



**Request for Proposal (RFP) for
(1) Facilitation of a meeting of the Pathogen Variants Network in Thailand in
September 2025; and
(2) Preparation of a meeting report**

Suppliers may submit proposals for (1) or (2) individually, or both parts together.

1. RFP Background & Objectives

In 2022, Wellcome funded six research teams through an open call for proposals, to carry out research on the immunology, virology and structural biology of novel SARS-CoV-2 variants, to generate evidence that would be used by policy-makers in responding to and controlling Covid-19 in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs). An additional aim of the call was to build capability in LMICs to enable local researchers to lead the research response to future infectious disease outbreaks.

To maximise the impact of this funding, the Pathogen Variants Network has been formed, bringing together the six research teams through network meetings and working groups to promote networking and collaboration.

Wellcome is organising the third annual meeting of Pathogen Variants Network members on 23-25 September 2025, bringing together members of the six research teams in a predominantly in-person meeting format in Bangkok, Thailand. Up to 70 people will attend in person, we anticipate up to 10 people to attend online. Delegates will arrive on 23 September, and facilitation and a meeting report are required for two full days on 24 and 25 September (approximately 15 hours of facilitating time in total, including breaks and lunch hours), with an earlier finish on 25 September to enable delegates to travel home on the same evening.

The aims of the meeting will be:

- To present research from across the network, in particular to showcase the work of Early and Mid-Career Researchers (EMCRs);
- To provide networking opportunities across the six teams;
- To identify priorities for the final eight months of the network project and consider how the remaining network activities can best build future outbreak preparedness;
- To reflect on the learnings from this network project.

The meeting will be structured as a series of longer talks, short talks, poster presentations, panel discussions and breakout discussions. We would like everyone present to contribute to the discussions.

What we would like to achieve during the meeting is:

- EMCRs have an opportunity to showcase and discuss their research with experts from other teams;
- Researchers are informed about relevant research by other teams and about network activities over the past year;
- Collaborations are established or strengthened between researchers from different teams with common scientific interests;
- Researchers have the opportunity to identify potential future collaborative research projects;



- Feedback is gathered from network members to shape the final eight months of network activities, and to inform how Wellcome approaches similar network projects in future.

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 to limit ambition or innovation.

Please make clear which Proposal you are submitting for, or if you are proposing to submit for both Proposals

Proposal One – Meeting Facilitation

We seek to appoint an experienced facilitator to facilitate the workshop on 24 and 25 September 2025. We need the selected facilitator to do the following:

- Rapidly familiarise themselves with the project and understand our desired outcomes.
- Work with the Network Steering Committee to finalise the aims and agenda for the meeting.
- Work with the Network Steering Committee and Wellcome to finalise roles and responsibilities for key participants (e.g. chairs of presentation sessions or breakout groups, poster judges) and prepare a short briefing document to ensure that all key participants understand the purpose of their session and their role within it.
- Facilitate all sessions at the workshop. This includes introducing speakers and facilitating Q&A and panel discussions ensuring diverse perspectives from the participants are heard.
- Lead a session on priority activities for the final eight months of the network, and how the remaining network activities can best build future outbreak preparedness, including a prioritisation exercise of the options network members put forward.
- Collaborate with session chairs to guide and steer discussions effectively.
- Effectively managing the timing and schedule of the event.
- The selected facilitator(s):
- Can be freelance, sole contractors or working as part of organisations, provided they can deliver on the outlined project scope.
- While it is not necessary for the facilitator to be an expert in the field, they should possess a solid understanding of infectious disease research. If needed, the facilitator should be able to bring in additional experts to provide insights and expertise.

The Pathogen Variants Network has a Steering Committee of six Principal Investigators from the research teams, and while the high-level aims of this meeting have been defined, we would



like the facilitator to meet with the Steering Committee to finalise a detailed plan for a meeting agenda of activities to achieve these aims.

Proposal Two – Science Writer

We also seek to appoint an experienced science writer to prepare a meeting report for Wellcome’s internal use. We need the selected writer to:

- Rapidly familiarise themselves with the project and understand our desired outcomes.
- Prepare a meeting report of up to 20 pages (excluding appendices) which contains:
 - Executive summary
 - Short background to the project and the purpose of this meeting.
 - A summary of each meeting session, with a particular focus on identifying the themes within discussions and drawing out the conclusions and recommendations.
 - Participants’ priority activities for the remaining eight months of the project, drawn from discussions throughout the meeting
 - Lessons learned for future similar network projects: what has gone well and what would participants like to have seen done differently, both within this meeting and overall throughout this project?
 - Conclusions and recommendations on how to maximise the benefit of the network over its remaining term, based on the meeting discussions.

The selected writer(s):

- Can be freelance, sole contractors or working as part of organisations, provided they can deliver on the outlined project scope.
- While it is not necessary for the writer to be an expert in the field, they should possess a solid understanding of infectious disease research. If needed, the writer should be able to bring in additional experts to provide insights and expertise.

3. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issued on Contract Opportunities webpage	Wellcome	10/02/2025
2	Submission of Expression of Interest and Supplier Q&A	Supplier	24/02/2025
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers	Wellcome	04/03/2025
4	Submission of RFP Response	Supplier	10/03/2025
5	RFP Evaluation Period	Wellcome	11/03/2025 to 28/03/2025
6	Supplier Presentations	Supplier	31/03/2025 to 25/04/2025



#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
7	Notification of Contract Award	Wellcome	12/05/2025
8	Contract Negotiation	Wellcome & Supplier	12/05/2025 – 30/05/2025
9	Contract Start Date	Wellcome & Supplier	01/06/2025

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.

Please confirm which Proposal you are submitting questions for (Proposal One: Facilitator and/ or Proposal Two: Science Writer)

- 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

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.

RFP Response

Please confirm which Proposal you are submitting questions for (Proposal One; Facilitator and/ or Proposal Two: Science Writer)

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

#	Question	Max Words
1	Describe how (including stages and timeframes) you propose to meet our requirements.	500 words



2	<p>Provide a cost proposal which details and justifies the proposed costs to meet our requirements.</p> <p>Please include travel costs to attend the meeting in Bangkok from 23-25 September 2025, excluding the cost of accommodation and meals which will be provided as part of the event.</p>	200 words
3	<p>Provide 3 references (inclusive of contact name, organisation, brief overview of work provided, email & telephone) who Wellcome can contact as part of this RFP process.</p>	200 words
4	<p>Provide 2 case studies of where you have successfully provided services similar to those described in this request for proposal.</p> <p>If you are submitting a proposal for the science writer role, please provide an example of relevant previous work as an attachment to your proposal.</p>	200 words
5	<p>Highlight to us any risks which you foresee with meeting Wellcome's requirements.</p>	200 words
6	<p>What makes you best placed to fulfil Wellcome's requirements set out within this request?</p>	200 words
7	<p>How would you ensure equity, diversity and inclusion considerations are embedded throughout the planning, development and delivery of the project?</p>	200 words

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Detail	%
Methodology	<p>Will the supplier's proposed approach to meeting the requirements set out in this RFP, deliver the desired, credible, and useful results?</p>	30%
Experience	<p><i>Skills and Experience:</i> Does the supplier have the relevant skills, experience, and contextual understanding to deliver this work?</p>	30%
Delivery & Outputs	<p><i>Communication:</i> Is there a good plan for communicating with the Wellcome team?</p> <p><i>Delivery plan:</i> Is the proposed delivery plan appropriate and achievable?</p>	20%



	<i>Feasibility: How feasible is the delivery plan? Are there significant risks associated with the proposed timelines, and how well are they mitigated?</i>	
Budget	<i>Value for Money: Is the proposed work good value for money?</i>	10%
EDI	<i>Does the supplier have EDI policies and are these being put into practice in the proposal?</i>	10%
	Total:	100%

Contract Feedback

Wellcome is not able to enter into negotiation with Suppliers over amendments to our Standard terms and conditions. Please only submit a proposal if you know you can or have confirmed that your organisation can agree to these terms and conditions.

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).

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 invited to a virtual meeting which will last 30 minutes to an hour and will be a 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](https://www.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.

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