

Equitable Partnerships Brief #3

Assessing Partnership Principles in Projects

- for Agrifood Research and Innovation for Development - Version 1.0

**This brief describes a survey-based tool (Partnership Assessment Tool - PAT)
to assess how well projects have engaged partners
and applied the nine [Equitable Partnership Principles](#).**

This is relevant at every stage of a project lifecycle for Agrifood Research and Innovation for Development (RI4D) projects. The questionnaire can be completed by partners or a facilitator and used by project coordinators or funders to guide the application of partnership principles.

In addition to the **survey-based questionnaire**, PAT includes an **indicator framework for aggregating partner responses** collected through the questionnaire and generating an assessment of the partnership experience. The exercise can either be undertaken **manually** (Annex 1) or through a **digital version** of the tool (Annex 2).

Partnership gaps in the project become evident when partners respond negatively to partnership experience questions in the survey. Upon identification, these gaps can be resolved through discussion and relevant amends to the partnership approach.

The assessment is based on the following questions at each stage of the project life cycle:

Stage 1. Identification & scoping		Notes
1.	When did your organisation become a part of the scoping process? ☐ At the start ☐ Somewhat early ☐ Midway ☐ Near the end ☐ After completion	
2.	How often did your organisation receive project information in a timely manner? ☐ Always ☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never	
3.	How often could your organisation freely communicate with other project partners? ☐ Always ☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never	
4.	To what extent were your organisation's expectations from the project considered during scoping discussions? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Not considered	
5.	To what extent were your organisation's concerns relevant to the project considered during scoping discussions? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Not considered	

Stage 2. Research design & planning	
6. To what extent could your organisation contribute to research design? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Could not contribute ☐ Not applicable	
7. Considering your organisation's role, to what extent could it contribute to the project until now? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Could not contribute	
8. When were authorship arrangements discussed with your organisation? <i>Consider if there was enough time for your organisation to meaningfully negotiate and agree on the arrangements.</i> ☐ Early enough ☐ Just in time ☐ With limited time ☐ Too late ☐ Not discussed ☐ Not applicable	
9. How fair were the outcomes of authorship/recognition discussions to your organisation? ☐ Very fair ☐ Fair ☐ Somewhat fair ☐ Unfair ☐ Very unfair ☐ No discussions took place ☐ Not applicable	
10. How much of your organisation's learning or capacity needs relevant to the project was recognised during the planning process? ☐ All ☐ Most ☐ About half ☐ A few ☐ Not recognised ☐ Not applicable	
11. To what extent did the partnership involve your organisation in discussions on sustainability or project continuation? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Not involved ☐ Not applicable	
Stage 3. Data collection & fieldwork	
12. How much access to relevant project data did your organisation have? ☐ Full ☐ Significant ☐ Moderate ☐ Negligible ☐ No access ☐ Not applicable	
13. How often were challenges and changes to the implementation plan discussed openly by project partners? ☐ Always ☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐ No challenges arose ☐ I don't know	
14. How appropriate were the project's implementation approaches to the local or national contexts? ☐ Very appropriate ☐ Appropriate ☐ Somewhat appropriate ☐ Inappropriate ☐ Very inappropriate ☐ I don't know	
15. To what extent could your organisation contribute to decisions on the project's data interpretation? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Could not contribute ☐ Not applicable	
Stage 4. Analysis & interpretation	
16. To what extent could your organisation contribute to analysing the findings? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Could not contribute ☐ Not applicable	
17. How long before external sharing were the project's findings shared with your organisation? <i>Consider if the time given to your organisation was adequate for reviewing findings and responding</i> ☐ Well in advance ☐ Just enough time ☐ Very little ☐ No time ☐ Not shared ☐ Not applicable	
18. To what extent did the partners discuss the project's shortcomings? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Not discussed ☐ No shortcomings arose ☐ I don't know	

19.	How many of the authorship commitments made to your organisation were honoured? ☐ All ☐ Most ☐ About half ☐ A few ☐ None ☐ Not applicable	
Stage 5. Dissemination & communication		
20.	To what extent did the partnership involve your organisation in communicating the findings? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Not involved ☐ Not applicable	
21.	How accessible were the project's outputs to your organisation? ☐ Very easily accessible ☐ Fairly easily accessible ☐ Somewhat easily accessible ☐ Difficult to access ☐ Not accessible ☐ Not applicable	
22.	How accessible were the project's findings to end users? ☐ Very easily accessible ☐ Fairly easily accessible ☐ Somewhat easily accessible ☐ Difficult to access ☐ Not accessible ☐ I don't know	
23.	Rate your level of satisfaction with the way your organisation was credited in communication outputs. ☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied ☐ Not applicable	
24.	How many of the forums where the project findings were presented were accessible to your organisation? <i>Consider any occasion, e.g., conference, webinar, symposium, paper presentation, where findings could have been presented</i> ☐ All ☐ Most ☐ About half ☐ A few ☐ None ☐ Not applicable	
Stage 6. Review and scaling sustainably		
25.	To what extent was your organisation involved in reviewing the partnership? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Not involved ☐ Not applicable	
26.	To what extent did the partnership strengthen your organisation's capacity? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ No difference ☐ Not applicable	
27.	How many of the benefit-sharing commitments made to your organisation were fulfilled? ☐ All ☐ Most ☐ About half ☐ A few ☐ None ☐ Not applicable	
28.	To what extent could your organisation contribute to discussions on scaling the project's outcomes? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Could not contribute ☐ Not applicable	
29.	To what extent did the partnership involve relevant local partners in shaping the scaling approach? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Not involved ☐ I don't know	
30.	To what extent did the partnership involve relevant end users or their representatives in shaping the scaling approach? ☐ Full extent ☐ Large extent ☐ Moderate extent ☐ Small extent ☐ Not involved ☐ I don't know	

ANNEX 1

Manual Partnership Assessment Tool (PAT)

Instructions for respondents

1. Project partners are requested to attempt the survey at the end of each or all stages of a research project.
2. Every partner in a project is required to use a separate questionnaire.
3. Respond to all questions. Please indicate **Not Relevant** only if the question is not relevant to your organisation due to its role in the project.
4. You can use the **Notes** field to provide additional information to explain your responses.
5. In the questionnaire, organisation is defined as: Any registered institution or non-registered/informal entity, including collectives and community-based entities.

Project and Partner Information (where information is unavailable, leave fields blank)

Project Title	
Partner Organisation Name	
Respondent Name	
Respondent Designation	
Project Start Date	
Project End Date (if underway, mention Ongoing)	
Project Funder	
Budget	

Assessment Framework

**Only for facilitator. Not to be shared with respondents*

Instructions

1. The framework comprises 30 indicator statements. Each statement corresponds to the question numbered the same as the indicator.
2. The indicators will be marked **Green**, **Red**, or **No Data** based on aggregate of scoreable responses to the corresponding question.
3. Rules for aggregation of responses and assigning initial indicator status
 - a. A statement's status is marked **green** if all scoreable responses to the corresponding question are either options 1 or 2.
 - b. A statement's status is marked **red** if any scoreable response to the corresponding question is either options 3, 4 or 5.
 - c. A statement's status is marked **No data** if every response received is excluded (see below). The following responses are to be excluded.
 - i. Not Applicable
 - ii. No challenges arose/No shortcomings arose (where offered)
 - iii. No discussions took place (question 9 only)

- iv. **I don't know:** Excluded from status, but the facilitator should note how many partners responded this way for each indicator. A pattern of "I don't know" responses may itself indicate a gap in partnership transparency worth examining.
4. An indicator initially marked red can be changed to green in the final status if the partnership takes corrective action through deliberation and addresses concerns of partners who raised them. An indicator initially marked green will remain green in final status.
5. In case of initial red status, facilitators are required to ascertain from respondents if corrective action has been taken to address the gap before assigning final status.

Stage	Q#	Indicators	Proportion	Initial Status	Actions taken to address gaps	Final Status
Identification & scoping <i>PP:1, 2, 9</i>	1	Early involvement of partners to be able to influence the direction or scope of the project		 		 
	2	Receipt of project information in a timely manner and through accessible communication channels		 		 
	3	Free and direct communication between project partners		 		 
	4	Partners' expectations being considered during scoping		 		 
	5	Partners' concerns being considered during scoping		 		 
Research design & planning <i>PP:1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9</i>	6	Partners' ability to influence research design		 		 
	7	Partners' roles within project allowing them to contribute appropriately		 		 
	8	Early discussions about authorship or recognition arrangements with the project		 		 
	9	Fairness of the outcomes of authorship and recognition discussions		 		 
	10	Learning or capacity needs recognised by the project		 		 
	11	Involvement in discussions on sustainability or continuation of the project		 		 
Data collection & fieldwork <i>PP:2, 3, 4, 5, 9</i>	12	Partners' access to relevant project data		 		 
	13	Open discussions about the implementation plan		 		 
	14	Appropriateness of implementation approaches to local or national contexts		 		 
	15	Partners contributions to decisions on data use or interpretation		 		 
Analysis & interpretation	16	Partners' contributions to interpreting research findings		 		 

PP:1, 2, 4, 5, 6	17	Partners' access to findings before being shared externally		☐	☐		☐	☐
	18	Partners openly discussing aspects of the project not meeting expectations		☐	☐		☐	☐
	19	Authorship commitments to Partners' organisations		☐	☐		☐	☐
Dissemination & communication PP:2, 6, 7, 9	20	Partner organisations' role in communicating the findings		☐	☐		☐	☐
	21	Partners' access to project outputs		☐	☐		☐	☐
	22	Accessibility of project outputs to end users		☐	☐		☐	☐
	23	Partners' levels of satisfaction over credit in communication outputs		☐	☐		☐	☐
	24	Partners' access to forums where findings were presented		☐	☐		☐	☐
Review and scaling sustainably PP:1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	25	Partners' involvement in reviewing the partnership		☐	☐		☐	☐
	26	Strengthening partner organisations' capacity or learning		☐	☐		☐	☐
	27	Fulfilment of benefits sharing commitments to partner organisations		☐	☐		☐	☐
	28	Partners involved in project scaling-up discussions		☐	☐		☐	☐
	29	Local partners' involvement in shaping the scaling approach		☐	☐		☐	☐
	30	End users' involvement in shaping the scaling approach		☐	☐		☐	☐

ANNEX 2

Digital Partnership Assessment Tool (PAT)

The digital version of PAT (currently in a testing phase) is the same questionnaire and indicator framework described above. It allows for digital capturing of responses and automates the assessment process.

The digital version has two modules:

A. Facilitator Module

Facilitator is an entity who initiates and coordinates the survey. The facilitator will create a project, add partner organisations, and enable their access to the survey by generating links. The tool can be accessed at <https://agr4d.vercel.app/facilitator.html>.

For first time use, create a facilitator key by entering a key and clicking access. This key provides you access to all projects you have or will have facilitated. To access your projects in your profile later, simply enter your access key and click a project you facilitated.

The screenshot displays the 'Facilitator module' interface. At the top, there's a 'Facilitator key' input field with a 'Save key' button. Below this, the 'Project setup' tab is active, showing fields for 'Project title' (Restoring drylands in ABC), 'Project start date' (15-03-2021), 'Project end date' (10-02-2024), 'Project funder' (Funder 1), and 'Budget (USD)' (10000). The 'Stage access' section allows selecting stages 1 through 6. The 'Partner organisations' section is at the bottom, with a note about generating unique respondent links.

The Response Status tab in the facilitator module helps keep track of survey completions. The Indicators tab displays a snapshot of partnership health. Indicator statements that are marked red require attention of partners. The indicator assignment logic is the same as that of the manual tool.

The screenshot shows two panels. The left panel, 'Partner response status', shows a table with columns for Partner, Stage 1 through Stage 6, and a 'Pending' status. The right panel, 'Indicators', shows a table with columns for Respondent, Organisation, Response, and Notes. It lists two partners, Rahul and Ramesh, both with a response of '1. Always'. Below the table is a section for 'Actions taken to address gaps' with a text input field.

B. Respondent Module

The respondent module features the questionnaire, which is only accessible through links generated by the facilitator. A respondent can only take the survey for a stage that has been assigned by the facilitator.

AGRI4D

Partnership Assessment Tool

Your details

Please complete all fields before continuing.

Project title

Partner organisation

Your name

Your designation

Stage to assess

Stage 2: Research design & planning ▼

Start questionnaire →

Stage 1: Identification & scoping

Question 2 of 5

QUESTION 2 OF 5

How regularly did your organisation receive project information in a timely manner?

☒ 1 Always

☐ 2 Most of the time

☐ 3 Sometimes

☐ 4 Rarely

☐ 5 Never

Notes (optional)

← Previous question
Next →

The figure displays two screenshots of the Partnership Assessment Tool interface. The left screenshot, titled 'You have completed Stage 2', features a green checkmark icon and text indicating that the user has completed the research design and planning stage. It asks if the user would like to proceed to the next stage and provides two buttons: 'Proceed to Stage 3 ->' and 'End survey'. The right screenshot, titled 'Thank you for your responses', features a yellow heart icon and text thanking the user for their inputs, which will contribute to the overall partnership health assessment. It includes a box for contact information: 'FOR PARTNERSHIP HEALTH INFORMATION, CONTACT [facilitator contact details to be added here]'.

This brief is part of the Equitable Partnership Brief Series designed for Agrifood Research and Innovation for Development. The series currently includes briefs on:

- Partnership Principles
- Applying Partnership Principles in Projects
- Assessing Partnership Principles in Projects
- Partner-Inclusive Language
- Case studies of applied Partnership Principles

We welcome collaborations to further co-develop these or other guides and case studies that can assist in more equitable partnerships in research and innovation.

Prepared by: Rohit Pillandi, Joanna Kane-Potaka, and Allison Grove Smith

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