



RFI Implementation in Senegal

early lessons at national and institutional levels

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RFI Implementation in Senegal – early lessons at national and institutional levels

- ×RFI aims to promote fair research within the framework of the North-South partnership, based on indicators defined by the stakeholders of both continents.
- ×RFI Report will contribute to establishing standards of good practice for research collaborations in the future.

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- × In Africa three countries were targeted for the organization of implementation workshops:

Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal

- × Senegal proposed three pilot research institutions
- × 2 workshops were organized in Senegal in 2016 and 2017

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The selection of the institutions invited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR) to become the first institutions to complete their RFI Reports was strategic:

- ×UADB – a new university with a mandate for rural development



- ×CEA-SAMEF – a local research funding programme in Maternal & Child Health based in the well established Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar



- ×IRESSEF – the largest HIV-2 research and training institute in Africa and a public-private partnership, receiving most of its funding from Gilead



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- ✘ All 3 Senegalese RFI Report writing teams were led by the institutions' top management (the rector of UADB, the Director of CEA-SAMEF and the deputy CEO of IRESSEF)
- ✘ This reflected the high level of interest that the institutions had in the RFI and added, undoubtedly, to the completeness of responses
- ✘ All draft reports were reviewed by the international RFI Team and feedback was sent to the institutions

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- × In March 2018, UADB RFI Report was reviewed and validated.
- × CEA-SAMEF and IRESSEF are currently preparing their publishable versions.
- × UADB provided several appendices which can be shared.

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- × UADB RFI report will be available in digital format on the university website
- × UADB is free to use:
 - The official RFI logo on the cover of his RFI report and on the website
 - The term "[We are] an RFI Reporting Organization", inside the cover of any RFI report that it may produce - or in any other place that it may choose to provide background information on the RFI report

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×RFI Report is valid for two years:

❖ **1 April 2018 – 31 March 2020**

×**UADB RFI Validation Number for the current period is : RFI_201802**

×The COHRED / RFI team is authorized to publish the RFI report on its own "Web RFI" pages.

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- ×UADB's RFI Report addresses more particularly the impact of research partnerships on community engagement, given its mandate to support development of the Bambey district.
- ×The RFI needs to be improved to cover 'community engagement' in research which is a key topic.

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× Findings for UADB

- Partnerships established with countries such as Switzerland and Canada which have guidelines for partnerships, i.e. those guidelines are imposed as UADB does not have any.
- Community engagement: a topic that may be added to the list of RFI indicators.
- RFI could help UADB make progress in research excellence, and in its ability to attract funding and partnerships.

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× Findings for IRESSEF

- The team realised that the RFI was addressing very important elements of partnership which were left aside in their institution
- RFI had its own grounds, likewise ISO standards
- Most collaborations were based on amicable agreements, including the transfer of specimens abroad
- Recognised the relevance of having a comprehensive institutional research policy manual

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- × Findings for CEA-SAMEF
- Realised as a donor that they didn't have any mechanism to evaluate the partnership component of the funds awarded
- Financing is done traditionally, based on the excellence of the proposal only
- Should consider including more explicit objectives of institutional research rather than individual research
- Funders have a key role to play in setting standards, not only for research excellence, but also to broaden the impact of research funding

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- ✘ MESR coordinated the report writing of the three pilot institutions from start to the final validation. The scaling up phase at the national level is due to follow
- ✘ Workshop in November 2018 with all 3 institutions and others candidate institutions
- ✘ 2nd workshop scheduled in 2018 to update the FIRST (fund for impulsing scientific and technical research) call for applications and the management manual

The RFI approach could be taken into account

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- × A national survey on research at the national level is commissioned by the MESR (done by the National Agency for Statistics and Demography (ANSD)). Results due in 2018 and could be used during the preparation of the MESR RFI report.
- × The “Research Fairness” guidelines should be distributed to ethics committees in universities, in both advanced and developing countries alike.

RFI Team recommendations 1/3

Priority actions:

- × Workshop with the 3 institutions and MESR to discuss, validate and improve their reports and work on recommendations
=> set realistic deadlines for completion of actions
- × Start the development of institutional Research Management Manuals / SOP as the absence of such written guidelines puts Senegalese institutions at risk for research benefits sharing

RFI Team recommendations 2/3

- ✘MESR should examine the capability of institutions in Senegal to negotiate and conclude complex contracts.
- ✘To provide immediate support, institutions can be made aware of the Fair Research Contracting toolkit of COHRED.
(<http://frcweb.cohred.org>)
- ✘A national workshop can be held by MESR in the next 2 years to define a standardized policy on promoting women's participation in science.

RFI Team recommendations 3/3

MESR should also investigate policies and practices related to the following topics:

- ✕ To ensure Senegalese partners have fair access to data and publications

- ✕ To develop a standard Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) – to ensure proper governance of biological specimens shipped out of Senegal

- ✕ To encourage institutions to create realistic budgets in collaborations. One source of accessible information is provided by ESSENCE

www.who.int/tdr/partnerships/essence/en/

- ✕ To ensure Senegalese institutions share the benefits of collaborative research partnerships through technology transfer and sharing Intellectual Property rights

Conclusion

- The Research Fairness Initiative (RFI) provides a systematic and comprehensive framework to assess fairness and impact of partnerships.
- It unpacks “fairness” into a range of dimensions, to include more voices, perspectives and values, so that research collaborations succeed in targeting the problems and building the social and institutional structures of all partners, especially those in low-income countries.



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**