

Invitation to Tender

Innovator support for the Wellcome Snakebite Innovation Prize

**Challenge Works, design and delivery partner for the
Wellcome Snakebite Innovation Prize**

**Deadline for submissions: Wednesday 11 November
2026 at 11:59 am GMT**

1. What are we commissioning

[Challenge Works](#) (part of [Nesta](#)) is commissioning an expert organisation, incubator, accelerator, or consortium of individual contractors to deliver comprehensive innovator support services for the Wellcome Snakebite Innovation Prize (WSIP) finalist teams operating across Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America.

The selected support provider(s) will design and deliver a 10-month innovator support programme running from January 2027 to October 2027. This package will assist up to 15 finalist teams – comprising up to 10 Launch Track finalists and up to 5 Growth Track finalists – to advance their technological, social, logistical, or systems-level innovations across high-burden settings. Because finalists will be geographically distributed, selected partners must demonstrate the capability to work with innovators across multiple regions, adapting mentorship to local operational contexts while facilitating cross-regional cohort learning and collaboration, where appropriate.

This tender is issued as a single overall contract envelope of up to £200,000 (excl. VAT). However, Challenge Works expects to contract more than one organisation or individual and to split the total budget and workstream responsibilities into smaller targeted contracts according to the specific competencies and strengths submitted by bidders. Crucially, organisations are **not** expected to cover all required competencies in-house. Challenge Works will adjust the allocated budget and scope for selected providers based on the specific workstreams they are commissioned to deliver.

Proposals will be evaluated with a rigorous emphasis on value for money. Bidders should present transparent, cost-effective pricing structures that maximise direct mentorship, expert access, and practical support delivered to finalist teams.

Core objectives of the innovator support programme:

- **Tailored 1-on-1 and cohort assistance:** Provide a support package that combines cohort-wide capacity-building with direct expert mentorship tailored to each finalist's solution type, maturity level, and operational context.
- **Equitable support:** Deliver support in a balanced and equitable manner across both Launch and Growth tracks, recognising their different development stages.
- **Alignment with the judging criteria:** Guide finalists to strengthen their solutions, evidence base, and operational pathways in alignment with WSIP's judging criteria, without the support provider directly developing the solutions.
- **Leveraging ecosystem networks:** Mobilise trusted networks of clinical, technical, regulatory, and business advisors – including local ecosystem consultants in high-burden geographies.
- **High-quality final submissions:** Support finalists to prepare robust, evidence-backed final submissions and compelling pitches for the winners judging phase in late 2027.

2. Background to the Wellcome Snakebite Innovation Prize

The [Wellcome Snakebite Innovation Prize](#) is a £6.25 million, 4.5-year global challenge prize funded by Wellcome and designed and delivered by Challenge Works (part of Nesta). The prize aims to transform patient outcomes for people affected by snakebite envenoming in high-burden settings and directly contribute to the World Health Organization's (WHO) goal of reducing snakebite mortality and disability by 50% before 2030.

Every year, over 5.8 billion people live at risk of venomous snake encounters, resulting in up to 2.7 million envenoming cases, over 100,000 deaths, and 400,000 life-changing disabilities. This burden disproportionately affects impoverished, rural, and agrarian communities in four primary high-burden regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. Most deaths are preventable, but patients often cannot reach safe and effective care fast enough.

The Wellcome Snakebite Innovation Prize calls for solutions that tackle critical challenges and improve outcomes for people affected by snakebite in high-burden settings by strengthening community responses, accelerating access to appropriate care, or improving the delivery of treatment. While important work is being done to improve existing antivenoms and develop new treatments, these are out of scope for this prize. Rather, the prize seeks the technological, social, logistical and systems-level innovations that will maximise the reach of these treatments and ultimately improve health outcomes in the settings where snakebite is most harmful and unmet need is greatest¹.

The dual-track structure and solution diversity:

To balance early-stage novel thinking with near-term real-world impact, the prize operates across two distinct tracks:

- **Launch Track** (up to 10 Finalists, each awarded £75,000): Focuses on early-stage concepts or ideas repurposed from adjacent fields. Finalists enter at Innovation Maturity Levels (IML) 1-2², working toward IML 2+ (developing the prototype and carrying out pilot testing) by October 2027.
- **Growth Track** (up to 5 Finalists, each awarded £100,000): Focuses on more mature solutions that may have already been tested and partially implemented, helping them develop, implement, reach scale, and achieve health impact. Finalists enter across IML 3-6, working toward IML 4+ (real-world pilot validation and implementation readiness) by October 2027.

¹ To see the timeline of the prize, visit the website: [Wellcome Snakebite Innovation Prize](#)

² Read the IML definitions in pages 36-37 in the [Innovator Handbook](#).

Finalist solutions will span multiple regions (Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Latin America), diverse domains (medtech, digital health, logistics, education and social interventions), and a wide spectrum of maturity levels (IML 2-6). Consequently, innovator support cannot be a one-size-fits-all model. Support providers must demonstrate how their offerings will be customised to ensure they are meaningful and impactful for each team.

3. Details of the scope, workstream, and key support needs

The selected support partner(s) will co-design and deliver the innovator support package in close collaboration with Challenge Works. While initial support priorities have been mapped from applicant entry data, the specific package will be refined and modified in January 2027 based on the baseline needs assessment conducted with the selected finalist cohort.

Contextual relevance across high-burden regions:

The judging process to select the 15 finalist teams will conclude in November 2026. Based on entry distribution, we expect finalists to operate across all four high-burden regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. Proposals must explicitly detail past experience working in these geographies or present clear methodologies for tailoring mentorship and resources to be culturally, operationally, and contextually relevant.

Key reported support needs (applicant survey analysis):

An analysis of applicant entry data highlights the top reported support areas requested by prospective finalists:

Support Need	Count	Percent
Pairing teams with a snakebite expert ³	183	49%
User-centered design support	154	41%
Connections to pilot sites/labs	123	33%
Impact assessment support	117	31%
Product development support	115	31%

Secondary reported needs include: pairing with innovation experts (26%), strategic insights (23%), cohort knowledge-sharing opportunities (21%), pitching & communications coaching (15%), team capacity building (15%), business expert mentorship (13%), proposal development (13%), and market fit support (13%).

³ Challenge Works will pair the finalists with snakebite experts, therefore this is not required for the partner proposals.

Indicative 10-month innovator support delivery roadmap (subject to change):

Timeline	Support phase & core focus	Key activities
January 2027	Phase 1: Diagnostic needs assessment	Conduct 1-on-1 diagnostic interviews with the finalists (working with other support providers where appropriate), building upon initial entry survey data and assessor feedback to establish a baseline support roadmap.
February - April 2027	Phase 2: Capability building and technical assistance	Deliver bespoke 1-on-1 mentorship* and local ecosystem advisors paired with cohort-level masterclasses on cross-cutting topics including human-centred design (HCD), behavioural insights, and financial management.
May - July 2027	Phase 3: Validation, pilots, and market engagement	Facilitate connections to relevant testing facilities, wet labs, and high-burden regional pilot sites to assist Launch teams with concept validation and Growth teams with field testing. Support teams with user feedback and market engagement strategies.
August - September 2027	Phase 4: Evidence, scale, and investment readiness	Provide assistance with impact assessment, evidence generation, scaling strategies, and preparations for long-term sustainability and follow-on investments.
October 2027	Phase 5: Final submissions and judging prep	Provide pitching coaching for public engagements and judging presentations and proposal writing guidance.

**Mentorship can be delivered directly in-house where appropriate expertise exists, or by engaging trusted external consultants – ideally local consultants with knowledge of the innovation ecosystems in the finalists' specific geographies.*

4. Working with Challenge Works and governance

Challenge Works will centrally manage the WSIP innovator support programme and oversee overall governance. The contracted support provider(s) will work in close partnership with Challenge Works under a collaborative governance model.

Responsibilities of the successful contractor(s):

- Lead the detailed design and execution of allocated innovator support workstreams under Challenge Works oversight.
- Maintain high agility and flexibility to adapt support offerings as new finalist needs emerge during user testing and field trials.

- Leverage existing networks and recruit vetted external ecosystem consultants where specialised gaps exist.
- Comply with Challenge Works' monitoring, reporting, and contractual requirements.

Challenge Works support and inputs:

- Review and sign-off on all innovator support work packages and deliverables.
- Provide thorough onboarding for contracted suppliers immediately post-contracting in December 2026 / January 2027.
- Host and maintain the central digital Innovator Hub webpage for document sharing, resource access, and cohort announcements.
- Conduct regular check-ins with contractors and finalists, and oversee final submission processes.

5. Required expertise and qualifications

Required supplier expertise is divided into essential requirements and desirable qualifications. In-house snakebite expertise is **not** mandatory, provided the supplier demonstrates a willingness and capacity to learn about the [last-mile health and multidisciplinary challenges of snakebite envenoming](#).

Essential qualifications:

- **Accelerator and innovator support track record:** Demonstrable experience designing and delivering structured capacity-building or support packages for early-stage and growing social/technology/healthcare ventures.
- **International LMIC experience:** Proven track record managing multi-workstream international programmes in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- **Mentorship and workshop facilitation:** Strong operational capacity to design, coordinate, and deliver high-quality 1-on-1 mentorship and cohort masterclasses.
- **Ecosystem and advisor networks:** Access to a network of trusted external advisors or ability to engage local consultants familiar with regional innovation ecosystems in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, or Latin America.
- **Agility and sector learning:** Experience in and/or commitment to learn about snakebite envenoming's unique patient journey, last-mile health challenges, and health system context.

Desirable qualifications:

- **Global health supply chains and regulation knowledge:** A demonstrable grasp of global health supply chains, medical device regulatory pathways, and public sector health procurement in LMICs.
- **Facility and testing connections:** Relationships with life science wet labs, diagnostic testing facilities, or regional pilot sites in high-burden settings.

6. Success criteria, reporting and performance management

KPIs and milestone targets will be co-established and agreed upon during contract negotiation in December 2026, tailored to the specific workstreams awarded to each contractor.

Expected meeting and reporting intervals:

- **Regular progress meetings:** Weekly or fortnightly (every other week) virtual check-ins with the Challenge Works team to monitor delivery, review finalist feedback, and address emerging risks.
- **Mid-point progress report** (May 2027): A mid-term report evaluating finalist engagement, milestone progression across Launch and Growth tracks, and identifying refined support needs for the second half of the phase.
- **Final evaluation report** (October 2027): A comprehensive final report evaluating total support delivered, finalist IML progression, satisfaction ratings, and lessons learned.

7. Budget and indicative procurement timetable

The total available budget envelope for innovator support services is up to £200,000 (excl. VAT). This total budget covers all support delivery across the 10-month finalist phase (January to October 2027) and may be split across more than one contracted organisation or individual.

Proposed budgets must be fully itemised, detailing fee rates per team member/level, implementation costs, and direct pass-through costs. Bidders must clearly demonstrate how their proposal delivers maximum value for money and cost efficiency.

Date/Deadline	Procurement activity
October 2026	Tender published on Challenge Works' website
Wednesday 21 October 2026 (11:59 am GMT)	Bidders confirm intent to respond and submit clarification questions
Monday 26 October 2026	Challenge Works responds to clarifying questions and posts responses on the prize website
Wednesday 11 November 2026 (11:59 am GMT)	Deadline for written proposals (snakebite.prize@challengeworks.org)
Late November 2026	Shortlist interviews
December 2026	Supplier (s) selection and partner contracting
January 2027	Partner onboarding and finalist diagnostic needs assessment commences
10 January – 19 October 2027	Innovator support delivery

8. How to respond and selection criteria

Bidders are requested to follow a three-step process:

- **Step 1 Confirmation of intent:** Interested organisations/consortia must confirm their intent to respond by emailing snakebite.prize@challengeworks.org by Wednesday 21 October 2026 at 11:59 am GMT.
- **Step 2 Written submission:** Formal written proposals must be submitted in English to snakebite.prize@challengeworks.org no later than Wednesday 11 November 2026 at 11:59 am GMT. Written proposals must not exceed 8 A4 pages (recommended font: Arial, Inter; min. size 11) excluding itemised budget, team CVs/biographies (max. 1 page each), and up to 3 case studies (max. 3 pages each).
- **Step 3 Interviews:** Challenge Works will invite 3 shortlisted organisations to an interview during the weeks commencing 23 November and 30 November.

Selection and evaluation criteria	Weighting
1. Capability of organisation and qualifications of proposed personnel • Assessment of core competencies, track record in accelerator/support activities, and qualifications of key team members. • Breakdown of in-house vs external/outsourced personnel, including network of regional consultants in high-burden geographies. • Provision of 2+ client references.	30%
2. Credibility, creativity and proposal approach • Quality, feasibility, and creative approach of proposed activities. • Methodology for tailoring support to diverse solution types and maturity levels (IML 2 to IML 6) across the 4 high-burden regions. • Identification of delivery challenges and robust mitigation strategies.	40%
3. Value for money and pricing structure • Transparent, itemised fee structure detailing team daily rates, activity allocation, and cost efficiencies. • Demonstration of high cost-effectiveness and resource alignment with direct finalist impact.	20%
4. Contract management and quality control • Robust project management, quality assurance, and risk governance framework. • Approach to working flexibly with Challenge Works and reporting on progress.	10%

Appendix: Standard procurement terms and conditions

This appendix sets out the standard terms and conditions governing the submission of proposals to Nesta / Challenge Works.

1. Submitting a Proposal: By submitting a proposal, the bidder confirms that they have no actual or potential conflict of interest with Nesta or Wellcome; have full legal capacity; and that the proposal remains open for acceptance for at least 90 days.
2. Compliance & Right to Reject: Nesta reserves the right to reject or disqualify any tender that is incomplete, received after the deadline, involves collusion or anti-competitive behaviour, or where a material change in bidder standing occurs.
3. Tenderer Costs & Confidentiality: Bidders are solely responsible for all costs incurred in preparing their proposal. All ITT documentation must be treated as strictly confidential.
4. Intellectual Property: All IP in this ITT remains the property of Nesta. Any IP arising from the provision of services shall belong exclusively to Nesta unless otherwise agreed in writing.
5. Jurisdiction: This ITT and any resulting contracts shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales and subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.