



Informing Women's Health and Gender Equity at Wellcome



Informing a cohesive sex and gender health equity approach at Wellcome

Wellcome is committed to fostering a healthier future for everyone through funding inclusive, high-quality research, supporting effective translation pathways to impact, and influencing across the global health architecture to support more equitable research and health practices. Core to this commitment lies the need to understand and integrate sex and gender equity into our work, ensuring that Wellcome's portfolios are, where relevant, addressing the biological and structural inequities which lead to differing health outcomes for people of different sexes and genders. Wellcome has already made significant strides in this mission, with multiple portfolios addressing specific gendered health challenges, and colleagues conducting discrete mapping exercises to understand possible opportunities for development in this area.

We now seek an independent supplier to support Wellcome in bringing these efforts together to inform a more cohesive strategic approach with clear guidance around the most appropriate next steps across the organization. The aims of this work are threefold: firstly, to support strategic teams to develop implementation plans for already existing sex and gender focused work packages. Secondly, we are seeking support to map out current gaps and opportunities within Wellcome's strategy and ways of working. Finally, we hope the supplier can utilize this analysis to support Wellcome's Equitable Research Practice Team to develop an impact framework with guidance and practical support for internal colleagues to implement following the completion of the contracted period. While we outline suggested methodologies and areas of focus, we recognize that suppliers bring valuable expertise in mapping and recommendation-setting through a gendered lens. We therefore invite proposals that explain how you would approach this work, including any innovative methods or frameworks you believe best meet these objectives.

If you are interested in working with Wellcome on this activity, please review the information below. This document explains the activity for which Wellcome is seeking proposals, timetable, required information from Suppliers and instructions on how to engage with us further. To ensure you are successful please read the whole document and answer the questions within the section(s). Responses should be made via email as below. Responses will not be accepted outside of the system.

Wellcome Contact Details

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

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1 Synopsis

Request for proposals to support Wellcome's Equity Department (Equitable Research Practice) in, supporting urgent impact-led sex and gender work packages, developing an understanding of Wellcome's existing approach to gendered health inequities and informing a cohesive approach to addressing health inequities experienced by people of all sexes and genders through Wellcome's work.

1.1 Background and Objectives

Background

Wellcome has a history of funding research which seeks to create more equitable health outcomes for communities most affected by health challenges, including people impacted by biological and structural inequities in the development of disease, likelihood of accessing care and experience of that care. In line with this mission, Wellcome is seeking to better understand the opportunities to integrate a more sex and gender intentional lens across our three strategic ways of working: engaging people, enabling and investing in research, and influencing change. Within all three of these methods of work, Wellcome has already begun to work to support more sex and gender inclusive approaches.

In 2023, Wellcome supported the "Women's Health Innovation Opportunity Map", led by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the US National Institutes of Health. The report identifies 50 opportunities for promoting innovation to improve the health of women. The recommendations span the entire women's health ecosystem and require input from all relevant stakeholders within this ecosystem, including research funders and philanthropic organizations such as Wellcome.

In 2025, Wellcome contributed to the World Economic Forum White Paper entitled "Prescription for Change: Policy Recommendations for Women's Health Research". The paper noted five key policy recommendations to address the significant R&D gap in women's health research: unlock innovation in women's health; expand the inclusion of women in clinical trials; enhance disaggregation of clinical trial data; design clinical trials with women in mind; and deepen insights sex-specific differences.

With these recommendations in mind, Wellcome has now implemented a Sex and Gender in Health Research policy, requiring all applicants for Wellcome funding to explain how their research will account for sex and gender differences, or provide a justification for not doing so. With the introduction of this policy, Wellcome recognizes that sex and gender can affect whether and how we develop certain health conditions, how well we respond to treatments and how often we seek care.

Across Wellcome's research and funding portfolio, efforts are being made to ensure Wellcome's work is contributing to greater sex and gender health equity, both within the current portfolio and within the future strategy and budget plans. Focus areas in Wellcome's current and future funding portfolio include heat and maternal health, women's mental health, the inclusion of pregnant people in clinical vaccine trials and scoping work on women's leadership in science.



Objectives

Wellcome's Equity (Equitable Research Practice) team is now seeking to help develop our organizational approach to better understand and address gaps in health equity for people of all sexes and genders across our work. Ultimately, this will allow us to be more intentional in how we approach our mission and impact.

Through this work, we hope to support the early implementation of impact-focused sex and gender work packages within our priority strategic areas (Infectious Disease, Climate and Health, Mental Health and Discovery). Secondly, we hope to plan for a more strategic and joined-up approach to sex- and gender-intentional research, influencing and policy development across Wellcome, building accountability, organizational learning and practical guidance for colleagues across Wellcome to implement this approach. The project will have three key objectives:

1. Facilitating coaching team sessions within strategic areas to support the development of impact-focused sex and gender-informed research and funding priority work packages.
2. Mapping and understanding cross-Wellcome ways of working and gaps to identify the opportunities for more impactful sex and gender intentional approaches, and benchmarking this against gender equity frameworks.
3. Informed by the first two steps, support in designing a way forward to translate commitments into organizational practice towards a cohesive and intentional sex and gender approach on a longer-term basis.

1.2 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. The indicative budget for this exercise is £45k- £55k exclusive of VAT, but Wellcome will be guided by the supplier as to possible negotiations around this cost depending on the activities proposed.

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.

Scope of Work

The proposed work builds on existing efforts within Wellcome to understand the opportunities for greater gender equity across our portfolio and ways of working. The aim of the proposed work is to support Wellcome in developing our organizational approach to be more intentional about integrating sex and gender equity concerns across our portfolio.

Phase 1: Project Planning and Alignment

The aim of this phase will be to align the project work with Wellcome's strategic ambitions and equity approach. Discussions and planning sessions with Wellcome's Equitable Research Practice team and the supplier will focus on:

- Creating a detailed plan for the next three phases of work
- Aligning on the ambitions of this work from an equity standpoint, and the equity frameworks to be utilized
- Aligning to Wellcome's strategic ambitions informing this work



Phase 2: Team sessions to support impact-focused sex and gender work packages

The proposed work aims to complement and support internal plans to evolve portfolios to address sex and gender health equity more explicitly across the next three years. As such, the work should begin with a focus on supporting Wellcome teams to accelerate the implementation of already developed plans around sex and gender work packages within Wellcome's strategic focus areas (Infectious Disease, Climate and Health, Mental Health and Discovery).

We are seeking support to host 4 team sessions (one with each strategic team) to facilitate the development and implementation of these work packages. This phase should include tailored support for the individual team areas to develop the appropriate infrastructure for impact-focused research and funding project development, and to align these projects to relevant sex and gender equity metrics as well as to Wellcome's strategic ambitions.

We hope that external facilitation will support teams in developing relevant approaches, identifying data gaps, and anticipating unintended consequences of existing approaches that might not deliver expected impact or may cause harm. Significant work has already been conducted across Wellcome in this area, with teams at various stages of ideation and implementation. As such, tailored support should account for the different stages of this work. The Phase One work alongside the Equity Team should support suppliers in planning this facilitation appropriately.

Phase 3: Mapping opportunities and gaps in Wellcome's ways of working to develop a more cohesive approach

Building on the work developed within individual teams, we are seeking support to inform a Wellcome-wide, comprehensive approach which brings together our multiple strategic objectives and ways of working (engaging people, enabling and investing in research, and influencing change), and sets clear accountability measures. This mapping will build on existing analysis of Wellcome's approach, and focus on key gaps in our approach, as well as potential opportunities for cohesion across the various strategic areas.

Through this analysis, we are seeking proposals which create a clearer picture of how health outcomes vary by sex, gender identity and gender expression, and where disparities exist in our understanding of causes resulting in limitations in the sex and gender equity measurement of our current approach. Areas of exploration for this analysis may include, but are not limited to:

- What do we not yet know due to a lack of sex and gender disaggregated data?
- What are the sex and gender implications arising from our current research themes and their potential health outcomes?
- How does taking an intersectional approach to this analysis alter our understanding? What are the implications of our current research themes for other dimensions of identity where inequities often exist, such as race, disability, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation?
- For the disparities that emerge, what are the causes?
- How does funding flow in these issue areas? (in research and in impact spaces)
- What policy/influence traction have we gained to date, and where are the opportunities for influence?
- How could we engage people in ways which more effectively account for sex and gender inequities?

Opportunities for the development of a more cohesive approach following this analysis could include:

- Supporting sex and gender diversity in our funded science
- Expanding our research portfolios to include sex- and gender-based challenges/differences
- Considering the research to impact pipeline, to ensure Wellcome is designing funding, policy and influence work with sex and gender equity in mind
- Exploring partnerships including with Wellcome LEAP to enable greater impact from our work
- Developing our influencing and communications strategies to support the leadership and advocacy of women and people of minoritized genders in global health



We are also interested in learning more about best practice approaches taken by other global health and health research funders, including approaches which could inform our strategy development. Suppliers may propose in-depth case study analysis or a more general mapping of the approaches taken by equivalent funders in this area to support in a benchmarking of Wellcome's approach.

We encourage proposals which recognize the complexity of Wellcome's portfolio and ways of working, and propose mapping approaches which account for this broad spectrum of work. As such, we encourage suppliers to propose relevant mapping and benchmarking methodologies and scales.

Phase 4: Translating commitments into institutional practice

We are seeking support to build the infrastructure for organizational practice and learning to enable joined-up, cross-organization delivery. This would support the Equitable Research Practice team to kick start mechanisms that can act as scaffold for this work, ensuring that this infrastructure supports sustainable, long-term work practices across the organization. This might include:

- Establishing an internal women's health and gender equity community of practice for cross team learning
- Exploring a cross Wellcome learning programme to understand approaches/examples of case studies to be more gender intentional
- Building a roster of technical support/expertise to support our equity ambitions, with sex and gender health equity expertise as a key theme
- Connecting with Wellcome's Data & Digital team on data tracking/sex and gender marker approaches to enabling monitoring and evaluation of this work on an ongoing basis
- Understanding and articulating the potential for cross funder learning spaces and networks

Expertise required

This commission will require suppliers who hold:

- Expertise in sex and gender health equity in global health research and implementation
- Expertise in gender analysis frameworks, benchmarking across the philanthropy sector and the impacts of intersectional approaches in this space
- Skills in portfolio mapping, synthesis and analysis, including the ability to work with incomplete or imperfect data (e.g. where Wellcome has not historically mandated data disaggregated by sex and gender so the implications may not be immediately clear)
- Experience of strategic analysis and recommendations at the intersection of research funding and influencing
- Skills in facilitation and organizational engagement to support buy-in and the creation of a joined-up strategy
- Skills in Theory of Change and Impact Evaluation Framework design

Deliverables

Phase One Deliverables

- *No specific deliverable. Phase will result in an agreed project plan between Equitable Research Practice and the supplier.*

Phase Two Deliverables

- Design, facilitation and documentation of 4 coaching sessions with strategic teams. These sessions should result in teams developing concrete plans for implementation of existing impact-focused sex and gender-intentional work packages and ensure work packages align to established sex and gender metrics.



Ongoing facilitation of work packages after this planning phase is out of scope and will be conducted by internal strategic teams.

Phase Three Deliverables

- A comprehensive mapping report outlining Wellcome's existing activity across research, funding, policy and influencing. The report should capture information about gaps in Wellcome's current investments and approaches, opportunities for cohesion across the portfolio and data gaps related to gendered health outcomes. The report should clearly outline where Wellcome currently stands and where there might be opportunities for further work in relation to gendered health outcomes across global health and our strategic focus areas.
- A benchmarking paper synthesizing approaches taken by other global health funders to address women's health and gendered inequities. This should include an analysis of Wellcome's unique position with respect to other funders working in this area, ensuring that our work can complement rather than reproduce that of others. The paper could also include some impact stories of where other funders working in this area have been able to make a significant difference. The format of this paper should be proposed by the supplier.
- A set of recommendations for Wellcome, articulating how Wellcome can take a more holistic and gender-intentional approach over the next three years, and beyond. These recommendations are intended to inform Wellcome's internal planning and implementation, rather than offering detailed operational delivery plans. These recommendations could address:
 - Research portfolios and funding design
 - Research-to-translation pathways
 - Partnerships, including Wellcome LEAP
 - Policy, influencing and communications strategies
- A co-developed high-level organizational theory of change or impact framework, which can then be adapted by individual strategic teams.

Phase Four Deliverables

- An Implementation Roadmap outlining mechanisms for joined-up, cross-organization delivery and recommendations for governance, ownership and accountability. The supplier's role in this phase will be limited to design and advisory support rather than delivery or management of ongoing organizational structures.



1.3 Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issue to Suppliers	Wellcome	13 May 2026
2	Submission of Expression of Interest and Supplier Q&A	Supplier	20 May 2026
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers	Wellcome	28 May 2026
4	Submission of RFP Response	Supplier	19 June 2026
5	RFP Evaluation Period	Wellcome	22 June 2026 – 10 July 2026
6	Supplier Presentations	Supplier	20 July 2026 – 29 July 2026
7	Notification of Contract Award	Wellcome	31 July 2026
8	Contract Negotiation	Wellcome & Supplier	August 2026
9	Contract Start Date	Wellcome & Supplier	August 2026

1.4 Guidance on Submission and Process

Submission:

- Suppliers submitting a full proposal should answer the following questions listed below
- All sections should be completed as fully as possible for Wellcome to review and score your responses once the submission period is closed. Please ensure you attach all information.
- Supplier's responses should be submitted via email on page 2 once you have submitted your response you will be notified that it has been received
- Suppliers are allowed to revise their submitted response until the close date.
- Throughout this process Wellcome will ensure you are notified and contacted when you have been successful and unsuccessful

Supplier Presentations:

- Following proposal submission, successful suppliers will invited to a virtual or in-person meeting which will last 60 minutes in total. This will likely be in the format of a PowerPoint slides presentation given by



the Supplier to a Wellcome interview panel, followed by questions and answers.
We may also require a brief follow-up call after these presentations.

1.5 Contract Terms and Conditions

Wellcome will be looking to put a contract in place using Wellcome's Standard Terms and Conditions. Suppliers submitting proposals should review Wellcome's Standard terms and Conditions [document](#)

Individuals submitting proposals as a sole trader (not registered) should review this [document](#).

2 Responses Required

* Response is required

2.1 Section 1. Expression of Interest and 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 then be penalised for future opportunities.

Please submit your:

- Organisation details
- Indicative budget
- Any questions you have on the RFP.

2.2 Section 2. Methodology

1. Provide a short proposal outlining how you would approach the work and the proposed methodologies for each phase. Please also include how you will adapt your methodology if data volume or complexity changes and how you will approach data protection when handling data and how the data will be managed and destroyed. [750 words]
2. Describe your approach to working with the Wellcome team. [250 words]



2.3 Section 3. Team Skillset and Expertise

1. Provide a brief overview of your organization, including your track record, expertise and skillset relevant to activities of the type outlined in this RFP, and to the required expertise detailed in this document. As part of your answer, please outline what makes your team best placed to fulfil Wellcome's requirements within this request. Please also include a brief description of who would be involved in the project team, their qualifications, their main role and responsibilities and the management plan. [500 words]
2. Provide two case studies of where you successfully provided services similar to those described in this RFP. [500 words (circa 250 words per case study)]

2.4 Section 4. Delivery, Outputs and Risks

1. Provide a proposed delivery plan for all phases of the work outlining the project deliverables and timelines. [1 table or Gantt chart]
2. Outline any significant risks and challenges you foresee with meeting Wellcome's requirement. Please include your mitigation strategies for these risks and challenges. [250 words]

2.5 Section 5. Budget

1. Provide a detailed cost breakdown which details and justifies the proposed costs to meet our requirement.
 - Time contribution and roles of the various team members (if supplier is a team)
 - Costs (including a comprehensive breakdown of expenses, including how many FTEs and number of days that will be required)

2.6 Section 6. Equity Diversity and Inclusion

1. Outline your approach to equity, diversity and inclusion, both concerning your proposed methodology for the project and within your organisation. [250 words]

3 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	Details	Weight %
Methodology	<i>Coverage:</i> How well are the desired focus areas (as outlined in the specification) covered in the proposed methodology addressed? <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? <i>EDI:</i> Has appropriate attention been given to equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations in the proposed methodology?	30%
Team and 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?	25%
Budget	<i>Value for Money:</i> Is the proposed work within your budget and good value for money?	15%
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
	TOTAL	100%



Supplier Presentations

Following proposal submission, successful suppliers will be invited to a virtual or in-person meeting which will last 60 minutes in total. This will likely be in the format of a PowerPoint slides presentation given by the Supplier to a Wellcome interview panel, followed by questions and answers.

4 General Information

4.1 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.

Successful Suppliers will be asked to complete a TPRM or TPSRA assessment this is for Wellcome to assess how you handle data.

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

4.2 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.

4.3 Disability Confident

The Wellcome Trust is proud to be a Disability Confident Employer (DC Level 2) and we encourage all our partners and suppliers to do the same. More information about this can be found on the government website [Disability Confident employer scheme and guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Disability Confident is creating a movement of change, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.



4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 Funding

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

4.7 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

4.8 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.

