

A guide for transboundary research partnerships

11 principles

1. Set the agenda together: To enable joint research that meets the highest scientific standards and is mutually relevant, all parties must work together towards a shared goal from the very beginning – making sure to include all concerned stakeholders. Joint determination of research questions, approaches, and methods is a crucial first step towards fairness in cooperation, shared ownership, and mutual trust.

2. Interact with stakeholders: Researchers should involve concerned stakeholders as early as possible. Research that specifically addresses societal issues and people's needs is more relevant and more likely to be used.

3. Clarify responsibilities: Effective partnerships ultimately depend on each partner contributing what they do best. When dividing the work, it is critical to clarify and designate the tasks, duties, and obligations of each partner.

4. Be accountable to beneficiaries: Relevant, meaningful research is accountable not only to funders, but also to society and the scientific community. Responding to the needs and expectations of research beneficiaries is both an obligation and an effective means of communicating and obtaining feedback.

5. Promote mutual learning: Monitoring and evaluation are useful not only for general stock taking (*'What have we achieved together?'*), but also for internal *ex ante* assessment and navigating the future (*'How can our work together improve?'*). The emphasis should be on learning 'together'.

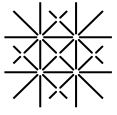
6. Enhance capacities: Capacity strengthening and capacity development are long-term processes that are key to sustainable knowledge production. The challenge lies in translating individually held capacities into sustainable, institutional capacities. For this reason, long-term research partnerships are needed.

7. Share data and networks: Transparency and unrestricted flows of information are essential in research partnerships aimed at societally relevant outcomes. Experience shows that both sides of North-South partnerships bring information and relationships to the table that are vital to the success of joint research projects.

8. Disseminate results: First, research findings must be translated into the 'formats and languages' of each target audience (scientific community, end users, funders, etc.). Second, they must be fed into the proper communication channels, such as scientific journals, policy briefs, or local media.

9. Pool profits and rewards: The benefits of any research partnership should be distributed as fairly as possible among all involved researchers. It is important to assess the potential profits and professional rewards of research activities early on, and to agree on their fair allocation between partners (eg authorship, publications, patent rights).

10. Apply results: Implementing research results effectively requires not only speaking the language of end users, but also translating and contextualising findings in a manner suitable to different levels of intervention. Intermediaries and facilitators can help in this endeavour.



11. Secure outcomes: Long-term targets should be included both in strategic planning and in the design of project and programme cycles. Governments and international organisations must meet the challenge of steering research in the South out of marginalisation and towards sustainability.