

Request for Proposals

Discovery Phase Audience Research

Front End Audience and Community Consultation

Budget: £22,500 (inc. VAT)

Proposals by: 14:00 (UK) on 12th May 2021

To Start: June/July 2021

To Finish: 18th Dec 2021

Note: This brief is tendered alongside a second DToL brief for Evaluation Consultancy. Interested parties can submit proposals for one, or for both of these briefs. The Evaluation Consultancy brief can be found [HERE](#). Both schemes of work are outside IR35 for HMRC purposes.

Project Overview

The [Darwin Tree of Life](#) [DToL] requests proposals for an audience consultation project [Discovery Phase] in the field of public engagement with genomics. We invite proposals from individuals, who have the right to work in the UK, and organisations [Learning Partner].

DToL is a world leading genomics research partnership, headed by the [Wellcome Sanger Institute](#). The DToL public engagement programme runs alongside DToL's highly ambitious scientific research, which aims to fully sequence the DNA of all complex life across Britain and Ireland (70,000 species of animals, plants, fungi, and protists) to create a new way of understanding biodiversity and transform how we do biology.

The DToL public engagement programme will develop connections between scientists and a number of community groups around the UK to experience cutting edge genomic science, hands on. From the Norfolk Broads to the Scottish Highlands, school children, local communities, and citizen scientists will have the chance to get involved in finding and identifying specimens; will experience how DNA from these specimens is extracted, sequenced, and analyzed; and learn how this mammoth project can help protect the species that make our world so special.

The first stage of the public engagement programme is the Discovery Phase covered by this tender. The [Discovery Phase](#) will examine how key communities perceive DNA and genomics in the context of the natural world, evolution, and biodiversity, and how the DToL academic community can benefit from interaction with communities sharing an interest in the natural world. It will inform the planning and implementation of the later stages of DToL's public engagement programme, which will proceed through 2022 to finish on 8th Feb 2023.

Project Objectives

We are looking for public consultation specialists to conduct both desk-based and public consultation research that will equip DToL with:

1. An improved understanding of our audiences, particularly before engagement activities. What their awareness is of DNA and genomics as they pertain to the natural world; what their attitudes are towards DToL science; what their reasons might be for getting involved in engagement activities; and any obstacles that would reduce this engagement.
2. A set of planning and communication tools / recommendations for DToL public engagement delivery teams that are informed and shaped by an increased understanding of community needs/desires.
3. An improved understanding of what our academic community wants from public engagement, to maximise their ownership of / involvement in public engagement.

In order to achieve these learning objectives, we anticipate the Learning Partner undertaking a literature review; an audience consultation; and a consultation with the DToL academic communities at the Wellcome Sanger Institute and our partners around the UK. We expect that this work can be completed remotely (see *Project stakeholders and Travel Requirements section*).

What are we looking for?

Key deliverables:

- Working with the DToL Public Engagement team to develop a research plan;
- Completing desk-based audience research independently and reporting findings to DToL team;
- Developing a consultation plan for relevant communities and stakeholders;
- Completing public consultation;
- Completing academic community consultation;
- Producing a detailed research report by the end of the Discovery Phase in December 2021, including recommendations for implementing findings in future public engagement on DToL.

We are looking for a public consultation specialist/s, with demonstrable track record in:

- Conducting desk-based research and literature reviews on public understanding of scientific topics;
- Public consultation and analysis (DToL are open to a range of approaches to this work);
- Academic community consultation and analysis;
- Writing formative learning summaries / reports.

Note: Alongside this Request for Proposals, DToL are also seeking an Evaluation Consultant to deliver an evaluation for all of DToL's public engagement programme. We are open for candidates submitting expressions of interest for one or for both of these opportunities. The Evaluation Consultation brief can be found [HERE](#).

Context

The [Darwin Tree of Life's](#) ambition, to map the genome of every Eukaryotic organism in the UK and Ireland, is at the leading edge of the [Earth BioGenome Project](#) - a global effort to map the DNA of all complex life. DToL will be vitally important for UK species and UK genome science, and lay the pathway for future biodiversity genome projects around the world. Public engagement is an integral part of this ambition. The Discovery Phase will lay a strong foundation for this public engagement, by ensuring it responds to the needs of UK communities and speaks in appropriate language, with energising narratives.

Alongside the Discovery Phase, the DToL public engagement grant will fund an expansive Participation Phase. This will involve participatory projects such as Bioblitz events, field trips, museum exhibits, online chat-rooms with scientists, and other engagement activities. While the events programme has gone through initial planning and been allocated budgets, the content of the Discovery Phase will inform delivery; training for engagement teams; evaluation; and the allocation of enabling grants for further activities, or extensions to the existing programme.

Audiences and Partners

Our principle audiences are: children in schools with above average percentage of students receiving pupil premium (different events will cater for primary, secondary, and sixth form); nature enthusiasts who are members of expert-amateur groups who will help with collecting samples; and regional stakeholders, as many of our collection sites have strong relationships with local communities. The public engagement will also engage with wider cohorts beyond these groups, particularly with our partners who are visitor destinations in their own right.

As well as the Wellcome Sanger Institute, DToL's public engagement programme will involve ten partner institutions around the UK: Earlham Institute, Norwich; EMBL-EBI, Cambridge; Kew Gardens, London; Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, Edinburgh; Marine Biological Association, Plymouth; the Natural History Museum, London; and the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Oxford.

Fees and terms

The maximum available budget for this Discovery Phase is £22,500 including expenses and applicable taxes.

We are offering this package of work on a freelance, self-employed basis over a six month period. We are happy to offer this work on a part-time or flexible contract, but expect the given hours/days and applicable rates to be described in the proposal document. We anticipate payment of this fee in several instalments related to milestones which we will agree with the Learning Partner once they are appointed.



Anticipated Outputs and Timetable

Expected outputs and timetable:

- A literature review by the end of July 2021.
- Semi-regular (e.g. monthly) meetings to identify learnings and inform iterative refinement of events.
- A summary report, including identification and implementation of improved practice, by 18th Dec 2021.
- A debriefing session with DTOL representatives by 18th Dec 2021.
- The Discovery Phase will run for six months from June – December 2021.

These are our initial expectations for outputs and timetable. Ultimately they are a guide only, and the final structure of the work will be constructed in agreement with the Learning Partner once they are appointed.

Project stakeholders and Travel Requirements

The Learning Partner will report to Jack Monaghan, Public Engagement Coordinator for DTOL at the Wellcome Sanger Institute.

They will also work with other members of the DTOL team, including:

- The public engagement partner teams and community partners leading each activity;
- The wider academic community, both at the Wellcome Sanger Institute and each of the partners;
- Other consultants working on the DTOL project, e.g. the evaluation consultant/s.

We anticipate that this brief can be delivered remotely, with contact with the DTOL team made via telephone or videoconference. Occasional travel to the Wellcome Sanger Institute in Cambridgeshire, UK would be happily accommodated, though no additional expenses will be available.

We are open to different approaches to public and academic community consultation, though any plans must be capable of adaptation to different Covid-19 lockdown scenarios without going over the allotted budget.

Preparation of proposals

Interested parties should respond to this tender in writing, submitted to Jack Monaghan (jm58@sanger.ac.uk) by 14:00 (UK) on 12th May 2021, and be able to begin work in June/July 2021.

Responding individuals or organisations should submit the following:

- A short outline (max three pages) detailing how you would approach the required outputs, with impact of different Covid-19 lockdown scenarios and mitigation steps detailed;
- Examples of two previous projects that have demonstrated similar challenges;
- An outline of all individuals involved in delivery and their previous experience;
- A budget breakdown, including days worked and anticipated expenses (in GBP);
- To comply with HMRC IR35 regulations, please state your employment status: for example if you are employed by an umbrella company, an agency, or are self-employed.

Selection Process and Key Dates

Questions can be submitted to Jack Monaghan (jm58@sanger.ac.uk) up to 28th April 2021, and all Q&A's will be shared in a summary email on 30th April 2021 with all those who have contacted Jack Monaghan before this time.

Proposals must be submitted by 14:00 (UK) on 12th May 2021.

DTOL will review submissions and respond w/c 17th May 2021.

Shortlisted suppliers will be invited to pitch via a 25 minute video call during the **w/c 24th May 2021**. Shortlisted suppliers will be given one week notice and more details to prepare their pitch.

Work is expected to start by June/July 2021 with immediate start preferred.