



Wellcome funding opportunities

Ana Cehovin

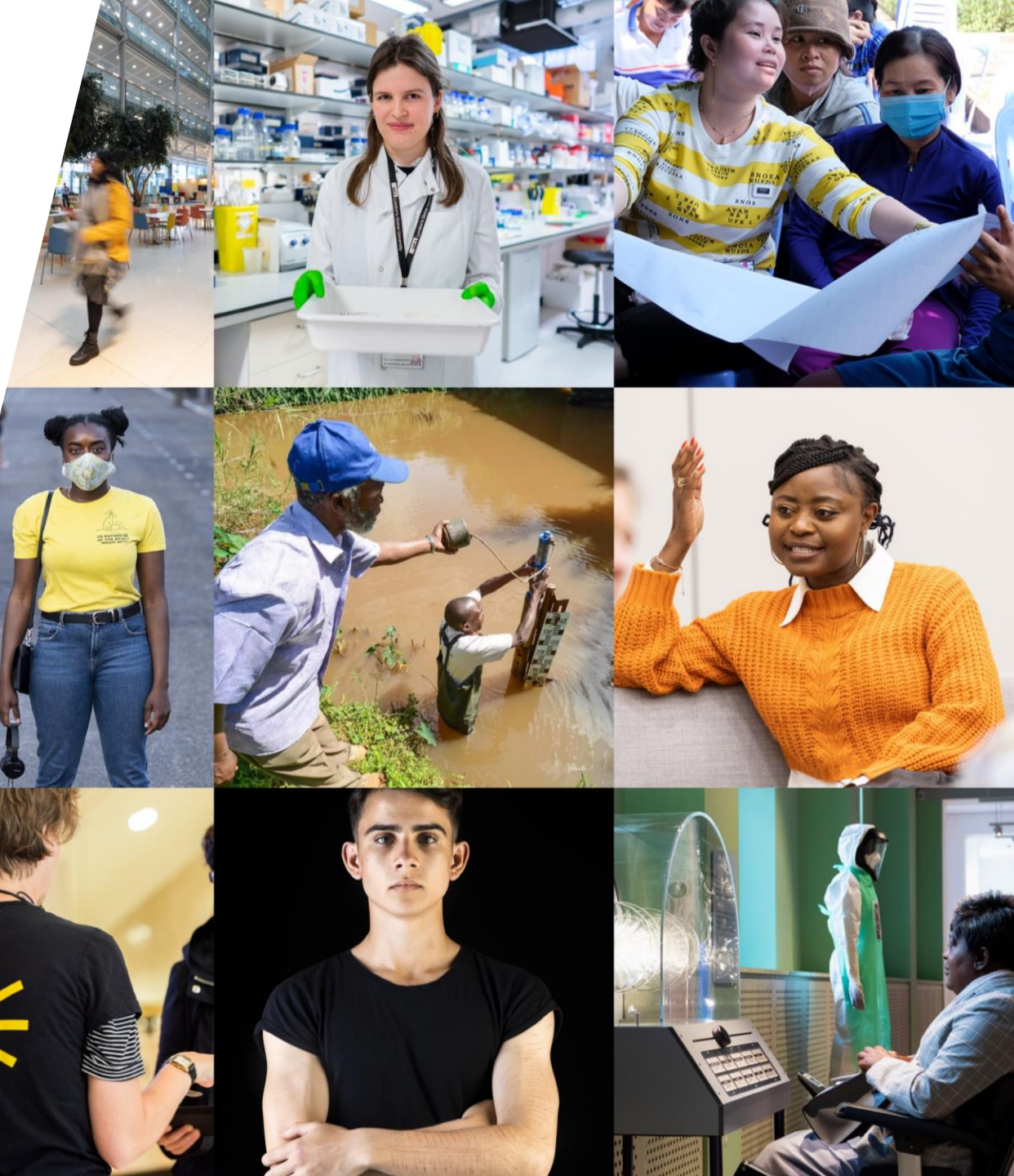
Research Lead, Infectious Disease Team

October 2025

Wellcome is an independent and global charitable foundation

Our **vision** is a healthier future for everyone

Our **mission** is supporting science to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone



Our Strategy:

Supporting Science to solve urgent health challenges facing everyone

Discovery

By enabling people to ask questions about life, health and wellbeing, we will discover new knowledge with the potential to transform health in the future

Solutions

By focusing on urgent health challenges where our experience, expertise and influence can accelerate solutions, we can have impact in the short-term

Wellcome
Collection

Discovery
Research

Wellcome
Leap

Climate and
Health

Infectious
Disease

Mental
Health

Science + Health
Equity

Discovery Research funding schemes: what and who we fund

Discovery Research open-mode funding schemes



Early Career Awards (ECA)

For researchers **ready to develop their research identity**

- Salary and up to £400,000 for research expenses (approximately 513,000 USD)
- Usually for 5 years
 - May be less in some disciplines
 - Longer if held part-time



Career Development Awards (CDA)

For researchers **with potential to be international research leaders** to develop their research capabilities

- Principal Investigator salary (if required) and resources needed for the programme of work (max 4 full time equivalent posts)
- Up to 8 years



Discovery Awards (DA)

For **established researchers and teams** to pursue bold and creative research

- Investigator or team led
- Single discipline or multidisciplinary
- International standing in the field
- Resources that are needed for the programme of work
- Up to 8 years

What are we looking to support?

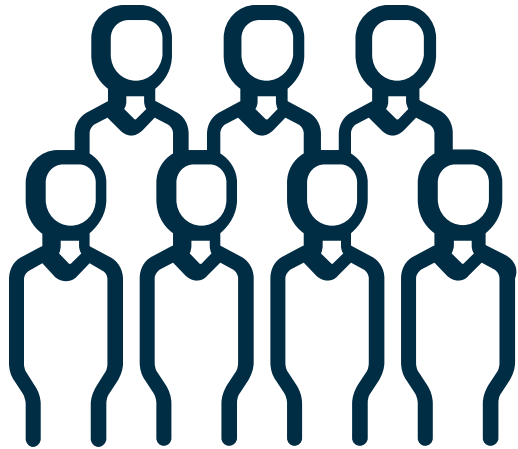


We want to support researchers and teams from **any discipline** who want to pursue **transformative** research ideas to:

- Generate significant shifts in understanding that could improve **human life, health and wellbeing**
- Develop methodologies, conceptual frameworks, tools or techniques that could benefit health-related research

We don't know where the new ideas will come from so our remit is deliberately broad.

Discovery Research - Who do we fund?



- We fund **individuals** at all career stages and **teams** of researchers
- Our schemes are open to lead applicants based in the UK, the Republic of Ireland and **low- and middle-income countries** as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (excluding China and India).
- Co-applicants can be from anywhere in the world if applying as part of a team (Discovery Awards)
- **Applicants do not need to partner with researchers in high-income countries**

Importance of LMIC-led research for Discovery Research



- Our portfolio represents the international research landscape
- Supporting a strong and diverse network of global researchers
- Ensure greater impact of the research that we fund



Common remit questions

What does 'Discovery research' mean?

Generating new understanding or new insights into how human life and health work. Tool development must have a clear link to new research potential.

Are you mainly interested in laboratory science?

No. Research can be in the laboratory, office, clinic, or field and can involve observational, experimental or theoretical approaches.

Can my research have clinical/policy impact?

Yes. There does not need to be a clear link to impact but where there is we want to hear about it.

Can I conduct a clinical trial?

We do not fund large-scale clinical trials where the main aim is to test if an intervention works.

You can use a trial design if this is the best study design for your question - the focus of the project must be on generating new knowledge. Small feasibility work can also be included.

Examples from our open-mode portfolio



Differentiation of neural crest cells

Pablo Strobl-Mazzulla (Argentina)
Career Development Award

Protecting African youth who are NEET

Linda Theron (S. Africa)
Discovery Award



Genetics &
Genomics

Cell
Biology

Population &
Public
Health

Social
Science

Pathogen
Biology

Genetic risk of depression

Allan Kalungi (Uganda)
Early Career Award

Modelling approaches to HIV care

Edinah Mudimu (S. Africa)
Career Development Award

Genomic surveillance for malarial drug resistance

Jasmin Akter (Bangladesh)
Early Career Award

Application review and assessment process

The assessment process



See the full **committee membership** here



Assessment Criteria

Research
Proposal



Applicant(s)



Research
Environment



Research Proposal

50%
of the overall
assessment
score



Check out
our **Guidance** pages
for how to write a grant

Bold

- Will generate significant shifts in understanding
- Potential to stimulate new and innovative research

Creative

- Develop and test new concepts, methods or technologies
- New perspectives and/or approaches to existing questions

High quality

- Well designed, feasible, supported by evidence.

Applicant(s)

25%
of the overall
assessment
score



Check out
our **Guidance** pages
for how to write a grant

Experience and autonomy

- Relevant experience
- Intellectual ownership & independence

Research outputs and contributions

- New ideas, tools or techniques

Career development

- Research skills and/or how these will develop
- Career development plans and/or contributions to the career development of others

Team

- Rationale for team approach and contribution of each member
- Equitable partnerships across institutions and geographies

Research Environment

25%
of the overall
assessment
score



Check out
our **Guidance** pages
for how to write a grant

People thrive in **equitable, diverse, and supportive** cultures

An icon consisting of three black circles representing people, arranged in a triangle and connected by thin lines.Two icons: on the left, a lightbulb with a lightning bolt inside, positioned above three stylized human figures; on the right, a simple icon of an open door.

Research is strengthened by being **ethical, open, and engaged**

Our assessment of research culture is context specific

Infectious Disease focus areas for funding

Infectious Disease

Vision

A world in which the impact of infectious diseases is minimised in the most affected communities

Mission

Supporting science to bring innovative solutions to combat infectious disease in the most affected communities

Our goals

Accelerate the discovery and development of impactful products, interventions and strategies to combat infectious diseases

Understand the causes and risks of infectious diseases to drive the development of evidence-based strategies

Disease Focus

Environmental Change

Drug Resistant Infections

Vector Borne

Water Borne

Fungi

Bacteria

Snail



Schistosomiasis

Mosquito



¹Viruses

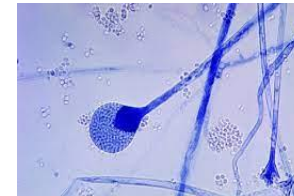
Fly



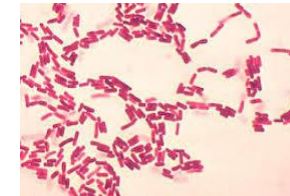
Leishmaniasis



Cholera



Pathogenic Fungi



²LMIC Pathogen Focus



Tuberculosis

For each disease, we have a strategic approach focusing on specific interventions where we believe we can deliver the most impact.

¹ Our initial focus will be on Arboviruses: Dengue, Zika, Chikungunya, Yellow Fever, Rift Valley Fever

² Our current focus is on Gram-negative pathogens

Infectious disease funding scope

We fund research:

- Related to:
 - **IDs sensitive to environmental change:**
 - Vector-borne viruses, schistosomiasis and leishmaniasis
 - Cholera
 - **Drug resistant infections:**
 - Bacterial Infections including TB
 - Fungal Infections
- To understand how and why these diseases escape control
- That accelerates the research and development of interventions that can prevent and/or combat these infectious disease
- From early translation to effectiveness studies

We don't fund:

- IDs only relevant to high-income settings
- Implementation research (except when related to specific interventions we have supported)
- Pre-translational research with no translational pathway or impact for developing interventions
- Interventions that are not affordable or accessible
- Diagnostics (except when related to specific interventions in our portfolio)

Funding opportunities at Wellcome

Discovery

- Open-mode funding schemes (ECA, CDA, DA)

Solutions

- **Targeted funding calls**
 - often team science, multidisciplinary focus
- **Discretionary awards**
 - Targeted funding for large teams / consortia
 - Early career researchers encouraged to be part of these teams

Different eligibility criteria between Discovery and Solutions schemes!

Infectious Disease: Correlates of Protection, Understanding dengue and Zika

Mental Health: Advancing target validation for novel mental health drug discovery

Climate & Health: Unlocking urgent climate action by making the health effects of climate change visible

Committee Observers

**Subscribe to our
Research Update
Newsletter for
updates!**

**[https://wellcome.
org/insights/news
letters](https://wellcome.org/insights/newsletters)**

Apply to observe a Wellcome funding advisory committee in 2026!

- Wellcome offers the opportunity to observe funding advisory committees.
- Researchers who are considering applying for Wellcome funding in the next two years can apply to observe a shortlisting committee.

Why observe a committee?

Understand

- How committees use our assessment criteria
- How different aspects of the application are considered during assessment.

Thank you!

How to reach us:

For remit and eligibility queries regarding a specific application:

- Use the contact form on our website, email fundingsupport@wellcome.org, call +44 (0)20 7611 5757 or access live Chat through our scheme and call pages

To stay up to date with Wellcome activities and opportunities:

- Sign up to our monthly Research Update newsletter at wellcome.org/ResearchNewsletter



Find out
more by
watching our
webinars