

# Research Fairness Initiative (RFI)

## Summary Guide

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**The Research Fairness Initiative (RFI) is a COHRED service to improve the fairness, efficiency and impact of research collaborations.** 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 organisations, institutions and businesses: greater fairness results in greater efficiency, longer-lasting partnerships, less conflict, improved uptake 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 RFI is in direct support of the Sustainable Development Goals - particularly SDG 17 on Partnerships.



The RFI can be used by all organisations, 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](http://www.rfi.cohred.org)

**Contact us:** Lauranne Botti, RFI Manager, [botti@cohred.org](mailto:botti@cohred.org)

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### RFI Documentation Series

01	RFI Summary Guide
02	RFI Reporting Guide
03	RFI Process Management Guide
04	RFI Governance and Management
05	RFI Secretariat
06	RFI Web and Added Value
07	RFI Revenue Generation
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The current version of the RFI Governance and Management is a final draft for consultation. We are welcoming any comments for improvement. Please send your comments to [botti@cohred.org](mailto:botti@cohred.org) or upload it on the RFI website ([rfi.cohred.org](http://rfi.cohred.org)).

# 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 in this Guide
- Provide supportive information
- Outline future actions to improve fairness and performance

## Comprehensive reporting on each domain requires one more step:

4. **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 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