

Invitation to Tender – Longitude Prize on ALS

INVITATION TO TENDER for North American PR Agency

Challenge Works

Longitude Prize on ALS communications campaign

**Deadline for submissions: 10th February 2025 (6pm GMT / 1pm
EST)**

1. Summary of Opportunity

The Longitude Prize on ALS is a multi-million-pound, international challenge prize to incentivise the use of AI to transform drug discovery for the treatment of ALS. ALS is currently untreatable, with only one medication that can slow progress of the disease. The Prize could result in the discovery of a cure for the condition, saving lives globally, and unlocking tools and drugs that could change the future of treatment across neurodegenerative disease more widely.

The Prize is looking for groundbreaking approaches to identification and validation of new targets, from those working in the biotechnology, AI and academic audiences.

These audiences will each have different barriers to entry, use different communications platforms and value different incentives.

We are looking for a US or Canadian based agency that can use PR and media to engage and excite each of these audiences across North America, using digital and traditional media channels to drive innovators to enter the Prize as well as creating a buzz across the broader ecosystem around the scale of the opportunity.

2. Background to Challenge Works

Challenge Works, a social enterprise founded and owned by Nesta, is a global leader in the design and delivery of challenge prizes mobilising innovation for social good.

Challenge Works runs challenge prizes that attract innovators to solve some of the world's biggest problems.

Challenge Works unearths innovations to solve problems that matter. We believe in big ideas. Bold thinking. Creative problem-solving. We believe that great things happen when people come together. That, given the right support, unexpected ideas truly can change the world.

Through a process of rigorous testing and iteration, we'll design a support system that incentivises progress. As well as prize money, we'll offer unparalleled support as teams progress through each stage. From press and networking to upskilling and access to tech, our challenge prizes are designed to drive fast results, change markets and make the world a better place.

More information can be found at <https://challengeworks.org/>

Nesta is the UK's innovation foundation. We help people and organisations bring great ideas to life. We do this by providing investments and grants and mobilising research, networks and skills. We are an independent charity (registered with charity number 1144091) and our work is enabled by an endowment from the National Lottery. All of

The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts' activities, contracts and staff were transferred to this new charity and a new charitable trust on 1 April 2012.

More information can be found at www.nesta.org.uk

3. Background to the Project

Project Summary

The Longitude Prize on ALS is being funded by a number of major charities and has been designed and is being delivered by Challenge Works, in partnership with a range of international data and scientific organisations.

Along with financial support across a five-year programme, with three innovation periods, Prize entrants will receive unparalleled access to a suite of curated ALS data, validation support and partnership opportunities with industry.

The Longitude Prize on ALS is the third modern Longitude Prize, following the success of the [Longitude Prize on AMR](#) (antimicrobial resistance) (2014-2024) and the ongoing [Longitude Prize on Dementia](#) (launched in 2022, due to announce a finalist in 2026).

Longitude Prizes are our boldest and most transformational prizes. Only once three clear criteria are met - a measurable step-change goal; relying on a breakthrough in technology; leading to impact of global significance - will the renowned experts of the Board of Longitude approve the use of the Longitude Prize name.

Unlike traditional grants, which can force innovators to stick to a pre-agreed, rigid framework even if it impedes the end result, challenge prizes accelerate a huge amount of activity and energy, incentivising and supporting multiple teams to progress through the stages of the competition.

This results in multiple, successful solutions from a diverse range of innovators, solving a previously underserved problem. By shining a spotlight on an issue, challenge prizes also produce a surge in public awareness; participants in previous Challenge Works prizes say the prestige that this generates has helped them secure further funding to grow.

Timeline

The Longitude Prize on ALS will have five key stages. The indicative timelines are summarised below (although please note that the details are still being finalised).

Outreach and convening: Innovator outreach, convening and initial evaluation [April - December 2025] - Engaging biotech and academic teams in the prize, including data teasing hackathons and enabling creation of joint ventures.

Solution development - Stage 1: In Silico Discovery and evaluation [January 2026 - December 2026] - 25 x £100k to identify novel drug targets with high significance for a) involvement in disease pathology b) potential for treatment.

Solution development - Stage 2: In Silico Validation and evaluation [January 2027 - December 2027] - 10 x £200k awards to validate findings against a suite of data curated by the Prize (in silico validation).

Solution development - Stage 3: In Vitro Validation and evaluation [January 2028 - December 2029] - 5 x £500k to undertake validation of the identified targets in the wet lab.

Winners announcement: Winner announcement [April 2030] - £1m for the team whose target is deemed the highest potential following validation.

4. Tender Details

This ITT has been prepared by Challenge Works for the purposes of inviting proposals from candidates for the provision of the following:

Types of Services

We are looking for written proposals and quotations from potential suppliers to provide specialist PR and media support in the US and Canada to engage and persuade entrants from biotech, AI and academic audiences based in those regions to get excited and engage with the prize.

The chosen partner will work under Seven Consultancy, who will have strategic communications oversight and be responsible for corresponding outreach in the UK and Europe.

Key Audiences (US and Canada focus)

Potential innovators; we anticipate that potential innovators will come from a range of sectors, including:

- All Biotech, Techbio, AI and Pharma currently active in the ALS or neurodegenerative space,

- Biotech and Techbio not presently active in ALS who could participate in the Prize,
- The ALS research community,
- The neurodegeneration research community, particularly those working in FTD, Dementia, Parkinson's etc,
- Academics specialising in AI/ML for health.

This tender will be looking for responses for supporting the first two stages of the Prize, with a focus on innovator recruitment from target audiences (drug discovery biotech, computational biologist and health AI specialists and the neurodegenerative disease scientific communities), awareness and engagement. We will be keen to see a mainstream marker piece to widen the reach at launch too.

Deliverables

Activity may include, but is not limited to:

- **Refining US and Canadian media targets** – in line with audience segmentation work.
- **Refining US and Canada broader stakeholders** – including possible judges, ambassadors, spokespeople and case studies for the campaign, including via partner and other charities.
- **Campaign development and planning from a North America perspective – including updates to comms launch materials** – including press release, reactive Q&A and media briefings.
- **Creating a national marker moment/media piece in the US and Canada at launch that has broader reach.**
- **Generating media interest at key challenge peaks** and making suggestions for a 'news generation' moment to sit outside of the peaks to maintain noise (budget dependent).
- **Media support for US spokespeople/ambassadors and case studies** – preparation for media interviews and other opportunities. Focus on relevant media to reach the biotech community.
- **PR support for US and Canadian events** –
 - Recommending key events to attend and be on relevant panels.
 - Engaging with and inviting journalists to key events, issuing local press releases, supporting in-person interviews at events as needed.
- **Manage reactive media** in markets, including any issues and possible proactive opportunities.
- **Ad-hoc deliverables:** to be defined and agreed.

Note – while the priority is the biotech innovators and wider ecosystem, it would be useful to consider how we raise the profile in the mainstream media at

launch and from the convening stage onwards (highlighting the broader issue and the potential opportunity).

- **Monitoring and evaluation** to measure the reach and impact of the campaign from a US perspective.

We welcome examples of previous work in these areas to showcase your expertise, and will be looking for both an approach to campaign development and to key media in your response. We are also looking for an agency that is willing to be agile throughout the challenge to ensure that activity is truly effective. When you pitch, we would like to see how you think about the different audiences (E.g. innovator vs influencers) and how we would reach them in the media and via stakeholders.

It is important that the awareness raised from the previous Longitude Prizes is leveraged for the campaign.

Proposed Length of Contract

This contract is for the first of the two stages – **Outreach and convening** and **Solution development - Stage 1** – which will run for approximately 21 months (March 2025 - December 2026, dates to be confirmed). The work will focus on pre-launch planning, launch moment, six months of innovator recruitment post-launch, engaging the bio-tech ecosystem and announcements after stage 1 evaluations.

This would be with a view to continuing the relationship throughout the other stages across the five years of the programme (which would include wider public awareness raising and establishing a positive perception of the Prize in scientific and healthcare communities internationally).

Partners

All work will be managed by Challenge Works' internal communications team alongside our partner communications agency, Seven Consultancy. We are also recruiting a digital-focused agency working on the project. The selected US agency would be expected to liaise with other partners to amplify and support each others' work as is needed.

We are looking for a supplier that can work with Seven Consultancy, the lead agency on the project (also overseeing UK and EU comms activity) to develop and implement a powerful, integrated campaign that aligns to our objectives, for the duration of the Challenge.

Key Success Criteria

The key focus areas for convening stage and stage 1 include:

- Driving strong potential innovators to the website and entry form (outreach and convening stage only).
- Increased awareness of the Prize amongst target audiences, particularly potential innovators, those in biotech and wider academic and scientific communities.
- Positive perception of the Prize, the Longitude brand, Challenge Works and key funders.
- KPIs – measures will be used to track performance, the exact target figures for which will be decided once we agree the approach. These are likely to include:
 - Number of pieces of coverage.
 - Coverage reach and relevancy.
 - Number of interested entrants (started applications/emails captured) in markets.
 - Key message penetration.
 - Spokesperson inclusion
 - Headline Prize name inclusion

Others will be added based on the details of the campaign and methods of creating awareness and adoption.

Assumptions

- **Peaks and troughs:** We expect the agreed communications strategy will include peaks and troughs in activity, with resources being deployed to maximise value against and delivery of the aims of the Prize. Anticipated peaks in activity include the launch and entry period and announcements after stage 1 evaluations.
- **Tentative timeline:**
 - Mid March-April 2025: Launch preparation
 - April 2025: Launch
 - April - September 2025: Ongoing entry period
 - October - December 2026: Evaluation and announcements of successful applicants
 - January - September 2026: Solution development stage 1
 - October - December 2026: Evaluation and announcement of semi-finalists

- **Project management: Ongoing participation in project management, with at least one (1) staff member present at:**
 - In person inception meeting - looking ahead at the programme timeline, aligning on key milestone dates, joint deliverables/dependant deliverables where necessary, etc.
 - Weekly client calls (with Challenge Works, Seven Consultancy and possibly key funder comms teams) - providing relevant updates and walkthroughs of deliverables, responding to any clarifications and feedback, incorporating these into any required amendments. With agreement, the frequency of calls may be reduced during periods with less communications activity.
 - Ad-hoc calls with Seven Consultancy as required - these should be limited to when necessary, addressing any unexpected issues for discussion and resolution.
- **Delivery of outputs:** Draft deliverables will be provided in advance of the client deadline (where possible seven working days in advance) in order to allow for feedback, revision as necessary, and finalisation.
- **Programme timeline for 2025/26:** Challenge Works will provide an indicative timeline as a delivery roadmap for the programme. Delivery will begin immediately in March 2025, with the first event - the Launch - due to take place in the first week of April 2025. This is subject to change based on evolving priorities and in response to risks where necessary.
- **On-boarding:** Challenge Works will ensure relevant on-boarding of the successful supplier will take place as soon as possible post-contracting in order to facilitate efficient commencement of work. The successful supplier will be able to mobilise their team and begin on-boarding as soon as possible post-contracting, indicatively March 2025.

5. Indicative Procurement Timetable

Set out below is the proposed procurement timetable. This is intended as a guide only.

Date	Timetable
<i>23rd January 2025</i>	Tender issued to agencies
<i>10th February 2025 (6pm GMT / 1pm EST)</i>	Deadline for receipt of written responses to tender
<i>11th - 14th February 2025</i>	Review submissions and evaluate against selection

	criteria. Shortlist the highest scoring selection stage candidates. Shortlisted candidates invited to pitch.
<i>19th and 20th February 2025</i>	Pitches (virtual video calls).
<i>w/c 24th February 2025</i>	Successful agency announced and contracting to start, with work commencing as soon as feasible in March.

6. Milestones and Indicative Budget

Payments will be released in stages alongside agreed milestones, providing these have been met. The final milestones shall be clearly documented in any contract entered into as a result of this ITT, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of this ITT.

The budget for the above PR Agency services for the Longitude Prize on ALS is between £150,000 and £200,000 (approx. \$185,000 - \$250,000 USD) including all implementation, expenses and travel cost.

This includes the **Outreach and convening stage** and **Solution development stage 1** (including announcements after stage 1 evaluations).

For the avoidance of doubt, invoices raised and payments made shall be in pounds sterling.

Additional contracting requirements based on client prerequisites will be outlined.

7. How to Apply

Your entire proposal, including all supporting documentation, should be no more than 15 pages with single-spaced text in 12-point font and on A4 paper.

Your proposal should be e-mailed as a single document, to als@challengeworks.org by no later than 6pm GMT / 1pm EST on Monday 10th February 2025.

If you require any reasonable adjustments, please contact the Challenge Works team at als@challengeworks.org.

Please submit your proposal to Challenge Works in accordance with all the instructions and terms and conditions set out within the enclosed documentation.

Annex 1 of this ITT (Evaluation of Proposals and Timelines) sets out the questions suppliers must respond to and the applicable selection and award criteria that will be applied to proposals. Suppliers must respond to all questions set out in Annex 1 under the selection and award criteria at the time of submission in response to this ITT. Annex 2 sets out the Terms and Conditions. If you have a specific question not answered either above or in the Annexes to this ITT, please email als@challengeworks.org.

Annex 1

Evaluation of Proposals

1. Evaluation Process

Challenge Works will run this competitive procurement process in a manner which is open and transparent and ensures equal treatment of participants in the process. Decisions will **be made on the basis of the stated criteria.**

Bidders must respond to all questions set out in this Annex 1 under both the selection and award criteria at the time of submission in response to this ITT.

Your proposal and interview will be evaluated against the selection criteria listed below.

Challenge Works will select the highest scoring suppliers to the next stage.

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Selection Criteria	Score / Weighting
<p>1. Experience of organisation</p> <p>Please summarise your relevant experience of providing similar services / similar campaigns in the biotech, academic or wider healthcare sector.</p> <p>Please explain whether all the resources are in-house or outsourced and provide the relevant experience of the individuals you propose to complete the project, including CVs for relevant individuals as appendices.</p> <p>Please outline relationships with relevant organisations and influencers that will support your plan.</p>	<p>10 points</p> <p>(with 40% weighting)</p>

<p>Please provide the names and contact information for 3 of your clients who could be contacted for references of your (or your agency's) capabilities, process, and relationship.</p>	
<p>2. Campaign approach</p> <p>Please summarise your campaign approach, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tactics for bespoke US and Canadian audience outreach, including identifying media targets • leveraging and engaging US and Canadian stakeholders (for example, as judges, spokespeople, ambassadors for case studies) • recommended local strategy for launch, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ideas for a 'marker' media moment at launch in the US/ Canada, o adapting and leveraging wider global comms materials • PR and media support for US and Canadian events – during and after entry stage (inviting journalists, issuing local press releases, supporting media interviews) • generating media interest beyond set challenge 'peaks' of activity, including spokesperson and case study profiling and other opportunities for news generation • managing reactive media and inbound enquiries • project management and reporting; including within structure of lead agency, partner agencies, client and funders <p>As a reminder, the key focus areas for stages 1 and 2 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving strong potential innovators to the website and entry form. 	<p>10 points</p> <p>(with 40% weighting)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of the Prize amongst target audiences, particularly potential innovators, those in biotech and wider academic and scientific communities. • Positive perception of the Prize, the Longitude brand, Challenge Works and key funders amongst social audiences. • KPIs – measures will be used to track performance, the exact target figures for which will be decided once we agree the approach. 	
<p>3. Budget and value for money</p> <p>Please share your budget breakdown.</p>	<p>10 points</p> <p>(with 20% weighting)</p>

Score	Commentary
1-3	Response provides Challenge Works with a poor- weak level of confidence in the supplier's ability to meet its requirements
4-6	Response provides Challenge Works with a moderate-good level of confidence in the supplier's ability to meet its requirements
7-8	Response provides Challenge Works with a very good level of confidence in the supplier's ability to meet its requirements
9-10	Response provides Challenge Works with a high level of confidence in the supplier's ability to meet its requirements

Annex 2

Terms and Conditions

This appendix provides the terms and conditions which will govern your submission of a proposal to Nesta. You are required to read this appendix carefully together with the Invitation to Tender (ITT) brief (including all its annexes) before submitting a proposal. By submitting a proposal, you accept these terms and conditions and you agree to abide by them. If you do not agree to these terms and conditions please do not submit a proposal.

1. Submitting a proposal

- 1.1 By submitting a proposal you confirm that:
 - 1.1.1 you have no actual or potential conflict of interest with Nesta (including Nesta's Trustees, officers or employees). If at any time during the ITT process you discover an actual or potential conflict of interest, please inform Nesta promptly;
 - 1.1.2 you have legal capacity to submit a proposal in response to this ITT and are acting lawfully, ethically and in good faith in your dealings with Nesta;
 - 1.1.3 you have sufficient time, skill, experience and resources to carry out the services to the highest professional standards expected of a competent supplier of services identical or similar and are able to obtain all necessary rights, licences, consents, waivers, approvals, permissions, permits, certificates and insurances necessary to provide the services to Nesta;

- 1.1.4 your tender will remain open for acceptance for a period of 90 days. A tender valid for a shorter period may be rejected;
- 1.1.5 all information contained in your proposal is true, accurate and not misleading; and
- 1.1.6 Nesta may share your proposal with any third party as Nesta in its absolute discretion deems necessary for the purpose of evaluation.

2 Compliance

- 2.1 Nesta reserves the right to reject or disqualify your tender where:
- 2.1.1 you fail to comply with the requirements of this ITT (including but not limited to these terms and conditions), your tender is incomplete, or you are guilty of a serious misrepresentation in supplying information in response to this ITT;
- 2.1.2 your tender is received after the deadline set out in this ITT. Nesta will not consider any requests for an extension of the time or date fixed for the submission of responses;
- 2.1.3 there is a change in your identity, control, financial standing or any other factor impacting on the selection and/or evaluation of your tender;
- 2.1.4 you are or become insolvent or have a petition issued against you;

- 2.1.5 you do not have the economic and financial standing and/ or the technical and professional ability to carry out the services;
- 2.1.6 you are suspected either directly or indirectly of behaving in a collusive, canvassing, or anti-competitive manner or you offer or accept an inducement or reward in order to gain a commercial, contractual, regulatory or personal advantage; and/or
- 2.1.7 you (or if you are a commercial entity, a director or person who has the power of control or power to make representations or decisions on your behalf) have committed any offence relating to conspiracy, corruption, bribery, fraud, money laundering or any other criminal offence related to your course of business or profession.
- 2.2 Nesta reserves the right in its absolute discretion to:
- 2.2.1 refuse any tender submitted;
- 2.2.2 disqualify any potential tenderer who has been convicted of any of the offences listed at Regulation 23(1) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 or equivalent;
- 2.2.3 extend the time or date for fixed submission. In such circumstances Nesta will endeavour to notify all tenderers of any change;
- 2.2.4 amend any aspect of this ITT (including but not limited to the evaluation criteria and the timeline) or cease the process at any time;

- 2.2.5 negotiate the award of additional services which are a repetition of the services advertised in this Invitation to Tender to the successful bidder;
- 2.2.6 limit the number of proposals invited to participate in any follow-up activity (for example, interviews) or to dispense with any follow-up altogether. Meetings will take place in London at our offices; and/ or
- 2.2.7 require that you clarify your tender in writing and/ or provide additional information and/or adequate references to Nesta's satisfaction. A failure to respond adequately may result in you not being selected.

3 Tenderer Responsibilities

- 3.1 You shall be responsible for all of your own costs, expenses and losses which may be incurred in relation to the preparation of your tender, attendance at interviews, site visits or similar.
- 3.2 You shall at all times treat the contents of Nesta documentation as confidential, as well as any information regarding Nesta imparted to you by any other means, and only disclose such information as may be necessary for the preparation of a compliant response. At Nesta's request you shall return or destroy all documents, other materials, working papers relating to this ITT and all copies thereof including all electronic copies. When completed you shall confirm such to Nesta in writing.
- 3.3 You shall not before the date and time specified within the ITT documentation disclose to any person the amount of your proposal except where the disclosure in confidence is necessary to obtain insurance premiums or guarantees required as part of any proposal to Nesta.

- 3.4 Any contract entered into as a result of this ITT will be on Nesta's standard terms and conditions (copy available on request).

4 Intellectual Property

- 4.1 All intellectual property rights in this ITT and all materials provided by Nesta or any third party acting on its behalf shall remain the property of Nesta.

- 4.2 Any intellectual property arising out of the provision of the services shall belong absolutely and exclusively to Nesta.

5 Warnings/Disclaimers

- 5.1 Nothing contained in this ITT or any other communication made in respect of it between Nesta or its representatives and any party will constitute an agreement, contract or representation between Nesta and any other party. For the avoidance of doubt, receipt by you of this ITT does not imply the existence of a contract or commitment by or with Nesta for any purpose.

- 5.2 The information contained in this ITT does not purport to contain all the information which you may require. While Nesta has taken all reasonable steps to ensure, as at the date of this ITT that the facts contained in it are true and accurate in all material respects, Nesta does not make any representation or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness or otherwise of this ITT.

- 5.3 Nesta accepts no liability to you whatsoever and however arising and whether resulting from the use of this ITT, or any omissions from or deficiencies in it.

6 Waiver

Failure or neglect by Nesta to enforce at any time any of the provisions of these terms and conditions shall not be construed nor shall it be deemed to be, a waiver of our respective rights hereunder, nor in any way affect the validity of the whole or any part of this agreement, nor prejudice our respective rights to take subsequent action.

7 Jurisdiction

This ITT shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of England and Wales and subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.