

# The EquiPar Tool



EquiPar

## Supporting Equitable Partnerships for Research Projects



LSHTM v6, 14 Sep 2022

### The EquiPar Tool Supporting Equitable Partnerships for Research Projects

#### Introduction

Partnerships are the foundation of the research that we do at LSHTM. Building healthy and mutually beneficial partnerships intrinsically concerns equity. At the heart of equity lie the principles of fairness and the distribution of resources according to needs. Historical legacies of colonisation, power relations, imbalances in opportunity and resources, perceived hierarchies of knowledge, and cultural norms can all lead to inequitable partnerships. At LSHTM we want to consider how we can build research partnerships from the outset to facilitate understanding, fairness, awareness of each other's contexts, trust and mutual exchange of expertise and knowledge.

Several sets of guidelines have been developed to use within global health research partnerships. Three that are highly relevant to our context include: the [Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research \(CCGHR\) Partnership Assessment Toolkit](#); the [Research Fairness Initiative Reporting Guide \(RFI\)](#); and the [Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries' \(KPEI\) Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships](#).

#### Principles of Research Partnerships

- Decide on the objectives together
- Build up mutual trust
- Share information; develop networks
- Share responsibility
- Create transparency
- Monitor & evaluate the collaboration
- Disseminate the results
- Apply the results
- Share profits equitably
- Increase research capacity
- Build on the achievements

[KPEI Guidelines for Research in Partnership with Developing Countries, 1998](#)

Drawing mainly on these three guidelines, as well as our collective experience, the EquiPar tool was developed to help us establish strong foundations and processes for our research partnerships. We encourage research teams and their partners to try using this tool in their current and developing research projects. The tool is just one step in the longer-term process of developing and maintaining partnerships, which also involves a range of "softer" considerations such as personal relationships, mutual trust and humility. However, we hope that research teams will find this tool helpful in thinking through their partnerships systematically, prompting action and change where necessary to promote effective and equitable collaboration.

#### How to use this tool

**What?** The EquiPar Tool is designed to provide practical and pragmatic guidance for establishing and strengthening equitable partnerships. It has been designed with individual research projects in mind, though could also have some relevance to broader institutional partnerships or partnerships with implementers. The tool poses questions for research teams to consider on three key themes: people

# History of Principles and Guidelines



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# LSHTM Equitable Partnership Initiatives



**Overarching Goal:** Develop more equitable research and educational partnerships

## Through:

- Piloting EquiPar Tool on Supporting Equitable Partnerships for Research Projects
- Review LSHTM-level policies and procedures – current focus:
  - Good research practice and research ethics
  - Research grant finance and contracting
- Develop case studies of good practice
- Develop and provide training/awareness raising sessions
- Regular school-wide open meetings

# The Purpose of the EquiPar Tool



- **Aim:** Provide systematic & practical guidance for setting up and/or strengthening partnerships
- Geared towards individual research projects (not institutional-level collaborations)
- Stimulate research project teams to discuss partnership issues, and develop appropriate strategies for individual projects at different stages of research cycle
- List of discussion questions, and resources in three key areas:
  - People management and relationships
  - Research activities and outputs
  - Contracting and resource management

# EquiPar Tool Domains across project research cycle

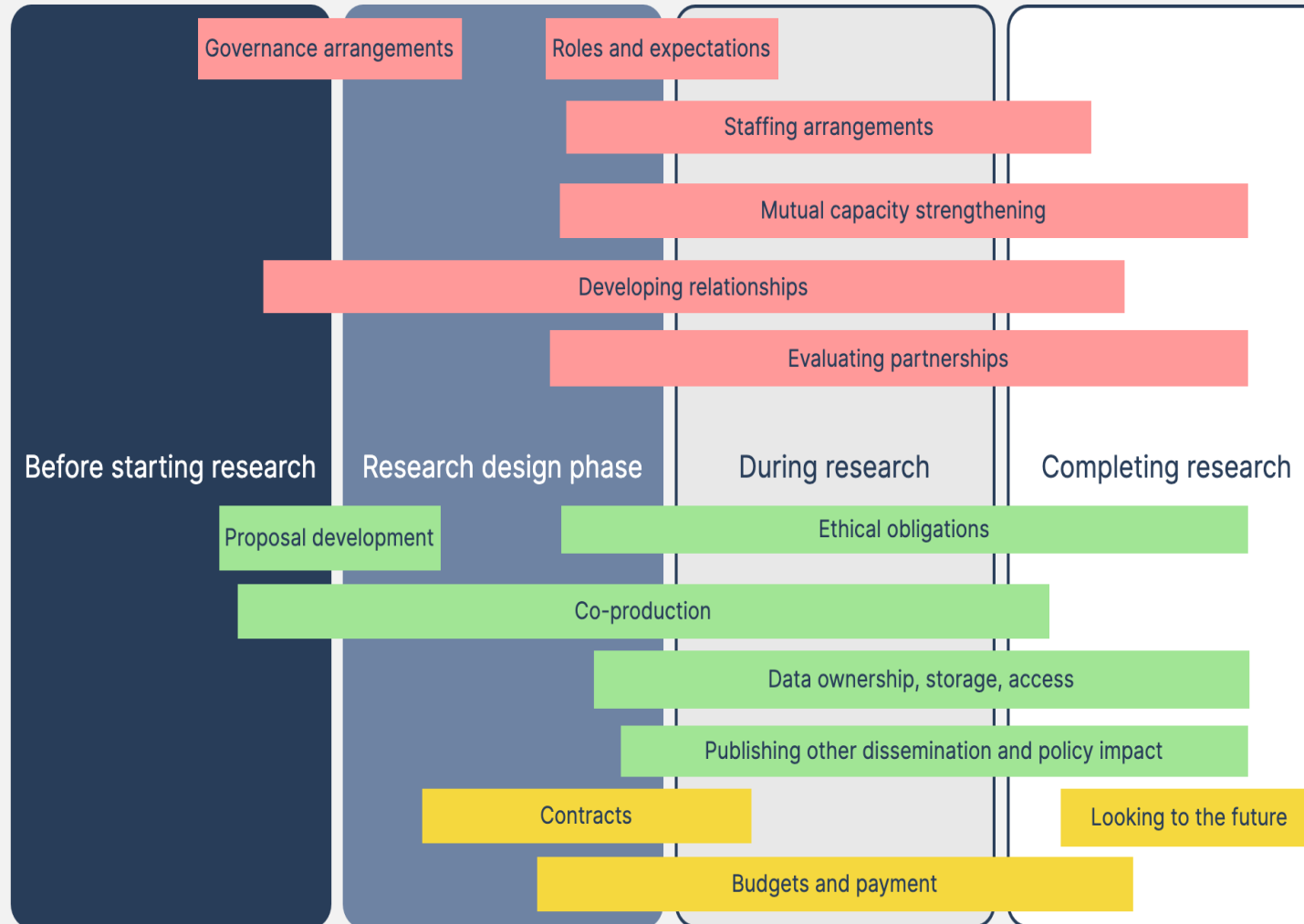


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People management  
and professional  
relationships

Research activities  
and outputs

Contracting and  
resource  
management



*Supporting equitable research partnerships*

# People Management and Professional Relationships



- ❖ What are our governance arrangements?
- ❖ Have we jointly agreed on the roles and expectations of each partner?
- ❖ What is our plan for mutual capacity strengthening?
- ❖ What considerations have we made for equitable staffing arrangements?
- ❖ What activities will we use to develop our relationships?
- ❖ How will we evaluate how well our partnership is working?

- *Have we considered opportunities for distributed leadership?*
- *How we will communicate?*
- *What principles/approaches will we follow to foster transparency in our partnership?*
- *How will we deal with any conflicts/concerns that may arise?*
- *Do partners know who to contact at LSHTM if feel concerns not addressed properly?*

# Research Activities and Outputs

- ❖ How can we maximise opportunities for all partners to contribute to proposal development?
- ❖ What opportunities exist to introduce elements of co-production into the project?
- ❖ How will we manage ethical obligations during this partnership?
- ❖ Do we have an equitable plan for publishing, other dissemination and policy impact?
- ❖ How can we ensure equitable ownership, storage, access and use of data and samples?

- *How will we decide which outputs to produce and who does what?*
- *Have we agreed authorship principles?*
- *Have we agreed on a set of principles for other dissemination e.g. internet, press, social media?*
- *Are outputs accessible to people with different types of disabilities?*

# Contracting and Resource Management



- ❖ Budget & payment
- ❖ Contractual arrangements
- ❖ Looking to the future

- *Do all partners have adequate resources for what they've been asked to do, both financially and in kind?*
- *Does the budget cover key aspects of equitable partnerships such as co-production, capacity strengthening, writing up time and publication costs?*
- *Have overheads been included fairly for each institution?*
- *Has an appropriate payment schedule been drawn up? Will partners receive advances where necessary?*



# Resources



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## Resources: Research activities and outputs

### ❖ Publication and other outputs

- E-pharmacy template for Publication Guidelines and Plan (on [MS teams](#))
- AMFm Dissemination Principles (on [MS teams](#))

### ❖ LSHTM documents and guidance on data management:

- [General LSHTM guidance on Research Data Management](#)
- LSHTM guidance on data protection and GDPR – Go to - [Service Desk](#) / Legal, Research contracts & data protection / Data Protection and GDPR
- [LSHTM Data Storage Options](#)

### ❖ Co-production Resources:

- [NIHR Guidance on co-producing a research project \(Feb 2019\)](#)
- [NIHR Reflective questions to support co-produced research \(May 2020\)](#)
- Lokot & Wake, [The co-production of research between academics, NGOs and communities in humanitarian response: a practice guide](#). LSHTM 2021
- [BMJ Special Issue on co-production](#), 2021

# How to use the EquiPar Tool



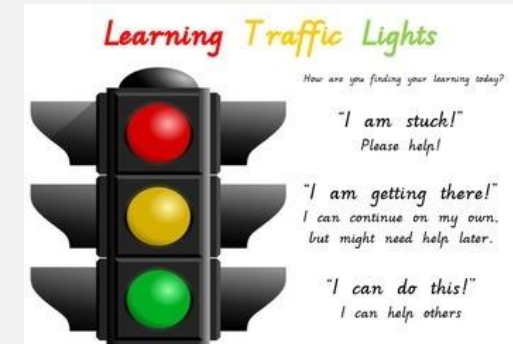
- ❖ Research teams can use the tool in any way that suits them
  - No requirement to complete a checklist/ report, though they may choose to document their own discussions internally
- ❖ Can be used throughout research cycle
  - At the beginning, to set expectations and set up procedures
  - Events (breakdowns, challenges, opportunities)
  - Closure and looking to the future



# Ideas about How to Use EquiPar Tool



- ❖ Include in a proposal OR use it to develop proposal (checking partners are also interested to use it, developing the 'how to')
- ❖ EquiPar sessions in key project workshops, including starting workshop where tool could be introduced
- ❖ Facilitated reflection & identifying what is needed/prioritized for partnership and project
- ❖ Could use a traffic light tool as part of this process
- ❖ Identify an EquiPar champion
- ❖ Develop action plan to monitor regularly in project meetings



# Example of making EquiPar Operational: E-Pharmacy Traffic Light Tool



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	A	B	C	D
	Theme	Criterion	Time of review (mm of project)	How are we faring (score out of 3, with 3 being best performance)
1				
2	People management & professional relationships	Governance arrangements		3
3	People management & professional relationships	Roles and expectations		3
4	People management & professional relationships	Staffing arrangements		2
5	People management & professional relationships	Mutual capacity strengthening		1
6	People management & professional relationships	Developing relationships		1
7	People management & professional relationships	Evaluating partnerships		2
8	Research activities and outputs	Proposal development		2
9	Research activities and outputs	Ethical obligations		1
10	Research activities and outputs	Co-production		3
11	Research activities and outputs	Data ownership, storage and access		3
12	Research activities and outputs	Publishing, dissemination and policy impact		3
13	Contracting and resource management	Budget and payment		3
14	Contracting and resource management	Contractual arrangements		3

# Example of making EquiPar Operational: Another example



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## Post-Survey Action Points

Agreed by [e.g. Steering Committee Group] on [date]

Next review date: [date]

Area	Immediate priorities	Short/Medium-term priorities	Nice-to-haves/long-term actions
e.g. Communications	[Action, who to action, date for completion]  e.g. review and rationalise project meetings schedule – [who] – [completion date]	e.g. create monthly newsletter for project team – [who] – [completion date].	e.g. update project website – [who] – [completion date]
e.g. Management structures and decision-making			

# Accessing the EquiPar Tool



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<https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/equipar-pilot-evaluation>

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Welcome About Team EquiPar Tool Outputs Additional resources

## Evaluation of the Pilot of the EquiPar tool to support equitable partnerships for research projects

Piloting and evaluating a tool to help LSHTM and our partners establish strong foundations and equitable processes for our research partnerships.

### About

Partnerships are a core element of Global Health research. LSHTM is committed to building equitable research partnerships that facilitate understanding, fairness, awareness of each other's contexts, trust and mutual exchange of expertise and knowledge. We have developed the EquiPar Tool

### Contact us

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