

SELECTED CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING QUALITY OF RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

(by Alessandro Meschinelli, Jon-AndriLys and Ann Water Bayers, inspired by the 11 principles of the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries, KFPE)

- 1) **All partnerships have the objective of contributing to the SDGs. The specific objectives are determined in a participatory manner by all key protagonists** including prospective end-users, involving different knowledge systems and stakeholders, world views and interests. This refers to the initial phases of identification, appraisal and planning to ensure equity in cooperation and shared ownership from the beginning with regard to identification of research questions/ideas/priorities, approaches and methods. This includes: the design of participatory processes for the ethical identification of relevant stakeholders and prospective end-users and priority setting process. Discussion of different objectives and identification of added value of the partnership as well as expectations, with sufficient resources and time allocated to the process.
- 2) Networks and communication platforms (also among different stakeholders) are set in a way to **ensure transparent and easy access to information by all**. This entails encouraging and allowing a free flow and exchange of the partners' specific types of knowledge (on financial, methodological, contextual, systemic, institutional and other relevant matters).
- 3) **Responsibilities are negotiated and shared effectively**. This entails distributing and allocating democratically duties and tasks within the partnership, compatible with the comparative advantages and with the competencies, preferences and social obligations of each partner. It involves also establishing patterns for decision-making, mutual accountability, resolving conflicts and defining internal TORs.
- 4) **Joint activities promote mutual learning**. The collaboration includes reflection not only on successful outcomes but also on shortcomings, failures and unachieved objectives. The challenge is to combine mutual learning processes with short-term accountability, creating adequate space and using appropriate tools for exchange and joint analysis, with a view to build a learning culture.
- 5) **Collective research capacities are enhanced**. The partnership is structured to translate the personal knowledge acquired into broader sustainable capacities within the stakeholder institutions, which involves clarifying and making explicit the purposes of capacity development and strengthening through *inter alia* on-the-job training.
- 6) **Benefits and merits are shared in an equitable manner**. Sound management of potential conflicting interests and claims. This means equal acknowledgement to all contributing actors and fair allocation to all partners of benefits, especially with regards to authorship, publications, etc. (also through MOUs).
- 7) **Results are disseminated broadly in forms that encourage and allow application**. This implies an effort in identifying potential users of results and involving them from the outset, entering into constant dialogue with them, and choosing different means of communication adapted to a variety of cultures and languages.

- 8) **Outcomes are relevant, scientifically credible, secured and sustainability of the processes is sought.** Both funding and human resources needed to continue and bring further the research as part of a collective strategy designed by all partners and not attributed to a single actor, creating dependency.
- 9) **Flexible application of the criteria** to the context is required based on the awareness of the local innovation landscape, cultural, practical and political circumstances.

