

Tips on managing cross-disciplinary research consortia

Making management decisions is more complex than usually reported, especially in cross-disciplinary global health research in North-South collaborations. This bulletin summarises tips on consortium management, based on complementary learning from [IMPALA MUDI](#) and two Centre for Capacity Research-led long-term programmes/projects exploring consortium capacity strengthening - [DELTA Learning Research Programme](#) and [ACBI Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Project](#). We took extensive reference from the DELTA findings on consortium management.

Key consortium management processes

- Develop integrated vision, goals, and activities
- Identify relevant academic disciplines and partners
- Governance
- Allocate and clarify roles and responsibilities
- Allocate resources
- Manage partner and research environment
- Coordination, communication, and monitoring

Key factors influencing management strategies

- Programme evaluation requirements (e.g.: funder requirements/recommendations)
- Competitiveness for future funding (e.g.: partners' capacity, tangible outputs)
- Adherence to collaborative principles (e.g.: equity and inclusion)

Enablers for consortium management success - operational factors

- Develop/use policies and guidelines to ensure consistency
- Establish an efficient secretariat
- Include and value specialist management team members from the outset

Active capacity strengthening to improve the management process

- Incorporate consortia management into programme planning, budgeting, and monitoring
- Assess the management capacity of consortium leads
- Strengthen leadership and management skills of leads and co-leads
- Track, reflect on, and report improvements in skills and processes in consortium management gained through projects

Consortium management approaches that can facilitate successful collaborations

- Manage communication and relationships among partners
- Ensure inclusive decision-making and equality
- Encourage cultural awareness and understanding of disciplinary and institutional differences
- Facilitate a mutual understanding of each other's cultures and disciplines
- Pay attention to partner needs, addressing disciplinary hierarchies, and manage emotions

References

- 1) Ding, Y., Bates, I. *Actions for fostering cross-disciplinary global health research in practice* (in development)
- 2) Pulford, J., Aiyenigba, A., Liani, M., et.al. 2020. [DELTA LRP Learning Report No 4 Apr 2019-Mar 2020](#)
- 3) Hajj, T. E., Pulford, J., Wiltgen-Georgi, N., et.al. 2020. Cross-programme Learning: Preliminary Findings from ACBI & Other Research Capacity Strengthening Initiatives across CCR

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