



INNOVATION FOR IMPACT

A NEW WAY OF WORKING FOR A CHANGING WORLD

Wellcome exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive. We have a proud history of backing great scientists to develop their ideas from fundamental research to an impact on human health.

Wellcome is making a greater commitment than ever to innovation to help turn science and technology into inventions that will transform people's lives. Over the next five years we plan to commit up to £500m to support innovation.

Our strategy for Innovation

Through this new approach we want to help researchers and organisations across the world to transform great ideas, discoveries and inventions into treatments, products and cures for disease. Our aim is to help develop transformational technologies and to make a meaningful impact on human health.

Our past approach to Innovations has delivered remarkable success and we are going to build on those successes. But we recognise the increase in scale of complexity of the innovation landscape and the key role that Wellcome can play in supporting innovation in a changing, connected world.

Our three strategic aims are:

- **Building better links between science, technology and innovation** by removing barriers between disciplines to make it easier to take the first translational step. We will play a more active role in supporting technology that has the capacity to enhance science and be applied to health.
- **Creating a global community dedicated to innovation for impact.** We will tap into our international network of companies, supporters and expert advisors to help encourage people from outside the life sciences to engage in biomedical research and innovation.
- **Supporting the next generation of innovation leaders.** We will work with emerging innovation leaders, giving them support and access to mentorship through interaction with our global network. We aim to encourage a greater diversity of career paths for scientists by helping them to engage in translation and innovation at an earlier stage in their career.

Our approach: How will we provide support?

We will provide support in four distinct ways, which are summarised below. We are also absolutely committed to continuing our support for existing awards to the end of their term.

Starting with science – encouraging early translation

The majority of Wellcome's funding goes into [discovery science](#). Because Wellcome is committing even more money than ever before to science, we believe that there are greater opportunities for translating science directly into improvements in human health.

We will be contacting Wellcome-funded institutions and researchers to see how we can support early translation – through pilot / proof of concept awards. We will work closely with scientists to identify promising discoveries that have potential for translation and innovation. The Innovation team will help identify the next steps for translation, and in some cases provide small **pilot awards** to test feasibility.

Building for impact from our existing portfolio - from early translation to patient impact

Innovations at Wellcome has previously focused on funding the gap between academic research and commercial viability – we will continue to support such opportunities.

But making new products through a commercial route is not the only way to translate science into health. We know that clinician scientists are ideally placed to take new discoveries and insights and apply them directly into clinical practice - without necessarily requiring the development of a new product.

So we will diversify our approach in pursuit of clinical impact - and will seek to work with clinician scientists committed to translation. We may work later in the development path, to help provide robust scientific evidence necessary to enable implementation - be that in drug repurposing, imaging and technology innovation, digital interventions, diagnostics etc.

Our initial priority will be to ensure that our existing portfolio of projects is well supported and we will proactively identify opportunities for early impact. In a small number of cases that may mean providing additional **follow-on awards** for particularly promising projects.

A broader innovation community

In February 2017 Wellcome will be launching 'Innovator Awards' for proposals of up to £500k. One of the aims of this scheme will be to encourage people that do not currently work with us to apply - including translators and innovators from outside of the life and medical science community. We think this is important because new technology has the potential to transform biomedical science, as well as have significant applications to health.

Flagship awards in order to achieve greater impact

We believe that in order to achieve greater impact on human health - we also need to focus on a smaller number of activities - something that we refer to as **Flagships**.

An example of an existing Flagship is the Hilleman Laboratories – an R&D facility in New Delhi, dedicated to generating new vaccines. This is a joint venture between Wellcome and Merck, USA. We also consider the [Wellcome Centre](#) for Anti-Infectives Research at the University of Dundee, and Centres at King's College London and University College London (co-funded in partnership with the EPSRC), as Flagships.

We will develop our Flagship activities in a flexible way - providing the resources necessary to ensure that we maximise impact from a partnership. Some will be used to support early translation, some later to drive to impact. Because these will be particularly significant investments we are taking some

more time to develop our approach. We do not expect to have more than 20 Flagships over the next five years.

Our goals and priorities

We care about impact in the immediate term and expect that by 2022 we will have supported interventions that improve the lives of at least 1 million people per annum. In addition, we will develop a portfolio of activities that deliver impact in 5 years - but with the potential to deliver longer and even greater impact on science and in health over the following 10-20+ years.

We will remain open to great ideas in any area. In our first year much of our support will focus on ideas and solutions involving mental health, neurological disorders and neglected tropical diseases, but these are not exclusive and other areas of particular interest will be announced in the future.

We will revisit, refine and change our themes and expect to have further themes in due course.

Independent, expert peer review will continue to be central to our decision-making - especially to help determine scientific quality and technical feasibility of proposals. But we will also complement peer review with further analysis and due diligence depending on the scale of investment proposed. For larger investments, key elements will include: value for money, deliverability, patient benefit and project / team resilience.

Summary

We are grateful to all of you - our friends, collaborators, partners, advisors and supporters - for all your help to get us to this exciting position. We are at the beginning of an exciting new era for Innovation at Wellcome. We look forward to working with the global community to embrace new approaches, new technologies and new ideas – for a single purpose – to improve human health.

We want to help researchers and organisations across the world to transform great ideas, discoveries and inventions into treatments, products and cures for disease. If you have an idea that you think could advance science and improve health, and believe that Wellcome can help you deliver impact please email innovations@wellcome.ac.uk.