



## **Guidelines on Good Practice in Partnership with Developing Countries**

**With the overall goal to reduce poverty in developing countries by improving the health of the populations, the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership aims through European research integration and in partnership with African countries to develop new clinical interventions to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.**

To achieve the balance between scientific research in developing countries and the scientists, public and its stakeholders the implementation of EDCTP will require guidelines on good practice in partnership with Developing Countries. Networking is a major EDCTP instrument to exploit and to mobilise the human and financial resources necessary to combat the three diseases in the developing countries. Through networking, the participating EEIG Member States commit to interact through EDCTP in their relations with other international initiatives, industry or other activities. This leads to (new) partnerships with international initiatives, and industry, with which EDCTP could develop joint projects.

A major principle is that EDCTP will not seek to compete with, or replace, successful initiatives already existing in this area. Rather the EDCTP will seek to form partnerships with such initiatives. Therefore, a partnership with international initiatives that provide a mutual surplus value will help EDCTP to succeed in achieving its objectives.

EDCTP has adapted the following 11 principles<sup>1</sup> for research in partnership between the participating Member States and developing countries:

### **1. Decide on the objectives together**

It is essential to form collaboration among the partners to find appropriate answers to socially significant problems. Research priorities must be set which fit in with the interest of all those involved to avoid one-sided interests coming into play. These general priorities must be distinguished from the research question to be answered by a particular project. Wherever possible, local traditional knowledge should be taken into account. This can be of useful to avoid misvaluations of the situation by outsiders and can prepare the ground at an early stage for achieving the expected results going into practice. The purpose of the partnership should be explicitly defined in terms of long-term vision, goals and activities, and should have a manageable focus.

### **2. Build up mutual trust**

The creation of mutual trust can contribute largely to an honest and open collaboration. Besides a common framework new contacts and relationships are important to strengthen the networks of collaborating institutions. Therefore prejudice needs to be avoided to bridge the time and patience gaps in reaching a level of mutual trust.

### **3. Share information; develop networks**

It is vital to set up a well-organised and effective communication system between the partners to reach a comparable level of information and knowledge about the joint research activities and its environment. If the communication infrastructure is inadequate, it is better to take action to acquire the necessary communication means for regular exchange of information. Apart from facilitating the North-North, North-South and South-South networks

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<sup>1</sup> "Guidelines for Research in Partnership with Developing Countries, 11 Principles", developed by KFPE/Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries, KFPE, 1998.  
[http://www.kfpe.ch/download/Guidelines\\_e.pdf](http://www.kfpe.ch/download/Guidelines_e.pdf)

partnerships need to facilitate strong link between institutions doing research and disease control programmes in countries where this is weak.

#### **4. Share responsibility**

All partners should be able to share the scientific and the technical leadership and management responsibility for the project implementation taking into account the competence and the resources. It is advisable to discuss the division of tasks and responsibilities at an early stage. The roles and responsibilities of the partners ought to be consistent with their capabilities and competences, both current and envisaged. The involvement of all partners will provide those with less experience the opportunity to gain expertise in research management.

#### **5. Create transparency**

Partnership plans should be developed jointly from conception. It is necessary to disclose all contributions either in commitments or financial resources received from all partners to avoid conflict and possible misunderstandings. It is practical to prepare a binding agreement in writing which lays down the contribution to be made by all partners along with their rights and duties. There should be transparency on all aspects of the partnership planning especially managerial issues, authorship, ownership of results of research, access to resources, and other results of starting the partnership. Regular review of the accounts, audits, and periodic checking of inventories are essential to creating transparency.

#### **6. Monitor and evaluate the collaboration**

Monitoring the progress of research and development and the functioning of the partnership is critical. This requires continuous checking of deliverables against the defined indicators to allow sufficient flexibility in responding to a dynamic and rapidly changing environment. Regular internal or external evaluations could assess the partnership in all of its aspects: management, communication, decision-making, implementation, and any improvement of partner's capacities, etcetera. The evaluation needs to be conducted in an impartial and independent manner.

#### **7. Disseminate the results**

It is a basic principle that there should be unlimited access to the results of research. Since research projects in partnerships between industrialised and developing countries are directed towards concrete problems, care must therefore be taken to ensure that the research results are communicated adequately and accessibly through appropriate media. This will smooth the path of bringing the results into fruition with the active participation of local community. The spreading of knowledge can take place in many ways, as long as the research results can be understood by a wider public than just the scientific community. Very often, the responses to these research efforts can be useful for other future work.

#### **8. Apply the results**

Partnerships projects raise expectations among the partners from the developing countries and within their own communities. Therefore the research teams are obligated to ensure and follow up on the results to benefit the target audience. The process of converting scientific results into practical projects and actual implementing it is extremely complex. It is always wise to keep the local political decision-makers and/or government bodies well informed on the research progress and its results to ensure their active participation and to fulfil the expectations of the community.

#### **9. Share contributions and profits equitably**

Research results have intellectual value and may also have commercial value. All partners should share equally in the benefits of both values. The legal rights of all partners in the

expected results should be discussed at an early stage and recorded in writing. International law (e.g. concerning patent rights) and the national regulations of the host country must be considered.

#### **10. Increase research capacity**

The main concern when research partnerships established is to strengthen the capacity of all those involved for carrying out effective research, both on the individual and institutional level. Moreover the South-South collaboration needs to be promoted in order to raise the level of achievements in research in those countries that have not reached the level of those in industrialised countries, and yet they bear the greatest burden of disease. The industrialised countries should provide support to achieve this goal. Gathering valuable experience can have other meanings when the participating research workers from the developing countries will be able to attend further education or training in an industrialised country to learn new methods, exchange information and enlarge the network. Use of local resources, expertise and budgets (engagement of governments) should be optimised to ensure respectful, effective and sustainable partnerships.

#### **11. Build on achievements**

In following a successful project there are three valuable outcomes: new knowledge, contribution to sustainable development, and new or more highly developed research capacities. New knowledge is recorded in publications. The contribution to a sustainable development means the new knowledge into policy and practice in a sustainable way. However, to maintain the new research capacities means that existing institutions need to continue to thrive or new ones need to be established and the research workers involved in the project need to find suitable employment under acceptable conditions. Many developing countries face the employment problems once the research project is finished. It happens all too often that good scientists leave their own country to find better job prospects in an industrialised country. The follow up after the finalisation of a research project is essential to overcome intellectual isolation. There should be measures to enable and ensure that partners can find future professional employments (e.g. by involving large international organisations). Partnerships should also develop institutional capacity and provide an enabling environment for training and research to better equip good scientists for more competitive research grants.