

Invitation to tender: comparative mapping exercise – governance of neural organoids and similar models

Commissioner: Nuffield Council on Bioethics

Duration: 6 weeks

Key dates:

- Application closing date: 28 August 2025
- Expected start date: 3 September 2025
- Deadline for final submission: 15 October 2025

Fee: £5,000 (inclusive of VAT)

Background and overview

As part of our ‘Mind & Brain’ priority area, we are exploring the use of neural organoids in research. Following the publication of our briefing note in March 2024, we have conducted further research and are now – steered by an expert Working Group - working towards the development of a short report focused on law, regulation and governance of neural organoids, assembloids and other neural organoid-based models. The report will propose options for future regulation to help researchers and decision-makers navigate the complexities of this space, and to promote safe and ethical research practices. We intend to publish this report towards the end of 2025.

Scope

The mapping should identify and synthesise governance mechanisms as relevant to the creation, storage and use of neural organoids, assembloids and other, similar models from **two** of the following jurisdictions¹: United States, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Japan, Australia and Canada.

It should cover:

1. ‘Hard’ regulation (legislation and any other binding mechanisms) and key differences between the jurisdictions explored and UK hard regulation;
2. ‘Soft’ regulation (including codes of practice, voluntary review mechanisms and similar); and

¹ For federal systems, both state-level and federal legislation should be included, where it exists.

3. Commentary in academic or grey literature, or government policy/debate, about the effectiveness of hard and soft regulation and any proposals for reform within those jurisdictions.

Sources examined and literature identified should, so far as possible, be in the English language. Literature in other languages should only be used where the applicant is a native speaker.

Output

The output should be concise (maximum 8,000 words, excluding references) and written using accessible language to account for NCOB's diverse stakeholder base. It should include the following:

- Executive summary with key findings
- Methods and approach
- Overview of regulatory mechanisms and key differences

Once the final mapping exercise has been completed and signed off by NCOB, its findings will be included within our forthcoming publication on neural organoids.

Timescale

The successful applicant will have a period of 6 weeks to undertake and deliver the final mapping to NCOB. It is expected that regular updates and drafts will be provided by the successful applicant to NCOB staff within that period, and that NCOB will feed back on a complete draft of the mapping at least one week prior to the deadline for final submission.

Application guidelines

Applications may come from individuals or small teams with relevant legal and/or regulatory expertise and a demonstrable interest in emerging technologies.

Applications should contain the following as a minimum:

- Your CV (and the CVs of any co-authors/collaborators)
- Cover letter (1 page maximum) setting out your interest and suitability for the exercise
- A short proposal setting out how you will conduct the mapping exercise, including methods, rationale and a timeline of how the work will be structured over the 6 week period
- A sample of recent, relevant writing (published, or accepted for publication)
- Details of two referees (we won't contact them without telling you first).

Skills, qualifications and experience required:

- A PhD or equivalent professional research experience
- Ability to write about complex subjects clearly and accurately

- Excellent time management
- A collaborative outlook

Applications, and questions in advance of application should be directed to Claudia Corradi, Researcher, at ccorradi@nuffieldbioethics.org.

The deadline for applications is **5pm on 28 August 2025**. Please note that we will not be holding interviews as part of the selection process, but may contact you for an informal conversation to discuss your application.