



## **Request for Proposal (RFP) for Developing standardised Cholera Epidemiology Definitions through expert consultations and DELPHI method**

### **1. RFP Background & Objectives**

#### **About Wellcome**

Wellcome is a politically and financially independent global charitable foundation. We support science to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone. Wellcome supports discovery research into life, health and wellbeing, and is taking on three worldwide health challenges: mental health, climate and health and infectious diseases. In 2021, Wellcome established the Infectious Disease Health Challenge, whose vision is a world in which escalating infectious diseases are under control in communities most affected.

#### **Background**

In July 2024, the Wellcome Epidemics & Epidemiology team convened a Cholera Transmission Dynamics Workshop to identify research gaps in understanding cholera transmission. A key finding at the workshop was the requirement for adopting standardised definitions on cholera epidemiology in research and public health. Current terms, stemming in the pre-genomics era, are ambiguously used, leading to miscommunications amongst the research community, funders, and other cholera stakeholders. For example, aquatic environments were traditionally considered a 'cholera reservoir' but genomic research now suggest their role as a 'conduit for transmission'. To conduct studies to test this role of aquatic environments we need precise definitions. Moreover, key terms such as 'endemic' or 'epidemic' for cholera are based on clinical case numbers but do not take into account asymptomatic transmission.

Standardised definitions are essential for cholera research and public health at large to avoid miscommunications, ensuring people understand what phenomena are being discussed, and that appropriate interventions are deployed for the right cholera epidemiological setting. For cholera epidemiology research specifically, standardised definitions are critical for ensuring consistency (studying/ discussing the same phenomena), comparability (e.g. identifying transmission patterns), replicability of research studies, data integration (leading to more robust datasets, i.e. combining genomics and clinical data), effective surveillance, clear communication, and intervention guidance.

#### **Objectives**

Wellcome, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) is therefore seeking to commission a supplier to establish standardised definitions on cholera epidemiology. This project has four objectives:

**Objective 1:** Identification of cholera epidemiology definitions in need of refinement, and identification of stakeholders to take part in the definitions' validation exercise to endorse the list of definitions



**Objective 2:** Reach consensus on newly refined definitions amongst a wide range of cholera research and public health stakeholders

**Objective 3:** Dissemination of refined definitions through publication on the WHO/GTFCC website and in a scientific journal (e.g. the Lancet)

**Objective 4:** Promote uptake and adoption of the collectively agreed-upon definitions amongst key cholera stakeholders through presentations at cholera conferences and meetings, and engagement with the cholera research and public health community

## **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 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. Wellcome and the WHO Cholera Programme will jointly decide on contract awardee.

### **Audience**

The intended audience of this work is the cholera research community and public health stakeholders at global and country-level. We aim to develop a comprehensive and collectively endorsed list of cholera epidemiology definitions that work for both public health and research purposes to foster a unified understanding of these terms.

### **Approach**

We propose the following approach:

1. Review of scientific literature, Global Taskforce For Cholera Control (GTFCC) resources, and other relevant resources to identify terms and definitions in need of refinement.
2. Consultation no. 1 with a small group of stakeholders to refine the definitions and to undertake stakeholder mapping and prioritisation for consultation no. 2.
3. Consultation no. 2 with a large group of stakeholders for a validation exercise of the refined definitions using the DELPHI method.
4. Dissemination of newly defined definitions.

### **Review of literature and other relevant resources**

This structured review should include published and grey literature (the supplier is invited to suggest an appropriate publication timeframe) and other relevant resources such as the recording of Wellcome's July 2024 cholera transmission dynamics workshop and GTFCC resources.

The anticipated outcome of the literature review would be a comprehensive overview of:

- 1) Terms and definitions in need of refinement
- 2) Definitions that are well-established and do not require redefining
- 3) Determine how disease epidemiology definitions are used for other relevant infectious diseases and determine whether they are appropriate for use in cholera epidemiology



- 4) A list of stakeholders that would be invited to take part in the validation exercise (consultation 2)

### **Consultation 1 with a small group of stakeholders**

We expect the successful supplier to be able to organise and run an at least one **in-person** consultation exercise (with virtual option for those who cannot attend in-person) with a selective list of cholera experts to:

- 1) Refine definitions identified during the literature review. This consultation should also be used to identify additional definitions in need of refinement
- 2) A structured stakeholder mapping exercise (including prioritisation of stakeholder engagement) to complement the list of stakeholders identified during the literature review. Stakeholders will need to include:
  - a. Academics (including participants of the July 2024 workshop)
  - b. Research funders (such as Wellcome, the Gates Foundation, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, National Institutes of Health)
  - c. Regional health bodies representing several regions affected by cholera (e.g. Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization Regional Offices)
  - d. Ministries of Health from cholera affected countries
  - e. NGOs working on the ground in cholera control (e.g., Epicentre)
  - f. Research Institutions in cholera affected countries (e.g., Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme, Kenya Medical Research Institute, International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh)

The in-person consultation is ideally to be conducted in an African country affected by cholera. However, if visa and travel logistics pose a barrier, the consultation may take place at an alternative location. We expect the supplier to suggest the appropriate location and timing for this consultation (i.e. a side meeting at an appropriate conference or symposia).

**Please include a cost estimate for organising the in-person consultation in your budget proposal (incl. participant travel and accommodation).**

### **Consultation 2: validation exercise with a wider group of stakeholders**

We expect the successful supplier to conduct a validation exercise using the DELPHI method to reach consensus on the cholera definitions amongst key cholera stakeholders (identified during the literature review and consultation exercise). The DELPHI process should include at least three rounds of structured feedback, with clear consensus thresholds (e.g., 80% agreement) and pre-defined criteria for terminating the process. This validation exercise can be done online or at relevant cholera meetings such as the GTFCC working group meetings.



## Outputs

The two key outputs of this project are 1) a publication of a glossary including the revised definitions and those that did not need refinement on the WHO/GTFCC website and 2) article(s) in a scientific journal such as Lancet.

## Dissemination

We expect a comprehensive dissemination strategy involving presentations at cholera-focused conferences and GTFCC meetings. Key dissemination locations should include at a minimum the annual GTFCC meeting, at least one regional WHO meeting, and at least two major international scientific conferences.

## Project oversight

Please note submitted proposals will be shared with WHO as well as Wellcome.

Project oversight and guidance will be provided by a steering committee comprising of 7-10 members representing key stakeholder groups (research, public health, funding bodies). The committee will meet virtually to review progress and provide strategic guidance.

## 3. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issue to Suppliers and issued on <a href="#">Contract Opportunities</a> webpage	Wellcome	11 Feb 2025
2	Submission of Expression of Interest and Supplier Q&A	Supplier	18 Feb 2025
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers	Wellcome	27 Feb 2025
4	Submission of RFP Response	Supplier	10 March 2025
5	RFP Evaluation Period	Wellcome	10 March 2025 to 21 March 2025
6	Supplier Presentations	Supplier	24 March 2025 to 4 April 2025
7	Notification of Contract Award	Wellcome	April 2025
8	Contract Negotiation	Wellcome & Supplier	April 2025
9	Contract Start Date	Wellcome & Supplier	May 2025



#### **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.

- Confirming whether you are an organisation or individual
- If an organisation please provide registered name, address, and registration number.
- A non-binding cost estimate as a single figure in GBP
- Any questions you have about the exercise and activity

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/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.

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.

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.

We will review expressions of interest to ensure that proposals fit within the scope of the RFP. Where we are satisfied of this, we will invite organisations to submit a full proposal to the RFP in accordance with the RFP timetable. Please note that you should only submit a full proposal to the RFP if you have been invited to do so.

##### **RFP Response**

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



#	Question	Max pages
<b>Team</b>		
1	A brief overview of your organisation, including your track record and expertise relevant to analysis of the type outlined in this RFP. Please also include a brief description of who would be involved in the project team, their qualifications/experience and their main responsibilities.	1
2	What makes you best placed to fulfil Wellcome's requirements set out in this RFP?	1
<b>Approach</b>		
3	Your proposed approach to this work, including the proposed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodology</li> <li>• Timeframes</li> <li>• Management plan, including role of team members</li> <li>• Plan for engagement with Wellcome during contract</li> <li>• Plan for production of final glossary and scientific journal article, including copy editing, formatting and graphics</li> <li>• Diversity and inclusion planning (how you will ensure that: the literature reviewed, and interviews conducted will be inclusive to different groups of people and locations; your methodology does not introduce bias).</li> </ul>	6
4	Case studies of where you have successfully provided similar services to those described in this RFP	2
5	Highlight any risks you foresee in meeting the RFP requirements and any mitigation you will undertake	1
<b>Costs</b>		
6	Cost proposal detailing and justifying the proposed costs to meet our requirements including breakdown as necessary. <b>Please include a cost-estimate for organising travel and accommodation for the in-person consultation.</b>	1
<b>Other</b>		
7	Provide details of any existing restrictions that may impact your ability to meet Wellcome's requirements. These should include (but not be limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicts of interest with other clients</li> <li>• Conflicts of interest with internal Wellcome staff</li> <li>• Restrictions on your licence to operate in certain jurisdictions</li> </ul>	1



## Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Detail	%
Methodology	<i>Coverage:</i> How well are the desired focus areas (as outlined in the specification) covered in the proposed methodology address? <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?	35%
Experience	<i>Skills and Experience:</i> Does the supplier have the relevant skills, experience, and contextual understanding to deliver this work?	30%
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?	20%
Budget	<i>Value for Money:</i> Is the proposed work within your budget and good value for money?	10%
EDI	<i>Do they have EDI policies and are these being put into practice in the proposal?</i>	5%
Accessibility	<i>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. *</i>	NA
	<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.

Suppliers submitting proposals should review Wellcome's Standard Terms and Conditions [document](#).

Individuals submitting proposals through their own personal services company please highlight this to the Wellcome contact immediately (see point 6 below).



## Data Protection

Wellcome is committed to upholding data protection principles and protecting your information. The [Wellcome privacy statement](#) 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 UK 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 UK [GDPR article 30](#) requirements.

## **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.

## **5. 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).

## **6. 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.

## **7. 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.

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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.

## **10. Funding**

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

## **11. 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.

## **12. Environmental Sustainability**

Wellcome is playing its part tackling the climate crisis through its mission-driven Climate & Health strategic programme.

In addition, our [Sustainability programme](#) aims to address the environmental impacts and carbon emissions of our activities and operations.



Our suppliers have a key part to play delivering on our sustainability ambitions.

We expect all our suppliers to take active steps to:

- Address their environmental impacts, for instance as part of a certified Environmental Management System.
- Reduce the carbon emissions of their products and services, for instance by adopting Science-Based targets and plans to deliver them.
- Embed environmental considerations in the sourcing and delivery of goods and services to Wellcome, across all stages of their life cycle.

### **13. Wellcome Contact Details**

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

Name:	Roisin Brown
Pronouns	She/Her
Role:	Procurement Officer
Email:	RFP@wellcome.org