RESEARCH FAIRNESS INITIATIVE (RFI)

Summary

Guide

SERIES: 1
The Research Fairness Initiative (RFI) is a COHRED service to improve the fairness, efficiency and impact of research collaborations globally. Given our origins in “research for health”, the RFI was created with the aim of improving global health, equity and development. However, with minor modifications, the RFI is also completely appropriate to be used in any other field of science collaboration. As we discovered, improving the fairness of research is also a strategic advantage in research organizations, institutions and businesses: greater fairness results in greater efficiency, longer-lasting partnerships, less conflict, improved uptake, reduced reputational risk and greater impact. The RFI is, therefore, of relevance to all key stakeholders in any research collaboration anywhere and of any duration - even though we started with the aim of increasing the research and innovation capacity of low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in particular.

The overall impact of the RFI should be more capable research and innovation systems in all countries of the world to deal with all the important local, regional and global health and development challenges – now and in the future. The RFI is in direct support of the Sustainable Development Goals - particularly SDG 17 on Partnerships.

The RFI can be used by all organizations, institutions, businesses or government departments who engage as actors, sponsors, facilitators of research and research partnerships. In particular, the RFI has been designed for use by:

1. Government departments with a major responsibility for supporting or undertaking research including but not limited to Ministries of Science and Technology, Health, Higher Education
2. National Research and Innovation Agencies
3. Academic and research institutions/organizations
4. Private sector / Industry research divisions and organisations
5. Research funders, sponsors, and philanthropies
6. Other key stakeholders – including but not limited to – large non-profits engaging in research, international organisations and multi-national bodies, development organisations promoting and using research and innovation, and others who associate themselves as concerned stakeholders

Research Fairness Initiative (RFI)
Get involved with the RFI, contribute to global research fairness, efficiency and impact for health, equity and development.

To become an RFI User:
Visit our website: www.rfi.cohred.org
Contact us: Lauranne Botti, RFI Manager, botti@cohred.org

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What you need to get started:
• RFI Summary
• RFI Reporting Guide
• RFI Implementation Guide

The RFI Web provides guidelines, publications, documents, links to websites and other information that forms the evidence-base for the indicators used in the RFI Report. Please consult the RFI Web <http://rfi.cohred.org/evidence-base/> to ensure you are aware of the most up-to-date guidelines and evidence to assist you in completing your institutional RFI Report.

Further documentation will be added over time. Please see the RFI website for latest updates. http://rfi.cohred.org

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The current version of the RFI Implementation Guide is ready for use. It is version 1, so we are convinced it can be improved. We are welcoming any comments for improvement. Please send your comments to botti@cohred.org or nivedhna@cohred.org or upload them on the RFI website.
Introduction to the RFI Summary Guide

The core of the Research Fairness Initiative (RFI) is an understanding of the characteristics and measures that organisations need to have to be or become better partners in collaborative research and innovation.

This Research Fairness Initiative (RFI) Summary Guide outlines the RFI domains, topics and indicators that are required to produce an organisational RFI Report. The RFI Summary Guide serves as an overview on areas of reporting for organizations to follow in order to become fairer partners in research and innovation. More details are provided in the RFI Reporting Guide.

One major objective of the RFI is to develop research and innovation system capacities in low- and middle-income country (LMIC) institutions through their research partnerships with high-income country (HIC) institutions. At the same time, the RFI is of relevance to increase efficiency and performance of any research collaboration and partnerships and this guide will be useful to all research stakeholders.

The RFI has been designed, firstly, as a reporting system that is used by all research stakeholders and can be validated by the RFI Secretariat, and, secondly, as a learning platform to increase understanding and sharing of innovations and best practices. High quality reporting is done by providing quantitative and qualitative information on each of the 45 indicators that jointly make up the RFI.

Comprehensive reporting on each indicator is done in three tranches:

1. Provide specific answers as required under each topic.
2. Provide supportive documentation to substantiate your answers in item 1.
3. Provide your short- and medium-term plans for further improvement of your organisation’s actions related to this particular indicator/topic. It is the strategic part for your own organization and for prospective partners – to see how future collaborations will be implemented.

For each indicator
- Report on each indicator according to specifications
- Provide supportive documentation
- Outline future actions to improve fairness and performance

Comprehensive reporting on each domain requires one more step:

1. Provide any other information on practices your organization employs to improve research collaborations. This is a place where you can share and publish organizational best practices with practical examples, case studies and more.

For each domain
- Supplement the information provided for each indicator with any other good partnership practices or actions used or promoted by your organisation

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RFI Guidelines: Domains, Topics and Indicators

RFI DOMAIN 1: FAIRNESS OF OPPORTUNITY

Topic 1. Relevance to communities – in which research is done

Indicator 1.1.1. Research priorities in communities where research is being conducted
Indicator 1.1.2. Actions if there are no research priorities
Indicator 1.1.3. Justification to research low priority topics

Topic 2. Early engagement of all partners – in deciding about aims, methods, implementation

Indicator 1.2.1. Relationship between the ‘main/lead/sponsoring’ and ‘other’ partners.
Indicator 1.2.2. SOPs for partner inclusion in study design
Indicator 1.2.3. SOPs for supportive actions to partners

Topic 3. Making contributions of all partners explicit – Fair Research Contracting

Indicator 1.3.1. Role clarification in research partnerships
Indicator 1.3.2. SOPs for conflict resolution
Indicator 1.3.3. Making potential impact explicit before starting research

Topic 4. Ensuring that matching and other co-financing mechanisms do not undermine opportunities for fair participation of all partners

Indicator 1.4.1. Equal co-financing
Indicator 1.4.2. Alternatives to equal co-financing
Indicator 1.4.3. Research outside national priorities and co-financing

Topic 5. Recognition of unequal research management capacities between partners and providing for appropriate corrective measures

Indicator 1.5.1. Research Management Capacity
Indicator 1.5.2. Financial Management Capacity
Indicator 1.5.3. Contracting and Contract Negotiation capacity
DOMAIN 2. FAIR PROCESS

Topic 6. Minimizing negative impact of research programmes on health and other systems

Indicator 2.6.1. Assessing potential harm of research
Indicator 2.6.2. Reducing negative impact of research
Indicator 2.6.3. Compensation for unintended (negative) consequences of research

Topic 7. Fair local hiring, training and sourcing

Indicator 2.7.1. Local staffing
Indicator 2.7.2. Local sourcing of consumables and services
Indicator 2.7.3. Support for local capacity development

Topic 8. Respect for authority of local ethics review systems

Indicator 2.8.1. Research Ethics Approval
Indicator 2.8.2. Supporting local Research Ethics Review capacity
Indicator 2.8.3. Enabling access to global expertise

Topic 9. Data ownership, storage, access and use

Indicator 2.9.1. Data Ownership Agreements
Indicator 2.9.2. Material Transfer Agreements
Indicator 2.9.3. Rights of Use of Data for Publication

Topic 10. Encourage full cost recovery budgeting and compensation for all partners

Indicator 2.10.1. Full Cost Recovery Budgeting
Indicator 2.10.2. Improving/Standardizing Budgeting
Indicator 2.10.3. External Financial Audit
DOMAIN 3. FAIR SHARING OF BENEFITS, COSTS AND OUTCOMES

**Topic 11. Research system capacities**

- Indicator 3.11.1. Training
- Indicator 3.11.2. Research Management
- Indicator 3.11.3. Increase (Predictable) Funding

**Topic 12. Intellectual property rights and technology transfer**

- Indicator 3.12.1. Technology Transfer
- Indicator 3.12.2. Sharing Intellectual Property Rights
- Indicator 3.12.3. Contracting Support for IPR

**Topic 13. Innovation system capacities**

- Indicator 3.13.1. Localizing innovation
- Indicator 3.13.2. Financing to link Research with Innovation
- Indicator 3.13.3. Support Innovation Culture

**Topic 14. Due diligence**

- Indicator 3.14.1. Promoting participation of women in science and innovation
- Indicator 3.14.2. Reducing negative environmental impact
- Indicator 3.14.3. Achieving SDGs

**Topic 15. Expectation of all partners to adhere to a best practice standard in research collaborations**

- Indicator 3.15.1. Partner Requirements for Fair Research Partnerships
- Indicator 3.15.2. Sponsor Requirements for Fair Research Partnerships
- Indicator 3.15.3. Fair Research Contracting
1. INTERNALLY
- promotes alignment with organizational values
- increases research (“R &D”) efficiency
- improves quality, cost-effectiveness and impact of partnerships

2. EXTERNALLY
- Creates clarity and transparency for partners and stakeholders
- Creates fairness right from the start
- Attracts those you want to work with
- Demonstrates responsible corporate/organizational citizenship in R&D
- Highlights organizational innovation

3. GLOBALLY
- Builds the global evidence-base on research collaboration
- Encourages use and development of standards, benchmarks and best practices
- Contributes to the global research capacity needed for health, equity and sustainable development

Research Fairness Initiative - For Whose Benefit?

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Important RFI contact information

- RFI Web Portal: http://rfi.cohred.org
- RFI Support: http://rfi.cohred.org/support
- RFI Resources: http://rfi.cohred.org/resources
- RFI Frequently Asked Questions: http://rfi.cohred.org/FAQ
- Email contact: rfi@cohred.org
- RFI Report Submission: http://rfi.cohred.org/validation