

Equitable Partnerships Brief #1

Partnership Principles

- for Agrifood Research and Innovation for Development - Version 2.0

Criteria for assessing the quality of research partnerships¹

In summary

PP1: Co-design goals & plans	PP2: Free & fair knowledge exchange	PP3: Shared responsibilities
PP4: Mutual learning	PP5: Enhancing collective research capacities	PP6: Equitable benefits
PP7: Results shared that enable application	PP8: Sustainable outcomes	PP9: Contextual flexibility

In more detail

1) The objectives of a partnership should be set collaboratively to ensure shared ownership from the outset.

All partnerships should aim to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Their specific objectives should be determined collaboratively by all stakeholders, including prospective end-users, to incorporate diverse knowledge systems, worldviews, and interests. This participatory approach, applied during the initial phases of identification of research questions, priorities, approaches, and methods, as well as during appraisal and planning, ensures fairness in cooperation and shared ownership from the outset. It involves designing participatory processes to identify relevant stakeholders and set priorities, discussing objectives, identifying the partnership's added value, and aligning available resources and time.

2) The networks and communication platforms established through a partnership should ensure transparent access and facilitate free knowledge exchange.

Networks and communication platforms should be designed to ensure transparent and easy access to information for all stakeholders. Such setup encourages the free flow and exchange of

¹ These nine Principles were developed drawing inspiration from the Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnerships' (GRP-Alliance) *A Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships- 11 Principles, 3rd Edition, 2018.*

partners' specific knowledge including financial, methodological, contextual, systemic, and institutional insights.

3) Responsibilities should be shared effectively through jointly agreed distribution and accountability.

Responsibilities within partnerships should be negotiated and shared effectively. This entails fairly distributing duties and tasks in a manner that aligns each partners' comparative advantage, competencies, and preferences. The process should also involve establishing patterns defining internal Terms of Reference for decision-making, mutual accountability, and conflict resolution.

4) Joint activities should foster mutual learning by reflecting on successes and challenges.

Joint activities within a partnership should be designed to promote mutual learning. The collaboration should include reflecting on both successes and shortcomings, including failures and unachieved objectives. The challenge lies in combining mutual learning processes with short-term accountability, creating adequate spaces, and using appropriate tools for exchange and joint analysis to foster a learning culture.

5) A partnership should be designed to enhance collective research capacities.

A partnership should be structured to enhance collective research capacities by translating personal knowledge into broader, sustainable capacities within stakeholder institutions. This process involves clarifying the purpose of capacity development and strengthening, using methods such as on-the-job training.

6) Within a partnership, benefits and merits should be equitably shared and managed.

Benefits and merits should be shared equitably within a partnership. This includes ensuring equal acknowledgement of all contributors and fair allocation of benefits, especially with regards to authorship, publications, often formalised through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and sound management of potential conflicts of interest.

7) Results of a partnership should be shared widely in forms that enable their application.

The results of a partnership's work should be disseminated broadly in ways that encourage and enable their application. This involves identifying potential users of the results and engaging them from the outset, maintaining dialogue with them, and choosing methods of communication that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

8) The outcomes of a partnership should be relevant, credible, and sustainably supported by shared resources.

Partnership outcomes should be relevant, scientifically credible and focus on sustainability. This includes securing the necessary funding and human resources to continue and advance the research as part of a collective strategy designed by all partners, avoiding dependency on any single actor.

9) The Partnership Principles should be applied flexibly to fit each partnership's specific context.

The Partnership Principles should be applied flexibly, taking into account the specific context of each partnership -such as the local innovation landscape, cultural, practical, and political circumstances- in order to ensure effectiveness, relevance, impact, and sustainability

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.

©GFAiR. *We encourage use of this work with appropriate citation.*

Suggested citation: GFAiR. 2024. Partnership Principles - for Agrifood Research and Innovation for Development, Equitable Partnerships Brief #1, Version 2.0, Global Forum on Agricultural Innovation and Research, Rome, Italy.

