



FACT SHEET

A guide to undertaking international innovation, science and research collaboration

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to aid the success and impact of international collaborations on innovation, science and research. It aims to achieve this by posing a series of questions drawn from challenges associated with international research partnerships. The document also includes support available from the Australian Government in engaging with overseas organisations and governments.

Stages and things to consider

Planning

1. Who and why do you want to work with the particular partner and country?
 - a. Establish credibility and reputation of partners.
 - b. Check alignment of partnership aims and priorities.
 - c. Identify all parties directly or indirectly involved in collaboration, including financiers and funding sources.
 - d. Identify potential contributions.
 - e. Develop knowledge and awareness with regard to the partner organisation/country.
 - f. Identify the impact of the collaboration on other multilateral partnerships.
2. What are the difficulties in establishing a working relationship and what approaches can be used to overcome the difficulties?
 - a. Set approaches to overcome language and cultural difference.
 - b. Identify the difference in administrative procedures and practises of the partner organisation/country.
 - c. Map strategies to navigate through the partner's organisational structures and hierarchy.
3. What is your organisation's policy agenda and strategy for collaboration with overseas partners?
 - a. Identify the policy agenda and strategy of your organisation and the funding body.
 - b. Learn the policy agenda and strategy of the overseas country and partner in the proposed field of collaboration.
 - c. Establish strong dialogue between project partners, well in advance of the project to avoid any issues.

4. What is your organisation's policy and strategy to manage Intellectual Property with both domestic and international partners? How will this apply?
 - a. Consult and seek advice from your organisation's legal/IP advisors.
5. What are the potential risks of collaborating with overseas organisations and what precautions will you take to mitigate these risks?
 - a. Be mindful of competing internal agendas and politics within partner organisations and teams.
 - b. Consider possible difference in ethical norms, political influence/interference, academic freedom, censorship, intellectual property protection and the issue of espionage.
 - c. Always prioritise Australia's competitive position and its national security interests.
 - d. Compliance with relevant legislation – e.g. *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012*, *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018*

Negotiation and Establishment

6. What are the main goals and expected outcomes of the joint collaboration?
 - a. Establish a clear strategic vision and agenda for the collaboration that works for all parties.
 - b. Establish rights, obligations and responsibilities of all parties involved.
 - c. Determine timeframes and milestones for evaluating the collaboration.
 - d. Discuss and agree on sharing of finances, resources and results.
 - e. Identify and address potential conflict of interests and decide how incidents of misconduct would be managed.
 - f. Develop strategies to develop collaboration at different levels of management within the partner organisations.

7. Who owns the rights to commercialisation and Intellectual Property?
 - a. Seek appropriate legal advice.
 - b. Reach an agreement on dissemination policies of the research outcomes at an early stage - This includes commercial interests and IP rights.
 - c. Sign non-disclosure agreements with all participants to prevent knowledge leaks.
 - d. Formalise all decisions through written agreements.

Management

8. How will you monitor the contributions of all parties involved in the collaboration?
 - a. Establish milestones and timeframes to confirm progress and contributions.
9. What are your strategies to recruit key personnel i.e. researchers, experts, students etc.
 - a. Identify and connect with early career researcher programs including exchange programs to secure researcher support for projects.
10. Do you and your employees understand the work culture, style and standard of partners?
 - a. Understand the strengths and weakness of partners and engage and provide support early if necessary.
11. Do your employees fully understand the potential risks of working with overseas partners?
 - a. Provide staff training and information on all regulations and protocols for working with overseas partners.
 - b. Maintain ongoing programs and strategies to boost awareness of vulnerabilities and risks of cooperation.
12. How will the data be stored and managed and does this storage meet the required standards?
 - a. Define protocols for sharing and storing sensitive data.
 - b. Have measures in place to prevent data dissemination to unauthorised parties.
 - c. Be aware of the partners' policies on data storage, sharing and use.

Other Considerations

13. What are the drivers behind the collaboration and are there strategies to improve the collaboration?
14. What are the necessary steps to prevent knowledge leaks and abuse of contact networks facilitated by academic cooperation?
15. How can you prevent overseas governments from taking advantage of the partnerships to recruit and/or use students, scientists and researchers?
16. How can the research become self-sustainable (as long-term relations and financial dependence on overseas funding sources increases vulnerability)?

Support Network

Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – Counsellor Network

The Department has Counsellors located in Beijing, Brussels, New Delhi, Tokyo, and Washington DC. Their key roles include engaging with industry and key science and research institutions and encouraging collaboration through Australian Government initiatives; supporting Australian industry development, innovation, and expansion overseas in key growth sectors; and engaging with overseas governments.

In China, the Department has two Counsellors – Joanna Bunting and Scott Wilson, covering the full breadth of industry (including resources and mining), innovation, and science matters. Joanna is Counsellor for science and innovation matters. Joanna can be contacted at joanna.bunting@dfat.gov.au, and the DIIS China team can be contacted at industry.beijing@dfat.gov.au.

IP Australia – Counsellor to China

IP Australia's Beijing Based IP Counsellor provides information and guidance to help Australians protect their intellectual property in China. A former biotechnology patent examiner, with a technical background in molecular biology, he can be contacted at david.bennett@ipaustalia.gov.au.

IP Australia has published a number of guides to assist Australian researchers and businesses which can be accessed here: <https://www.ipaustalia.gov.au/China>.

Other Useful Government Resources

- The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation's Business and Government Liaison Unit (<https://www.bglu.asio.gov.au/about-us>) provides business and industry with the most current security intelligence and protective security advice.
- The Australian Cyber Security Centre provides open-source information on cyber related scams, threats and other vulnerabilities, as well as guidance on mitigation and best practice.
- The Defence industry Security Program provides industry increased opportunities to work with the Department of Defence and easier access to Defence security services.

Other Useful Reads

1. 'Checklist for collaboration with Chinese universities and other research institutions', HCSS Global Trends, January 2019, <https://hcss.nl/report/checklist-collaboration-chinese-universities-and-other-research-institutions>
2. 'Assessing Europe-China collaboration in higher education and research', Leiden Asia Centre, 2018, <http://leidenasiacentre.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/LeidenAsiaCentre-Report-Assessing-Europe-China-Collaboration-in-Higher-Education-and-Research.pdf>
3. 'Ten simple rules for establishing international research collaborations', PLOS Computational Biology, October 2015, <https://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/article?id=10.1371/journal.pcbi.1004311>
4. 'Ten rules for successful research collaboration', The Conversation, 16 February 2016, <https://theconversation.com/ten-rules-for-successful-research-collaboration-53826>
5. 'Good practices in collaborative research and innovation', The University of Sheffield, <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/collaborative-research>
6. Blog: How to handle a formal meeting in China Author: Christopher Lim, Australian Consul-General, Chengdu, China 25 October 2018 (<https://chengdu.china.embassy.gov.au/cxdu/formalmeetingblog.html>)
7. Blog: The Art of the Chinese Banquet Author: Christopher Lim, Australian Consul-General, Chengdu, China 23 November 2017 (<https://chengdu.china.embassy.gov.au/cxdu/Chinesebanquetblog.html>)