the contract negotiation phase. Following the contracting phase, Wellcome and the supplier will work to refine and finalise the actual programme and the supplier will apply for a grant from Wellcome to receive funds to on-grant to the awardees. In the unlikely situation where the design process with Wellcome dramatically changes the programme to a point where the costs escalate dramatically, we can explore how to supplement the contract. However, we do not expect this to happen.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The management fee includes grant management plus supporting actual initiatives, how might we cost the whole proposal given that the support needs could differ quite widely? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a detailed budget with your proposed costs for grant management and expected supporting activities based on the number of Black-led initiatives you aim to support through your proposal.
17	<p>Strategic Alignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will Wellcome assess the alignment between the supplier's delivery plan and your strategic goals? What level of input or approval is required from Wellcome during key decision points in the design and delivery process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How Wellcome will assess the proposals has been outlined in the RFP and will cover 4 main areas: Methodology and Approach, Organisation, Delivery and Output, and Budget. The strategic goals of this project are to improve conditions for Black researchers in academia. This will be achieved by providing support to Black-led initiatives in a manner that prioritises how the support is delivered as much as what support is delivered. This project fits into a larger anti-racism strategy which focuses on tackling the underrepresentation of racially minoritised researchers in the academic sector. Wellcome would like the selected supplier to take the lead on the design and delivery of the programme. However, as Wellcome needs to ensure that any funding we give aligns with our charitable mission we will have regular check-in sessions with the supplier and Wellcome will need to approve the final programme.
18	<p>Partnership and Support</p> <p>In what specific areas does Wellcome see itself as adding the most value to support the project's delivery?</p>	<p>We are very open to suggestions of where Wellcome can add value to the project's delivery. However, the Wellcome team has strong understanding of the academic sector and has strong relationships with others also exploring how they can better support Black researchers. We also have expertise in</p>

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		grantmaking and access to spaces such as the Wellcome Trust office in London, which could be a useful asset. How Wellcome can benefit the project may vary over the lifespan of the project, and can be explored further in the design phase of the project.
19	Data Management and Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can Wellcome clarify its specific expectations for the data collection, storage, and reporting processes? • What tools, systems, or platforms does Wellcome recommend or require for these tasks? • How will data-sharing protocols align with GDPR and other data protection regulations? 	Wellcome expects that the selected supplier will be able to keep track of data relating to grant giving. Details regarding data-sharing, collection and storage will be discussed during the contract negotiation stage.
20	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What metrics or indicators will Wellcome use to evaluate the supplier's EDI efforts? • Does Wellcome have specific tools or resources available to support the supplier in embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion into the project? 	<p>How Wellcome will assess the proposals is outlined in the RFP and will cover 4 main areas: Methodology and Approach, Organisation, Delivery and Output, and Budget. The supplier's EDI efforts will be assessed under "Methodology and Approach" and "Organisation".</p> <p>Wellcome is looking to select a supplier that has a demonstrable history of embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion into their projects. Therefore, we don't plan on providing any specific tools or resources to support this element of the work.</p>
21	Accessibility: How will Wellcome support ensuring that the application process is truly accessible for smaller, less-resourced, Black-led initiatives?	Wellcome is looking to select a supplier that can ensure the application process is truly accessible for smaller, less-resourced Black-led initiatives. Designing a grantmaking process that enables this should be included in the supplier's proposal and will be assessed as part of the selection process.

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22	<p>Additional Activities and Community Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does Wellcome prefer certain types of optional activities, such as cohort-building or business support? Will there be a minimum number of 'activities' that awardees would choose from as part of their contract, to help support their longer-term sustainability? Are additional resources available to support the supplier in delivering these optional activities? 	<p>The Wellcome team does not have predefined, preferred ideas of what types of additional support should be provided. We are very open to proposed activities and have set no minimum activity requirements. Please review the RFP background and objectives section to get an idea of the types of activities that would be suitable for our target audience to become sustainable.</p> <p>The supplier should cost the resources that are required for them to deliver their optional activities into their detailed supplier's costs which will be part of the contract. This is separate to the grant funding which we have ringfenced a budget of up to £1 million.</p>
23	<p>Community Building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What role does Wellcome envision playing in fostering community among the awardees? How will this collaboration align with or support existing Wellcome community activities? 	<p>Currently Wellcome does not envision playing a direct role in fostering community amongst the awardees. However, we are open to providing support when we can be useful as a large organisation.</p> <p>In phase 1 of this project (July 2024), Wellcome held a community convening with many of the types of organisations that we hope to support in this work. Although, we have no immediate plans to continue this community activity, we hope this funding scheme and attached activities, plus support that we are providing as a funder to other activities with similar ambitions will foster a community for Black-led initiatives.</p>
24	<p>Design Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will Wellcome evaluate whether the supplier's approach sufficiently incorporates flexibility, accessibility, reliability, and tailored support? 	<p>How Wellcome will assess the proposals is outlined in the RFP and will cover 4 main areas: Methodology and Approach, Organisation, Delivery and Output, and Budget. The supplier's ability to incorporate the design principles of "flexibility,</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any non-negotiable elements within these principles that the supplier must prioritise? 	<p>accessibility, reliability and tailored support” will be assessed in the “Methodology and Approach” section. We hope that the selected supplier will be able to embed as many of the design principles as they can into their proposal.</p>
25	<p>Sustainability and Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does Wellcome envision the long-term impact of this initiative, and how can the supplier help contribute to achieving it? What measures will Wellcome use to assess the success and sustainability of the funded initiatives? 	<p>Wellcome hopes that the long-term impact of this initiative will be more support for Black researchers within academia. This project will help us achieve this by helping build up the capacity of Black-led initiatives who are already working to support Black researchers. Therefore, the selected supplier can help us achieve this by ensuring that the grants go to Black-led initiatives that are well placed to do this work and that they are supported throughout their awards to reach their ambitions. The supplier can help by using their skills and expertise to deliver any support in an inclusive manner that prioritises the experience of the grantees, aligns with the design principles and considers the insights provided by the focus group research.</p> <p>Wellcome plans to appoint independent evaluators to help us assess the success and sustainability of the funded initiatives. This will also help Wellcome understand if this partnership approach to funding is beneficial.</p>
26	<p>Legacy Building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there opportunities for the supplier to collaborate with Wellcome in securing future funding or expanding this initiative? How can the supplier ensure that the programme leaves a lasting positive legacy for Black-led initiatives? 	<p>We cannot commit to supporting any selected supplier in securing funding to expand this initiative at the end of the contracted period. We would hope that providing longer term, flexible funding to these Black-led initiatives who are often restricted to project based funding, along with supportive activities provided by our selected supplier will enable the programme to leave a positive legacy. This work also does not sit in isolation but also sits along other work that Wellcome is</p>

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		doing to support Black-led initiatives and forms part of a larger anti-racist programme to drive long term change within the Research and Innovation sector.
27	Thinking about the ambition - Is investing in Black and Ethnic Minoritised researchers' part of a long-term commitment from the Wellcome Trust?	Yes, this project sits alongside other work that we are doing as a funder to support individuals, collectives and institutions to drive change in the Research and Innovation sector.
28	How open is Wellcome Trust to the idea of funding being allocated to non-registered organisations and individuals seeing as most of the sector is made up of these groups of researchers? Would a process of capacity-building grants that help these groups in particular either formalise, or operate under a fiscal host/sponsor (one that aligns with Wellcome's vision) be of interest?	Very open. This is one of the main reasons that we decided to do this partnership approach because the focus groups told us that many groups are unincorporated or feel forced to legally formalise to access funding. Wellcome is unable to deliver funding to these more informal organisations in a easy to access manner therefore this approach will allow us to do this by working with a partner organisation.
29	Is it possible to see the details of the preliminary research to this fund?	We will share the insights from the preliminary research with the selected supplier and we are working to publish this research externally.
30	Can you elaborate on the type of partnership and collaboration Wellcome will provide to the selected Supplier during the three-year period (e.g., co-design opportunities, shared resources, or joint learning sessions)?	During the contract, Wellcome would like the selected supplier to take the lead on the design and delivery of the project. Wellcome will work with the selected supplier in the check ins to provide skills and expertise that will help in the design process and will provide final sign off on the designed programme of support. Therefore, the selected supplier can expect us to contribute our skills and expertise where possible to ensure we have a productive relationship. We will be open to hear the type of relationship that the supplier would like to have with the Wellcome team.
31	What proportion or percentage of the £1 million funding is anticipated to cover administrative costs? What proportion or percentage is also anticipated for business development support,	The £1 million for grant funding is separate to operational costs. The £1 million represents the maximum amount that Wellcome is able to distribute to Black-led initiatives. The supplier should include in their proposal any operational costs they would need

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	<p>capacity-building (including research-specific support)? Are there set parameters around the percentage of funds used for the administration of the grant, and, for capacity-building, compared to direct funding going to Black-led organisations?</p>	<p>to deliver their outlined programme including business development support or capacity-building activities that they would like to provide.</p> <p>We have not set any parameters around the percentage regarding the use of funds for administration of grants and for capacity building compared to direct funding to Black-led initiatives. However, we would expect the costs to be reasonable and justifiable.</p>
32	<p>Are there specific guidelines or restrictions regarding the use of grant funding for initiatives (e.g., operational costs, staff salaries, or infrastructure development)?</p>	<p>There are no specific guidelines or restrictions on how we would like the funding to be used. The project is aiming to provide flexible funding in an “unrestricted” manner. Therefore, Black-led initiatives can use the funding in the way that will best enable them to become more sustainable.</p>
33	<p>What role will the partner organisation take on in the independent evaluation, and what resources would you provide in this process?</p>	<p>The partner organisation should work with the independent evaluator to make sure the project is thoroughly evaluated. This could be for example, by taking part in interviews, focus groups, providing case studies or sharing data. We are not planning to provide extra resources for this as the evaluation should take place while the supplier is still contracted by Wellcome.</p>
34	<p>What would the Wellcome Trust like to see from this programme of work? What does success look like for Wellcome and its teams, in 5 years’ time?</p>	<p>Success from this project would be increased capacity, stability and community of Black-led initiatives who support the careers of Black researchers. This would enable better experiences for Black researchers in academia and a stronger connection between Wellcome and Black researchers.</p> <p>We also want to learn from this partnership approach. This is quite a different way of funding for Wellcome so we want to understand what the success and failures of this approach are, the impact it has on the Black-led initiatives and our partner</p>

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		organisation, and what would need to change if we were to do it again, then we would like to share this with the wider sector.
35	How will the partner's work in Phase 2 align with the larger goals of Phase 3 (long-term system change), and is there potential for extended collaboration beyond the initial three years?	Currently, we do not have plans for the partner's work in Phase 2 to align directly into Phase 3. Through our focus group research we heard repetitively that leaders of these Black-led initiatives felt that their work should not exist and would not be needed if the system and institutions played their part. Therefore, Phase 3 refers to work that Wellcome will be doing to challenge the academic system and collaborate with other funders to ensure we are playing our part in shifting the system. Therefore, there is not currently scope for extended collaboration beyond the initial contract period, but we are open to hear about how we can make the work in Phase 3 more impactful and how the work from Phase 2 can feed into this more.
36	If funding is being launched in November 2025 when do we anticipate the first round of funding to be carried out?	We have set a target date to launch the funding scheme in November 2025. How this scheme is carried out will be dependent on the methodology and timeline proposed by the supplier. However, as a guide we have set a target date of February 2026 for the first Black-led initiatives to receive their grants. Again, this date is not set in stone and is very dependent on the approach outlined by the supplier.
37	Are we able to partner with another organization to help manage the grant fund? If so is there a limit to how much of the funds can be sub awarded	Yes, please indicate in your proposal the lead applicant and list partner organisations. In terms of award limits for sub-awardees, we are open to working with the supplier to work out what would be the best award value to meet the needs of our grant awardees. In the RFP we have stated we expect individual grants to not exceed £60,000 over 3 years.

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38	Is there a minimum value award limit and a maximum value award limit?	We have not set a minimum award value but we have stated in the RFP that we would not like award values to exceed £60,000 over 3 years.
39	Is there a maximum number of black led initiatives for the grant funding process	We don't have a maximum number of Black-led initiatives that we would like to support. But we do have a maximum budget of £1 million to distribute in grants which will ultimately determine the maximum number of Black-led initiatives who can be supported through the grant funding process.
40	Will the funding call be international or just UK focused?	The funding call will be UK focused only.
41	Will the funding contract between the chosen organization and welcome be in place for 5 years?	Yes, we are happy to contract a supplier for up to 5 years. The final contract length is dependent on the proposed funding approach and contract negotiation.
42	Who will be responsible for the cost for carrying out the independent research evaluation?	We don't have anyone in place to do this evaluation yet, but Wellcome plans to contract another supplier to support this part of the project. Therefore, this additional cost will be managed by Wellcome.
43	Who will manage the cost centre for the income and expenditure of the grant?	We would expect the supplier to be able to accept the large £1 million grant from Wellcome and distribute the funds to successful applicants. Therefore, the supplier will be responsible for ensuring that the grantees receive and spend their grants in a manner that aligns with Wellcome's charitable mission. However, as these grants are flexible and "unrestricted" we aim to leave it to the awardees to determine how best to spend their money to support their initiatives long term ambitions and stability.
44	What format will you require for grant reporting – will research fish be used?	We do not have pre-determined ideas on how the grant reporting should be done. We will leave this to the supplier to determine. However, Wellcome will need to know that the

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		<p>money is spent in a manner that aligns with our charitable mission. You can see our charitable objectives here. How information is reported to the partner organisation and then to Wellcome in a manner that is not too onerous to the Black-led initiatives should be considered.</p>