

Equitable Partnership Checklist

Use this checklist to review any international research partnership.

A. Early Involvement & Design

- All partners were involved from the beginning.
- The research problem was defined together.
- Methods and tools were co-created, not imported.
- Local priorities were included.

B. Leadership & Roles

- Leadership is shared across countries.
- Local partners lead work packages where they have expertise.
- Roles and responsibilities are clear for every partner.
- The partnership avoids “coordinator-only” roles.

C. Governance & Decision-Making

- Decisions are made jointly.
- There is a shared steering committee.
- Meeting times rotate between time zones.
- Documents and plans are accessible to all partners.

D. Budget & Resources

- The budget matches the work each partner does.
- Local costs (travel, ethics, translation, community meetings) are included.
- Local partners have control over their own budget share.
- Overheads are fair for all institutions.

E. Communication & Collaboration

- Communication is regular, open, and respectful.
- Materials can be shared in multiple languages if needed.
- Tools and platforms are accessible to all partners.

F. Ethics & Community Engagement

- Local ethics processes are included.
- Community involvement is planned and budgeted.
- Research tools are culturally appropriate.

G. Long-Term Value

- The project builds capacity in all partner countries.
- Benefits for local communities are clear and realistic.
- The partnership supports future collaboration.

Fair Budgeting Guide

Fair Budgeting Guide for International Research

A fair and equitable budget respects the real work, real costs, and real value of all partners.

A. What a Fair Budget Should Include

Make sure your budget supports:

- Local travel, rural access, and transport
- Ethics approvals in partner countries
- Translation and interpretation
- Community engagement meetings
- Compensation or per diem for participants where appropriate
- Local research assistants and administrative staff
- ICT, connectivity, and data storage in partner countries
- Reasonable overheads for all institutions

B. Questions to Check Budget Fairness

Ask the following:

- Does each partner's budget share match their responsibilities?
- Are local partners paid for all the work they do?
- Are hidden costs (permits, village entry, local approvals) included?
- Do local partners have control over spending for their activities?
- Are fieldwork costs realistic for rural or remote areas?
- Is translation included at every stage?
- Are budget items culturally and contextually appropriate?

C. Common Budget Problems (to Avoid)

These issues often create inequity:

- Underfunding local travel and community meetings
- No support for translation or local-language materials
- Budgeting too little for ethics approval processes
- Giving local partners large responsibilities but small budgets

- Centralising all financial control in one (usually Northern) institution
- Funding analysis and writing only in the UK, leaving local partners under-resourced
- Expecting local partners to “make it work” with limited funds

D. Signs of a Fair Budget

A strong budget will:

- Allocate money based on real needs and real workloads
- Support local leadership and expertise
- Strengthen partner-country institutions
- Be transparent and discussed openly by all partners
- Avoid tokenistic or symbolic allocations
- Allow for adjustments if local conditions change

Red Flags & Green Flags Guide

Use this quick guide to spot risks and strengths in a research partnership.

Red Flags (Warning Signs)	Green Flags (Healthy Signs)
The proposal was written before partners were invited.	All partners join at the start of the project.
Local partners only asked to “add details later.”	Problem definition and design are shared.
One institution controls all decisions.	Leadership is distributed across countries.
All leadership roles belong to one country.	Budget is shared fairly, based on work and local costs.
The budget is heavily unbalanced.	Roles recognise all partners’ strengths.
No money for translation, ethics, travel, or community meetings.	Communication is open, regular, and inclusive.
Local partners get “coordinator” roles, not leadership positions.	Materials and meetings are adjusted for languages and time zones.
Communication is one-way or irregular.	Ethics, translation, and community engagement are fully supported.
Meetings are only scheduled in one time zone.	Partners have control of their own budget share.
Local context and priorities are ignored.	Communities are involved early and meaningfully.
A partner was added only to meet eligibility rules (tokenism).	The partnership builds long-term relationships and skills.