

Towards fair research collaborations at IHMT-NOVA

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SDG 17 aims at strengthening “the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”.



- **Research partnerships**

- involve the exchange of structures, the building of relationships, **mutual cooperation** and sharing tasks to attain **common goals** in order to **enhance research capacity** (*Craveiro et al, 2017*).
- are **fundamental** to attain research capacity in LMICs (*Macfarlane et al, 2008; Farnman et al, 2015*).
- with experienced institutions from LMIC may foster processes of **‘reverse innovation’** from the South to the Global North (*Crisp, 2014; Govindarajan and Ramamurti, 2011*).



Guidelines, standards, recommendations & regulations

- The topic has generated an extensive academic debate (Bezanson, Narain and Prante 2004; Kitzi, 2002; Adams, 2012; Carvalho, Nunes and Hartz, 2017).
- Over the past twenty years, we have witnessed the development of guidelines, good standards of practice, ethical regulations and recommendations on how to establish transboundary research partnerships (*ESSENCE, 2014; KFPE, 2014; CCGHR, 2016*).
- Recently COHRED developed the RFI, an **evidence based tool** that operationalizes good practice standards related to three main dimensions of partnerships - fairness of opportunity, fair process and fair sharing of benefits, costs and outcomes (*COHRED, 2017; Ijsselmuiden and Klipp, 2017; Carvalho et al 2017; Carvalho, Nunes and Hartz, 2017; Craveiro and Hartz, 2017*).
- IHMT-NOVA was the first Portuguese language partner of COHRED's RFI.



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Partnerships at IHMT-NOVA

- Currently, IHMT-NOVA is a key institution in Portugal and in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries – *Comunidade de Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa* - CPLP – in terms of health for development, infectious tropical diseases, education & training and capacity building.
- It is undergoing a process of revision of its management and laboratory processes and **COHRED's RFI provided** us with a tool to
 - go beyond talking about doing to actually doing it
 - review our partnership processes systematizing our ongoing efforts to establish fair partnerships with our collaborating institutions – **INTERNAL** positioning.
 - structure with our partners the dialogue about what should our partnerships look like – **EXTERNAL** positioning.



Vision

IHMT

- To function as part of **networks**
in order to
- to produce the knowledge, information, instruments and systems
- needed by individuals, communities and countries
to
 - Improve their health and well-being **equitably**
and
 - Responde to *glocal* health and tropical medicine threats and emergencies.

Research Centre on Global Health and Tropical Medicine - GHTM

- Our vision is to extend our expertise as a R&D institution in the specific field of global health and tropical medicine,
 - addressing present and future health problems,
 - **bridging across CPLP R&D institutions** in a worldwide context,
 - becoming a privileged **partner for health & scientific cooperation and development**,
 - respecting our national heritage of being in the forefront of new developments and societal challenges related with globalization
 - **aligned with key-concepts of sustainable development goals.**



Internal RFI Implementation

- Structured Interviews with key informants, based on the RFI script (Director, Deputy Directors, Full Professors and PIs) – recorded and fully transcribed;
- Informal conversations with other relevant staff (academic/admin)
- Analysis of already existing reports (annual reports; GHTM's 2013-2017 evaluation and strategy for 2018-2022);
- Synthesis of main answers/ideas/proposals;
- Identification of relevant examples related to RFI domains to include in the Report (case studies; research projects, etc.);
- Internal advocacy.



Internal RFI implementation

- praised by most of the interviewees - some of them had longstanding concerns with issues of ethics, fairness and North/South unbalances
- seen as an opportunity to assess, outline and systematize individual and institutional approaches to transboundary research partnerships
- IHMT's approach relies mostly on tacit agreements and not on SOPs/written guidelines –interviewees believed that, in some cases, it wouldn't be helpful to develop SOPs
- It was often pointed out that the RFI questionnaire was too long and repetitive (interviews following the full RFI Reporting Guide took more than 3 hours).





External RFI advocacy/implementation will build on:

- Members from partner institutions from from the South belonging to the Administration Board, Advisory Council & Scientific Advisory Board
- Institutional partnerships with Universities in Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique and East Timor
 - IHMT incorporates academic staff from those Universities as Invited Professors
 - IHMT staff reciprocates by serving as Invited Professors at those Universities, participating in Scientific Councils and
 - delocalizing training programs from Portugal to Angola, Brazil and Cape Verde.
- Membership of several networks, namely
 - within the CPLP (Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries)
 - within the European Union , such as TropEd
 - globally, such as IANPHI





External RFI advocacy

- A dedicated special issue of IHMT's scientific journal – **Anais do Instituto de Higiene e Medicina Tropical**
- **Translation** of RFI guides into Portuguese.
- Advocacy with the Secretary General of the CPLP leading to debate during Ministerial (Health) during October 2017 in Brasilia with a **CPLP Declaration to adopt the RFI**.
- **Research projects** and initiatives focused on capacity building, knowledge translation and public engagement with science.

- **Editorial** - Cooperation, research and health equity
- **Guest Editorial** – Beyond Good Intentions – The Research Fairness Initiative
- **Original Articles**
 - Implementation of the Research Fairness Initiative
 - Knowledge Production, political action and equity: contributions of the observatory of political analysis in health (PAHO)
 - Equity in Evaluative research focusing on health cooperation and development
 - Best practices of Public Health research equity: examples from Brazil and Portugal
 - Equity and governance: analysis of health research and innovation policy in Brazil
 - Review Article - Health for Development, research partnerships and fairness
- **Research Notes**
 - Strengthening Bioethics Committees from Portuguese Speaking African Countries
 - Collaborative and innovative partnerships in knowledge management for sustainable development in the context of the Research Fairness Initiative (RFI): The MedTROP Project – IHMT/FIOCRUZ



External RFI Implementation: scaling up

- *WIDENING-TWINNING project* in partnerships with COHRED and SDU, will develop the field of ‘fair research partnerships’ and foster the implementation of standards and good practices related to the RFI. This project will:
 - Strengthen the **research agenda** on research partnerships.
 - Through **training, auditing, mobility and internship mechanisms**, IHMT/NOVA’s students and staff members as well as members of the southern host institutions in mobility in IHMT/NOVA will acquire relevant experiences that will result in an **increase in the quality and fairness of their research portfolios**.
 - The creation of an optional **teaching module** on ‘research partnerships’.

