

# RFP for developing a brand story for Discovery at Wellcome.

## In a nutshell

- We are seeking an agency to help us create and deliver a compelling brand story for Discovery
- Wellcome's work is broadly divided into two modes – Discovery and Solutions – under which sit all our strategic programmes.
- Discovery mode includes our [Discovery Research](#) programme, proposed activity on AI and computational science, [Wellcome Sanger Institute](#), [Wellcome Leap](#) and many activities undertaken by our free museum and library, [Wellcome Collection](#).
- We need a cohesive narrative that brings these different projects together under one banner. Developing this brand story will help facilitate effective communication around this activity and strengthen Wellcome's position at the forefront of science and research.

## 1: Background and objectives

### Who we are

#### *Our mission*

Wellcome is a global charitable foundation established in 1936. We support science to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone. This is our mission: it's what we do.

With a £37.6 billion investment portfolio, we give researchers the time and resources they need to make breakthroughs.

We also work with policy makers, run advocacy campaigns, and form partnerships with other organisations to ensure everyone, everywhere benefits from advances in health science.

Between 2022 and 2032, we plan to spend £16 billion on our mission.

#### *Health equity*

Our vision is a healthier future for everyone.

This can only be achieved in a world where everyone's experience of health matters. We are accountable to society for delivering our mission and have a role to play in making health outcomes more equitable within and between countries.

To drive equitable health outcomes, we:

- advance inclusive practices in grant funding and directly commissioned research, to drive better science
- bring together researchers, affected communities and others across society to deliver appropriate and impactful solutions.

### *Beliefs and values*

Our beliefs provide the focus for our strategy, policy and funding decisions. They define our view of the world and the reasons why we have a mission to change it for the better.

- We believe in the power of science to build a healthier future for everyone.
- We believe science has its greatest benefits through collaborative action across society.
- We believe diversity of people and expertise leads to richer understanding and more impactful discoveries.
- We believe everyone's experience of health matters, and everyone should be able to benefit from science.
- We believe we should take on risks and tough challenges – especially when others aren't.

Our values guide how we behave, work and lead – both individually and as an organisation. They help define what makes Wellcome special as a place to work, and as people to work with.

- Transformative: we always strive to make a significant difference.
- Thoughtful: we care about our impact on people and the environment.
- Inclusive: we respect people and value difference.
- Brave: we stand by our beliefs and push boundaries.

### The challenge

In 2020, Wellcome launched a bold new strategy to continue supporting vital science and research to generate new knowledge about life, health and wellbeing (Discovery) and to take on three urgent health challenges facing everyone – climate and health, mental health and infectious diseases (Solutions).

We support Discovery in a variety of ways in our new Discovery Department :

- Discovery Research programme: Flexible funding for research in any discipline relating to health at any scale, from molecular mechanisms to cells, organs, systems, engineering biology, population health to societies.
- Proposed new activity on AI and computational science for discovery science and health. Equitable AI will be a big focus.

- Wellcome Sanger Institute: World-leading centre for genomic research in the UK, advancing our understanding of biology and improving health.
- Wellcome Leap: US based non-profit connecting scientists, technologists and innovators from around the world to pursue unconventional breakthroughs in human health (DARPA model for health).
- Wellcome Collection: Free museum and library, based in London, UK and online, that explores the past, present and future of health. Although not all Wellcome Collection activities sit under Discovery, the historic collection and archives left to us by Henry Wellcome are an invaluable resource for research.
- Rachel McKendry joined Wellcome in March 2025 as our inaugural Executive Director of Discovery

What we now call Discovery has been at the core of Wellcome's work since its inception. While the specifics of the Solutions challenges we're tackling might change, Discovery will always be central to Wellcome's identity and brand. Without a clear narrative, we have struggled to convey this message through the channels available.

We want to develop a narrative which brings all the elements of Discovery Department together, building on Wellcome's impact and legacy as well as focusing on interdisciplinary research and current strategic priorities such as genomics, spatial biology, data science and AI for health (disease prediction and prevention), engineering biology (also known as synthetic biology) and our support for the humanities and social sciences. Discovery is not a defined term (internally or externally) and has been mostly used by Wellcome to describe our Discovery Research programme.

This has led to some confusion from core audiences – researchers, policy makers and staff – about Wellcome's priorities, what funding is available to researchers and why the shift in focus has taken place.

This has been compounded by a necessary communications focus on the newly established Solutions programmes, as well as the replacement of funding streams focussed on specific disciplines with our three Discovery Research open-mode schemes.

Some of Wellcome's most established audiences have felt less valued under the new strategy, despite our continued investment in Discovery. We risk further confusion if the narrative for Discovery isn't clear on what we actually mean by it.

Additionally, science and research are facing global headwinds, including political instability, waning trust in science and rapid technological advancement. For organisations like Wellcome, which work across science and society on a global scale, it's more important than ever that we tell a compelling, galvanising and transparent story about our work. This story needs to sit above our programme messaging and help

inform everything from conversations with key external stakeholders to digital content and social media strategies.

## The goals

With the delivery of a compelling brand story for Discovery, we would expect to see -

- Greater coherence and understanding of our priorities within Discovery, including long term funding for curiosity driven research, genomics, spatial biology and AI, with the ability for any future priorities or initiatives to be added to the narrative
- Greater focus on genuinely interdisciplinary research (also known as convergence research or called science without borders), and new disciplines and fields where would like to grow eg AI, engineering biology, and emerging technologies
- Showcasing paradigm shifting /field opening science funded by Wellcome such as the Human Cell Atlas programme which is creating reference maps of human cells (A google maps of cells) as a basis for both understanding human health and diagnosing, monitoring and treating disease
- Greater focus on scientists funded via discovery, showcasing diverse leaders Greater understanding of how Wellcome is working in a trustworthy way and broadening the range of people leading, participating in and benefiting from science.
- Greater understanding of how culture, humanities and social science are integral to our vision and mission.
- Increased trust in Wellcome as an advocate for science and research.
- Wellcome's upcoming 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026 is an opportunity to celebrate discovery science

## 2: What we are looking for

We are open to suggestions on timelines and phases, but proposals should be clearly phased and scoped for delivery before the end of 2025.

2026 is Wellcome's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which could be leveraged in telling the Discovery brand story.

Example phases:

### Phase 1

Discovery (for Discovery). We have vast amounts of existing communications, audience data, communications analysis, message testing, UX testing, audience segmentation etc sitting within our departments. This needs to be collected and synthesised into actionable insights for the development of the Discovery brand story.

Additionally, we need key stakeholders within Wellcome to feed into this process and provide the steer for the priorities in their areas of work.

## Phase 2

Discovery brand story development. Help us bring together the narrative and develop the story that can map over all our communications. Key themes and messages, driven by the programs, partners and leadership, need to be identified and tested and Wellcome's newly developed Tone of Voice should be factored in.

## Phase 3

Implementation. Develop a plan for implementation which can work in our matrix structure. Which messages are delivered where and how does this ladder up to a cohesive brand story for Discovery?

## The audience

This narrative will be used across all Wellcome's core audiences – researchers, policy makers and staff. It will be targeted to the 'research community' in its broadest sense, including those doing research as well as individuals and organisations funding and influencing science and research in the UK and globally.

### Partners / Policy Influencers

- Science/research institutions e.g. universities
- Funders including government and philanthropy
- Private sector e.g. Deepmind
- Thinktanks

### Researchers

- Grant holders and applicants
- Research administrative staff.

The external audiences for Discovery can be broadly understood as spanning two groups; Wellcome's traditional research stakeholders (primarily UK-based bio-medical researchers, basic scientists and affiliated institutions) and newer stakeholders we're reaching out to (more diverse, global researchers and institutions).

The Discovery Brand narrative must work across all stakeholder groups but be adaptable for delivery to specific audiences. The successful supplier will help us to prioritise our stakeholder groups for delivery of the narrative.

While public audiences are not a target audience for this work, we need to be mindful that the topics and themes included in the narrative around cutting-edge research should be framed appropriately.

The chosen agency will have access to our in-depth audience segmentation work and will work alongside an agency delivering an insights synthesis project.

### Deliverables and suggested approaches

We are open to suggestions on the best approaches to phasing and completing this work and what deliverables might be.

The brand story for Discovery is the key deliverable, but this can take many forms. We would like your expertise on how best to house this narrative to make it accessible to all levels of the organisation.

We are also open to suggestions to key deliverables across the phases.

### 3: Response timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issued on Contract Opportunities webpage	Wellcome	23/04/2025
2	Deadline for Suppliers to ask questions and submit Expression of Interest.	Supplier	29/04/2025
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to all Suppliers and add to Contract Opportunities	Wellcome	1/05/2025
4	Submission of RFP Response (in line with requirements set out in section 4)	Supplier	11/05/2025
5	RFP Evaluation Period	Wellcome	12/05/2025 - 16/05/2025
6	Supplier Presentations	Supplier	21/06/2025 - 28/06/2025
7	Notification of contract award	Wellcome	Early June
8	Contract Negotiation	Wellcome / Supplier	Mid June
9	Start of contract	Wellcome / Supplier	Early of July

### 4: How to respond to this RFP

#### Expression of Interest

Suppliers are asked to submit a short expression of interest by e-mail to the Wellcome contact in accordance with the RFP timetable.

This should include a few lines confirming your intent to apply. In your response, please include:

- Whether you are an individual or a company (Full company name and number and Registered company address).
- Indication of the intention to submit a proposal as a standalone organisation or as part of a consortium or partnership. If the latter is the case, please indicate the names of your potential partners and your rationale for including them.
- Provide a non-binding cost estimate as a single figure (in GBP), excluding VAT, and any questions you have about the exercise and activity.

Important: Full proposals can be submitted even if a supplier has missed the deadline for Expressions of Interest.

### 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 an EOI/Q&A is not a binding commitment to submit a full proposal should your organisational priorities change. You will not be penalised for future opportunities.

### Full proposal

Please send us a proposal of no more than 15 pages by the date in the above timetable. A full proposal should show us the following:

- i. Your proposed approach with details of your multi-phase plan that addresses the needs outlined above
- ii. A timing plan to accompany your suggested approach that delivers within the timeframe outlined.
- iii. A good understanding of the novelty and complexity of this work which includes risks and assumptions underlying your proposal along with your recommendations for contingencies.
- iv. An understanding and commitment to upholding Wellcome's commitment to Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and our Beliefs and Values.
- v. Costs based on your proposed phases, deliverables and resource needs
- vi. An outline of your approach to project management, including communication and engagement plan with Wellcome
- vii. Recommendations on the key deliverables

- viii. Your knowledge and experience working on similar projects including 2 case studies with global organisations
- ix. Brief details of the project team assigned to this programme. We would like to see teams that reflect the diverse nature of our audiences and stakeholders.
- x. Your organisation's actions and policies on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- xi. A budget proposal including a breakdown of costs and any optional elements that is not more than £150,000 (ex VAT)

## Evaluation Criteria

During the RFP evaluation period the evaluation panel will independently evaluate your proposal against the criteria outlined below. All scores will be collated, discussed and a decision will be agreed on who progresses to the next stage of the procurement exercise.

Criteria	Detail	%
Methodology	Coverage: How well are the desired focus areas (as outlined in the specification) covered in the proposed methodology? 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?	25%
Delivery and Outputs	Communication: Is there a good plan for communicating with the Wellcome team? Coordination: How well is the supplier planning to leverage internal and external expertise to deliver this work? 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?	25%
Budget	Value for Money: Is the proposed work within your budget and good value for money?	10%
EDI	How well are EDI and accessibility considerations incorporated in the proposal?	10%



## Contract Feedback

Wellcome is not able to enter into negotiations 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 as sole traders (not registered) should review [Wellcome-Consultancy-Agreement-individual.pdf](#)

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

## 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: Supplier Presentations

Following a submission of the proposal, successful proposals will 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: 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: Amy Cox

Pronouns: She/her

Role: Stakeholder Communications Lead

Email: [a.cox@wellcome.org](mailto:a.cox@wellcome.org)