



## Request for Proposal (RFP) for

# Landscape review of employment contracts and salary provision for academic researchers in multiple countries.

## 1. RFP Background

### 1.1. Context

Wellcome is a politically and financially independent global charitable foundation that supports science to solve urgent health challenges facing everyone. It does this primarily through providing grants to organisations for their employees to carry out specific research projects. The majority of grants (70%) are awarded to UK organisations, predominantly universities but the proportion awarded to overseas organisations is increasing. Wellcome does not employ the researchers carrying out the research it funds. Eligibility for Principal Investigators (PI's) and Co-Investigators (Co-I's) to request salaries and on-costs in grant applications depends on where their administrating organisation is based, their contract type and their career stage. Our [Discovery Award scheme page](#) has full details of the requirements.

### 1.2 UK and Republic of Ireland (RoI)

**Early and mid-career researchers:** can request salary costs on grants as they are in the process of establishing their research careers.

**Established researchers:** cannot request salary costs on grants. Wellcome expects that such senior and experienced researchers to have been provided with stable employment via a permanent, open ended or long-term rolling contract that includes coverage of their salary.

**All career stages:** researchers with contracts requiring them to get their salary from grants ('soft money contracts') are ineligible to apply as PI's. They can apply as Co-I's for all funding streams which allow this role. Wellcome adopted this position because we want to discourage precarious employment practices in the UK/RoI, to avoid institutions making employment dependent on obtaining a Wellcome grant and to promote sustainable careers for researchers.

However, we are aware that there are increasingly different employment practices for researchers in UK universities, including 'soft-money', fixed term and permanent or 'tenured' contracts.

### 1.3 Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)

**All career stages:** researchers with 'soft-money' contracts can apply as PI's. We are advised that academic researchers in LMIC institutions are often granted a permanent, open ended or rolling contract earlier in their career than is the norm in the UK, but often without salary. On occasion, it is understood that salary must be obtained from other sources but the contract itself does not overtly state this



Researchers with soft money contracts can apply as Co-I's for all funding streams which allow this role.

#### **1.4 High Income Countries (excluding UK and Republic of Ireland)**

**All career stages:** researchers with soft money contracts can apply as PI's.

We are aware that other countries may have different academic employment contracting norms to the UK. For example, in the US it appears common practice for academics to have contracts that provide only nine months' salary that covers their term-time teaching duties, with the option of finding grant funding to undertake research for the remaining three months: effectively a partial soft money contract.

Researchers with soft money contracts can apply as Co-I's for all funding streams which allow this role. Organisations must agree to provide their salary if they cannot get it from other sources for the period of time they are working on the grant.

#### **1.5 Teaching buy-out**

There is an established practice in UK academic Humanities and Social Science research for 'teaching buy-out', where funders provide funds on a grant for the employment of a replacement lecturer for a period to protect the research time of the grant holder. On Wellcome grants, funds for teaching buy-out can cover up to 33% of the PI's contracted time. To our knowledge, this is not established practice in academic biomedical research and cannot be requested by these researchers on Wellcome grants.

### **2. Objectives**

Wellcome wants to better understand the employment contract landscape by commissioning an external supplier to undertake a landscape review of employment contracts, that:

- a) Provides robust evidence related to the:
  - contract types in use
  - prevalence of each type
  - drivers behind contract choice by employers in all the specified countries.
- b) Documents the provision by funders of teaching buy-out support for researchers and the degree to which the allocated funds are used for this purpose by PI's and Co-I's.

### **3. RFP Specification**

#### **3.1 Scope**

This section sets out the specification of the landscape review and report for this RFP exercise. Wellcome will be guided by the supplier as to what is an appropriate budget to deliver the desired outcomes for this work.

We seek to identify a supplier who will undertake a landscape review of the specified countries (see below) that:



- Identifies the types of contracts used to employ researchers and what determines the choice of contract used.
- Documents the prevalence of each type of contract and whether this has changed over the last 10 years. This should include an analysis of:
  - different research areas
  - career stages
  - geographical location
  - type of organisation
- Documents how Wellcome’s eligibility requirement for organisations to underwrite Co-I’s salaries affect researchers’ inclusion in Wellcome applications. Analyse any identified impacts by:
  - different research areas
  - career stage
  - type of organisation
  - country.
- Documents the provision and conditions of use of teaching buy out by funders in UK and other specified countries, including.
  - whether these have changed in the last 10 years and identify the drivers behind any change.
  - Describing organisations’ regulations in implementing teaching buy out.

### 3.2 Specified Countries

Country	Reason for inclusion
UK	Wellcome is a UK organisation
Republic of Ireland	Subject to same eligibility criteria as UK organisations
India Kenya Malawi South Africa Thailand Vietnam	Countries hosting Wellcome Major International Projects
Australia Germany USA	Countries receiving a large amount of funding from Wellcome and a high number of grants across a range of organisations

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.



### 3.3 Deliverables

- A short methodology and review proposal, defining the parameters and scope, within two weeks of contracting (no more than 6 pages).
- An interim update to Wellcome (format and date to be confirmed). Update meetings between the supplier and Wellcome will also be required, monthly or more frequently, as needed.
- A full report that meets the objectives set out in Section 2 and the specification in section 3 (maximum 10-15 pages, excluding annexes) and an executive summary (maximum of 2 pages) by the agreed completion date. Please use 11 font sizes.
- A presentation of the findings to Wellcome
- Report and presentation to be delivered by 31 August 2025.

### 4. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issued on <a href="#">Contract Opportunities</a> webpage]	Wellcome	7 February 2025
2	Submission of Supplier Q&A	Supplier	17 February 2025
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers	Wellcome	21 February 2025
4	Submission of RFP Response	Supplier	3 March 2025
5	RFP Evaluation Period	Wellcome	4 –13 March 2025
6	Supplier Presentations	Supplier	24 - 28 March
7	Notification of Contract Award	Wellcome	W/c 31 March
8	Contract Start Date	Wellcome & Supplier	Mid April

### 5. RFP proposal

#### 5.1 Supplier Q&A

Suppliers are asked to send any questions they may have around this exercise by e-mail to the Wellcome Contact in accordance with the RFP timetable, on your return email please confirm 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

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.

## 5.2 RFP Response

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

#	Area
1	How you propose to approach the objectives, including an outline of your methodology, its parameters and scope (including examples).
2	A proposed delivery plan which will enable you to meet the deliverables and timelines outlined above. This should include details of how and when you will regularly update Wellcome on progress, and any risks associated with the timelines set out.
3	Budget of the proposed activities costed against the requested deliverables with a brief supporting narrative per budget line.
4	Summary of data protection risks and how you will mitigate against them.
5	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 Wellcome staff</li></ul>
6	A brief outline of your approach to equity, diversity and inclusion in your work.

Proposals should be sent as a PDF or word document and should be no more than 10 pages (excluding images)



### 5.3 Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Detail	%
Methodology	Coverage: How well are the desired focus areas (as outlined in the specification) covered in the proposed methodology address? Quality: Is the proposed methodology aligned with our needs? Utility: Will the proposed methodology deliver the desired, credible, and useful results?	30%
Experience	Skills and Experience: Does the supplier have the relevant skills, experience, and contextual understanding to deliver this work?	30%
Delivery & Outputs	Communication: Is there a good plan for communicating with the Wellcome team? Delivery plan: Is the proposed delivery plan appropriate and achievable? Feasibility: How feasible is the delivery plan? Are there significant risks associated with the proposed timelines, and how well are they mitigated?	30%
Budget	Value for Money: Is the proposed work good value for money?	5%
EDI	Do they have EDI policies and are these being put into practice in the proposal?	5%
Accessibility	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.	n/a
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 5.4 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 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 10 below).

### 5.5 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.

## **5.6 Supplier Presentations**

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

## **6. About Wellcome**

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

## **7. Prospective Suppliers Personnel - IR35 and Off Payroll Working Rules**

Before the RFP response deadline, Prospective Suppliers must make the Wellcome contact aware if they are intending to submit a proposal where the services will be provided by any individuals who are engaged by the Prospective Supplier via an intermediary i.e.

- Where the Prospective Supplier is an individual contracting through their own personal services company; or
- The Prospective Supplier is providing individuals engaged through intermediaries, for the purposes of the IR35 off-payroll working rules.

## **8. Equity Diversity and Inclusion**

Embracing [diversity and inclusion](#) is fundamental to delivering our mission to improve health, and we are committed to cultivating a fair and healthy environment for the people who work here and those we work with. We want to cultivate an inclusive and diverse culture, and as we learn more about barriers that disadvantage certain groups from progressing in our workplace, we will remove them.

Wellcome takes diversity and inclusion seriously, and we want to partner with Suppliers who share our commitment. We may ask you questions related to D&I as part of our RFP processes.



## 9. 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.

## 10. 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.

## 11. Funding

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

## 12. 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.

## 13. 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.

#### **14. Wellcome Contact Details**

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

Name: Lindsey Atkins-Tamblin  
Pronouns: She/Her  
Role: Procurement Manager  
Email: RFP@Wellcome.org