

# Research Fairness Initiative for Partnership Success

The RFI is a reporting system that promotes and encourages fairness in research collaborations and partnerships.

The RFI fills a major gap in the research industry by providing a reporting framework that describes what institutions or governments do to make research partnerships - in which they participate or fund - more fair for all partners.

The RFI covers the entire research process - not just one aspect. It delivers a reporting guide that deals with **fairness of opportunity** (*what happens before research even gets underway*), **fair process** (*how partnerships in research are operationalized*) and **fair benefit sharing** (*if all partners receive appropriate benefits – at least commensurate to their inputs*).



## Why is the RFI important?

Global research is an industry of hundreds of billions of dollars annually, but there are no generally accepted conventions, frameworks or accepted guidelines on how research should be conducted to benefit all stakeholders in the research process, nor optimize its impact on development. There are certainly no guidelines that provide research partners with credible and measureable steps that can be taken to increase the research capacity in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and enhance the total global capacity for research and innovations needed to achieve global development goals.

While few would argue with this statement, it takes on a different meaning when dealing with solving development problems in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). In this case, the problems are in LMICs but the financing and science needed to address them are mostly located in high-income countries. But these partnerships are rarely balanced and fair and are not explicitly geared towards building the research and innovation capacity in LMICs so that the ingenuity and inventiveness of all countries and billions more people can begin to truly contribute to the global development of research and innovation.

This is where the [Research Fairness Initiative \(RFI\)](#) wants to make an impact. By creating a reporting system for governments and institutions engaged in research and innovation for health, the RFI will promote sharing of information on the creation and maintenance of research partnerships and on the sharing of all benefits of research. In doing so, the RFI will benefit all involved – research institutions, governments, research funders and sponsors, business, non-profits and, ultimately, those who need it most.

# Research Fairness Initiative

Fair & Equitable Partnerships for All Stakeholders

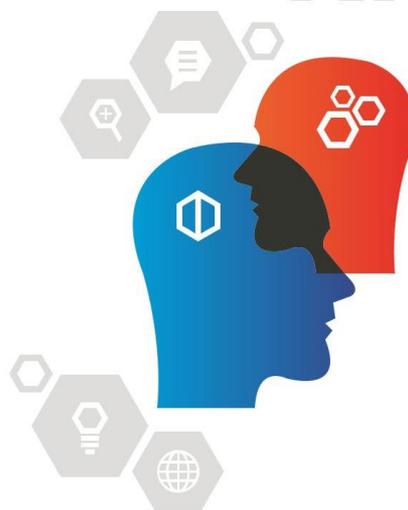


## RFI

**P**artnerships are essential to deliver research and innovation for global health and development. Sustainable Development Goal 17 emphasizes that all the other Sustainable Development Goals [rely on partnerships](#) for their achievement. Yet, there is no agreed framework, benchmark, or standard of best practice on which to model governmental, corporate, non-profit, or academic partnerships – particularly not considering ‘fairness’ of international research collaborations to partners in low- and middle-income countries.

**T**o address this critical gap, the Research Fairness Initiative (RFI) aims to create a reporting system that encourages governments, business, research organisations and funders to share their efforts to develop fair partnerships by describing their policies and practices – and, in the process, develop better guidelines and benchmarks that will increase global capacity to deal with the challenges of global health, equity and development.

**R**esearch partnerships are the only way to rapidly develop and scale this capacity, provided such partnerships are fair. That is precisely what COHRED’s Research Fairness Initiative aims to encourage and achieve.



*“The RFI is long overdue. Currently, there is a disproportionate distribution of research benefits among partners, with the “junior” partner receiving a “token” of the benefits of research. The RFI which seeks to promote fair practices, transparency and accountability will ensure that due recognition is accorded to each partner’s contribution for equitable access to research benefits.”*

**PROF. OYEWALE TOMORI, PRESIDENT NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE**

### BENEFITS OF THE RFI



#### IMPROVED INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

All institutions & governments that successfully engaged in research have extensive partnership arrangements. Yet, this is usually done without explicit internal management nor transparent partnership management processes - leading to potentially serious miscommunication between different divisions as well as missed opportunities, protracted contracting & unnecessary conflict. An annual RFI report to top management can greatly improve governmental guidance and institutional competitiveness and impact.



#### TRUST-CENTERED, CONFIDENT, & RESILIENT PARTNERSHIPS

A published RFI Report will make clear to current and prospective partners the value institutions and governments place on good partnership arrangements & allows clarity of expectations on all sides. This advances contracting, clears misconceptions, reduces negotiation time, makes expectations more realistic, helps make the implicit explicit and builds trust, confidence and resilience in partnerships.

As an added advantage, the RFI report will showcase the many good things happening in partnerships worldwide.



#### TOWARDS BENCHMARKS & BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS

In contrast to an ‘Index’ system in which there are accepted performance standards, the RFI Reporting System starts from the reality that there no defined criteria for partnership performance. This is partly because there are so many ways in which to construct partnerships and partly because there simply are no commonly agreed guides or benchmarks. Overtime, the RFI Reporting system will a global pool of knowledge on research partnerships that will enable pragmatic benchmarks & standards of best practice to evolve.



#### FAIRNESS-BUILDING RESEARCH & INNOVATION CAPACITY AROUND THE GLOBE

By creating the awareness on gross inequities in research & innovation capacity as well as highlighting missed opportunities – the RFI can make a major contribution to sustainable health, equity & development by addressing this.

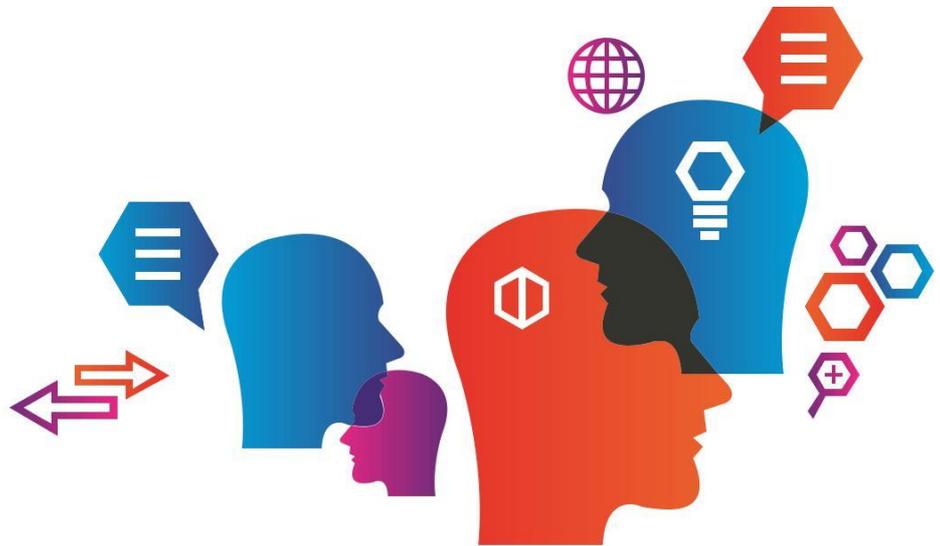
The RFI will contribute meaningfully to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Besides having an impact on several SDGs, the RFI is a significant stepping-stone towards achieving SDG 17 – partnerships to achieve global development

# GET INVOLVED

We welcome involvement from interested partners covering all areas of our work program.

Contributing to RFI's work enables participants to:

- \* Shape the agenda for a global research partnership reporting model;
- \* Maximize influence and leadership by working with a prestigious and multi-disciplinary group of experts and collaborators to lead the thinking on research partnerships disclosure and enshrine conclusions in a reporting framework;
- \* Access resources through collaborative information sharing;
- \* Shape development of reporting compliance mechanisms by following emerging research partnership reporting and developing effective and practical reporting compliance strategies;
- \* Endorse and be endorsed for support in building the global research partnerships reporting standards;
- \* Join an industry-leading forum with ambitious plans. RFI's has received support from representatives of world-leading organizations involved in the global research industry. Work with governments, business, investors and regulators to contribute to a fairer and more equitable research partnerships.



RFI offers organizations a framework for reporting international research collaborations that will yield data that are “decision-useful” for top management, to funders and future research partners.

## RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

Research Organizations can use the RFI framework to incorporate international research collaboration information to mainstream annual reports, assisting them in achieving holistic view on research collaboration affects their performance and the necessary actions they could take to address opportunities & risks.

## RESEARCH FUNDERS

Through the RFI funders and investors of research will be able to make informed and robust decisions based on clarity, confidence and trust in research opportunities and risks disclosed by research organizations. The RFI aims to achieve a transparent and effective communication process between funders and research organizations.



# LEVELS OF SUPPORT

## FOUNDERS' CIRCLE

US\$30,000-50,000

These are the top-tier supporters of the RFI. Members of the Founder's Circle signify their commitment & financial support to RFI and will receive the following benefits: Enhanced access to RFI data, engagement facilitation and enhanced network profile.

## INVESTOR CIRCLE

US\$15,000-25,000

Members of the Investors' Circle in RFI are organizations that would like to shape the future of the global research collaboration reporting. Members of this tier will receive the following benefits: gateway to networking & collaboration, opportunities for profiling & visibility

## RFI CHAMPIONS

US\$7,000-12,000

These are the core supporters of RFI. They are at the heart of the RFI reporting community and they will have access to response to the RFI questionnaires, which will enable them to evaluate their performance as well as the other member organization.

## Powering the RFI: Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED)

COHRED is an international non-governmental organization whose primary objective is to strengthen research for health and innovation systems, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries. COHRED supports countries to use re-search for health and innovation to:

- \* Improve health and reduce health inequities
- \* Improve health sector performance & accountability
- \* Encourage donor alignment and harmonization
- \* Link research for health with science, technology and innovation
- \* Generate economic and social prosperity.



Founded in 1993, COHRED merged with the Global Forum for Health Research in 2010. The organization is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and has offices in several other countries.

For more information on  
supporting the RFI

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