



Checklist of Characteristics of Collaborative Research Relationships with Indigenous Partners

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Checklist of Characteristics of Collaborative Research Relationships with Indigenous Partners

1. Funding

- Funding should be jointly sought by the Indigenous people and the Research Institution where societal circumstances make a joint effort possible.¹

2. Ethics and Consent

- Local, national and international guidelines regarding ethics and consent must be followed.²
- When research touches on traditional or sacred knowledge of an Indigenous community or on community members as Indigenous people, community leaders or a relevant umbrella organization should be consulted and consent should be obtained from them before approaching community members individually. Free, prior and informed consent of the individual participants is required, but must only be sought after community consent has been granted.^{3,4}
- Confidentiality must be ensured via an appropriate data-coding system and the respect of those who have access to confidential information.⁵
- Indigenous communities involved in research should have the right to have the collected primary and aggregated data returned to them for their own use.⁶

3. Partnership

- Researchers and Indigenous peoples must enter into a research relationship as equals. Research proposals should be prepared in collaboration, based on prior consultations between both parties.⁷
- Partners must agree upon the goals, objectives, and methods of the research. The research conducted, from planning to publication, should be open and collaborative.⁸ Ultimately, Indigenous peoples should fully participate as equal partners in all stages of data collection.⁹

4. Intellectual Property Rights

- Expectations regarding intellectual property rights must be explicitly addressed prior to commencement of the research.¹⁰
- Any commercial objectives or links to the commercial sector must be clearly communicated to all involved parties.¹¹
- The researchers and the Indigenous community should have the opportunity to review manuscripts and comment on the interpretation of the data prior to publication and dissemination.¹²

5. Mutual Benefit

- Research should benefit the researcher, as well as the community and/or individual community members. Benefits may be either tangible or intangible. Intangible benefits may include the knowledge gained from the research conducted, which may directly or indirectly aid the community or individuals members of the community.¹³
- When reasonably possible, a researcher should employ community members, and support the education and training (including training in research methods and ethics) of Indigenous people in the community.¹⁴
- If economic benefits are anticipated, the equitable distribution of these benefits should be agreed upon prior to commencement of research.¹⁵

6. Respect for Diversity

- Research should be conducted in a mutually understood and agreed upon language. Any data and final reports should be in a language that can be utilized by the Indigenous people independently of the researchers.¹⁶ When reasonably possible, all documents should be translated into the

language of the community. When cost is prohibitive, the executive summary of the research results should be, at minimum, provided in the preferred language.¹⁷

- Local Indigenous peoples should be employed as translators, interpreters, and/or as advisors to assist in the collection process where no written language exists.¹⁸
- In addition to language, researchers must be sensitive to diversity. This includes race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, disability, class, age and academic status.¹⁹

7. Capacity Building

- The total capacity of those involved, at both the individual and institutional level, should be increased via participation in the partnership.²⁰ This may involve increase of skills, education, information, experience and contacts.
- Capacity building should be a reciprocal relationship with all partners experiencing an increase in capacity.²¹

8. Create Transparency²²

- The amount, source and use of all resources (including, but not limited to, monetary resources) must be declared openly to all partners.
- Whenever possible, financial decisions should involve all research partners.
- It is advisable to create a written binding agreement regarding contributions of all partners.
- Checks and balances, such as audits and periodic checking of inventories, should be undertaken as they can aid in the creation of transparency.

9. Competent Management and Monitoring of Collaboration

- Research project managers must have adequate management skills, as established via past successful management of international, collaborative research projects or specialized training. Past research in country of origin alone should not be assumed to constitute competency.²³
- Regular internal or external evaluations should assess the success of the project (as accurately as possible) from the perspective of the different partners involved.²⁴ Aspects that may be included in such evaluations are management, communication, decision-making, and implementation. Individuals involved may keep records of issues arising that may be discussed at regular meetings in order to address potential problems as early as possible.

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