

# RESEARCH FAIRNESS INITIATIVE (RFI)

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## *Summary Guide*



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](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

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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## Suggested Referencing:

Research Fairness Initiative Implementation Guide accessed on [DATE] at [URL]

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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](mailto:botti@cohred.org) or [nivedhna@cohred.org](mailto: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 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

## 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

## 1. INTERNALLY

promotes alignment with organizational values

increases research ("R &D") efficiency

improves quality, cost-effectiveness and impact of partnerships

# Research Fairness Initiative - For Whose Benefit?

### Important RFI contact information

RFI Web Portal

RFI Support

RFI Resources

RFI Frequently Asked Questions

Email contact

RFI Report Submission

<http://rfi.cohred.org>

<http://rfi.cohred.org/support>

<http://rfi.cohred.org/resources>

<http://rfi.cohred.org/FAQ>

[rfi@cohred.org](mailto:rfi@cohred.org)

<http://rfi.cohred.org/validation>