



8 March 2019

The Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development undertakes a participative synthesis process. It invites r4d team members interested in participating in the synthesis stream around “*Research partnerships as transformative instrument*” to prepare corresponding concept notes.

Deadline for submission: 26 April 2019, 24.00h CET

r4d synthesis stream:

Research partnerships as transformative instrument

Call for synthesis concept notes

1. Background

The overarching goal of the Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development (r4d programme) is to contribute to solving global problems and securing public goods in Africa, Asia and South America. Today, the 57 projects funded by the r4d programme unfold in the normative framework of sustainable development as agreed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They are in an advantaged position for contributing to transformation towards achieving the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Synthesis of research programmes is gaining recognition as an opportunity to bring together different perspectives and academic disciplines while linking academic and non-academic forms of knowledge and evidence. It can help to improve the integration of scientific understanding in decision-making and can provide critical knowledge to solve pressing problems of our times (Hampton and Parker, 2011; Wyborn et al., 2018)¹.

The r4d programme foresees a synthesis process aimed at maximising the impact of the programme’s results and at contributing to global debates with a focus on the reduction of poverty and global risks. The r4d programme synthesis is a participative reflexion, exchange and learning process, that translates the experiences of all involved stakeholders into new knowledge.

¹ Hampton, S.E., Parker, J.N., 2011. Collaboration and Productivity in Scientific Synthesis. *BioScience* 61/11: 900-910; and Wyborn, C., Louder, E., Harrison, J., Montambault, J., Montana, J., Ryana, M., Bednarek, A., Nesshöver, C., Pullin, A., Reed, M., Dellecker, E., Kramer, J., Boyd, J., Dellecker, A., Hutton, J., 2018. Understanding the Impacts of Research Synthesis. *Environmental Science and Policy* 86: 72-84.

At the programme level, the r4d Steering Committee approved four synthesis streams:

- Research partnerships as transformative instrument
- Utilisation of research knowledge in transformative pathways
- Digital Storytellers, a tangible experience on contributions of r4d projects to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Learnings from research dealing with the complexity of global issues

2. Synthesis stream on “Research partnerships as transformative instrument”

2.1 Focus and questions

Within the r4d programme, “partnerships” embrace both collaboration between researchers from the global South and the global North (so called North – South partnerships), often working in interdisciplinary teams, as well as transdisciplinary partnerships that integrate scientific and non-scientific stakeholders in the design and implementation of the research projects. From its beginnings, the r4d programme has built upon both types of partnerships as key elements for facilitating transformative processes towards sustainable development and for working towards the three r4d programme objectives, i.e.

- to generate scientific knowledge and research-based solutions for reducing poverty and global risks in least developed, low- and middle income countries;
- to offer national and international stakeholders methods and options for finding integrated, holistic approaches to solving problems;
- to enhance scientific skills and know-how in dealing with the complexity of global problems for the benefit of societies in developing and emerging countries.

With a wide range of partnerships involved in the 57 projects of the r4d programme there is a lot to learn about their role and contribution in achieving the objectives of the r4d programme. Even more considering that the r4d partnerships are active at multiple scales (local, national, regional, international). **This synthesis stream aims at exploring jointly the learning potential by tackling the following synthesis questions:**

1. How have the r4d research partnerships **contributed** to achieve the objectives of the r4d programme and to advance sustainable development?
2. What are **opportunities and challenges** for conducting research for development in transnational, inter- and transdisciplinary and transnational partnerships?
3. What are **enabling or hindering factors** for knowledge co-generation in research partnerships?
4. **How** did r4d consortia use the opportunities and address the challenges?

The questions are formulated rather open to allow using different scientific approaches and perspectives on research partnerships to guide the search for answers. These include e.g. network analysis, institutional economics, behavioural economics or communication science. We therefore strongly encourage teams to take note of the existing literature on research about research

partnerships and to address gaps and add value to the existing knowledge, evidence and discourse.²

This synthesis stream can address diverse audiences such as donors interested in research for development, the scientific community, development practitioners and policy makers in Switzerland as well as in partner countries.

With this call, we invite r4d team members to prepare **innovative concept notes aimed at addressing the synthesis questions on “Research partnerships as transformative instrument”**.

2.2 Synthesis teams

All r4d researchers are invited to participate in this call. Concept notes have to be developed and submitted by teams that have to include members from at least two r4d projects from at least two of the six r4d modules. Further, geographic diversity of team members is required. For teams of two persons at least one shall reside in the global South. In case a team is larger, at least one third of the team members shall reside in the global South.

Researchers outside the r4d network may additionally be part of the project team and external competences and expertise can be included and sub-contracted (e.g. science journalist, knowledge translator or other).

Concept notes should include complete teams, clarifying roles of each team member and the proposed contact person.

2.3 Expected products

The synthesis products that will emerge from this synthesis stream should serve the needs of the target audiences. Products can take many forms, such as review articles, policy briefs, a magazine, e-debates, side events of thematically relevant conferences and meetings, interviews, videos, documentary films, radio broadcasts, training and teaching material, infographics, software applications, serious games, etcetera. Your creativity and choice are wanted! Although peer reviewed articles can be included as products we strongly recommend to propose as well products that are available for stakeholders beyond the scientific community.

The synthesis project outputs will be produced under the creative commons licence. The r4d programme will contribute to disseminate all synthesis products via its communication channels and push them into relevant media and fora. Other dissemination channels and opportunities are most welcome.

2.4 Budget

A total budget of CHF 150'000 is available for the programme synthesis stream on “Research partnerships as transformative instrument”. This budget will be allocated ideally to two to four projects depending on the evaluation of the concept notes and the proposed budgets. Eligible costs

² A list of potentially interesting references (not exhaustive) is provided in Annex 3 as entry point.

are honorarium for the people involved (see roles and budgets in Annex 1), travel, meetings, production costs, communication and dissemination.

Co-funding is requested from the r4d projects in the form of time and expertise provided by the involved team members (in-kind or/and in-time funding). The communication and application budget of r4d projects might also be used to (co-)finance synthesis activities.

The r4d programme will supplement this synthesis budget with a knowledge exchange and dissemination budget (e.g. for an r4d dissemination event 2021/22) as well as financial support for corporate design and public relations.

2.5 Duration

The duration of the awarded synthesis projects within the stream on “Research partnerships as a transformative instrument” is from June 2019 to June 2021, preferably with a rolling production of outputs for feeding into the r4d programme dissemination activities. The concept note shall include a specific timetable. Finalisation of activities prior June 2021 is allowed.

3. Application details

3.1 Documents

- Motivation letter signed by all members of a team (max 1 page)
- Concept note following the template provided in Annex 2 (max 4 pages)
- CVs of all applicants highlighting experience and competences relevant for this project (max. 2 pages per CV)

Because geographic inclusion and participation of multiple r4d projects/modules in the applying teams are evaluation criteria, the r4d programme offers individuals who would be interested in participating in this synthesis stream the opportunity to indicate their interest on the following temporary website <http://www.r4d.ch/Pages/r4d-synthesis-network.aspx>. It allows researchers across all projects and modules to establish contact with each other and facilitate the creation of mixed teams.

Please send your interest per email to r4d@snf.ch and we will publish it on the r4d synthesis network website.

3.2 Timeline

Call for concept notes published	8 March 2019
Deadline for questions	20 March 2019
Deadline for submission of concept notes	26 April 2019 at 24.00h CET
Selection of projects	24 May 2019
Contracting	June – September, 2019
Implementation phase	June 2019 – June 2021
Communication and dissemination activities	June 2019 – December 2021

3.3 Contact and submission date

Questions related to the application and evaluation procedures can be sent by email to r4d@snf.ch.

The concept notes have to be submitted electronically until **26 April 2019**, 24.00h CET to r4d@snf.ch.

4. Evaluation and selection of proposals

The evaluation of the concepts notes is vested with the selection committee composed of the r4d synthesis coordinator (Carmenza Robledo), an r4d programme coordinator (Claudia Rutte), the SDC research desk (Aurélien Righetti). External expertise by reviewers may be integrated.

Proposals will be evaluated along the following criteria and weighting:

No.	Evaluation criteria	Weighting
1	Competences in the team	30%
2	Diversity: Geographic diversity as well as diversity in the number of r4d modules represented in the team	20%
3	Quality of the proposed project	30%
4	Feasibility of approach, work plan	10%
5	Budget	10%

Each criterion will be evaluated according to the following score table:

Score	Fulfilment and quality of the criteria	
100	Very good fulfilment	Information clearly relates to the achievement of outputs; data quality is excellent
80	Good fulfilment	Information focuses well on requirements; data quality is good.
50	Average fulfilment	Information globally responds inadequately to the requirements; data quality is adequate.
30	Bad fulfilment	Information reveals inadequately to the requirements; data quality is poor.
15	Very bad fulfilment	Information is insufficient; data quality is very poor.
0	Cannot be established	Information has no significance, is not included or is not understandable.

5. Guiding principles for collaboration in the synthesis work on the r4d programme

- A synthesis process is regarded as a crucial element to achieve the transformative objectives of the r4d programme.
- For the r4d programme “synthesis” is understood as the contextualization and integration of research findings and procedural learnings beyond individual r4d projects into a larger body of knowledge either at the level of a specific module, across modules and/or at the programme level.
- A synthesis process should be reproducible and transparent in its methods, which can be quantitative and/or qualitative.

- The synthesis process shall promote participation of project partners from all regions. This explicitly includes project partners from science and from other communities (e.g. NGOs, public sector and private sector).
- Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) should facilitate the participation of their project partners in the synthesis activities
- Individuals collaborating in synthesis activities agree continue being open-minded and to secure a working atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Authorship of any synthesis product will be shared by all individuals collaborating directly in its production. A lead author and main responsible person will be selected at the beginning of each sub-project, other authors will be listed following alphabetic order.
- Publication of any product will follow the standards of the creative commons³.
- We acknowledge that funding for synthesis activities is limited, thus the synthesis coordinator and the PIs commit to check the possibility to co-fund working time for synthesis activities using synthesis budget as well as communication/outreaching funds from the research projects.

³ <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Annex 1: Roles and budgets

The table below illustrates roles and responsibilities that can be included in the concept notes. Other roles can be added, if required.

Potential roles	Responsibility	Budget from this synthesis workstream
Project lead	Accountable for overall content and delivery of product/process More than one project lead can be proposed	max. CHF 25'000
Main contributor(s)	Champion for the product/process in the wider community across single projects, responsible for content and product/process delivery	max. CHF 10'000
Other contributors including researchers, stakeholders or subcontractors	Collaboration and contribution for product/process delivery	tbd in concept note

Other roles relevant for this synthesis stream:

The **selection committee** includes the r4d synthesis coordinator, one representative of the r4d programme management and one representative from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It evaluates the concept notes, proposes and facilitates communication avenues for this project and, if required, consults with external experts.

The **r4d synthesis coordinator** overviews and coordinates the whole r4d synthesis portfolio, supervises the work and progress of the selected projects and coordinates the inclusion of the products into different communications avenues of the r4d synthesis. Her expertise is available to the projects, if required.

Annex 2: Template for synthesis concept notes on “Research partnerships as transformative instrument”

(max. 4 pages)

r4d programme synthesis Research partnerships as transformative instrument
Title of your proposal: Please formulate a working title.
Your proposal in a nutshell: Please describe the essentials for your proposed project in 2-3 sentences.
Objective: Please describe the objectives.
Contribution of the proposal to the synthesis questions: Please shortly specify how your proposal will contribute to answer any or multiple of the synthesis questions as listed in section 2.
Methodology: Please describe your approach to implement this proposed project including an explanation on how people and information from other r4d projects will be involved.
Activity plan and team set-up: Please provide a timeframe with people involved and their roles.
Target groups: Please specify the specific target groups.
Products: Please specify the expected products.
Budget: Please provide a preliminary budget for the project and potential contributions by participating r4d projects, distinguishing all necessary lines (e.g. honorarium for the people involved, travel, meetings, production costs, communication and dissemination activities). Please include co-funding (in-time and/or in-kind).
Dissemination opportunities: Please include events or processes where products from your proposed project could be disseminated. To the extent possible, explain whether/how you can pursue dissemination of your results/products.

Annex 3: Selected references on research partnerships (not exhaustive)

- Afsana, K., Habte, D., Hatfield, J., Murphy, J., Neufeld, V., 2009. Partnership Assessment Toolkit.
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- Carroll, A.M., Clancy, T., Bal, C.K., Lalani, S., Woo, L., 2017. [Learning through partnership with communities: A transformational journey](#). J. Prof. Nurs.
- Carvalho, A., IJsselmuiden, C., Kaiser, K., Hartz, Z., Ferrinho, P., 2018. [Towards equity in global health partnerships: adoption of the Research Fairness Initiative \(RFI\) by Portuguese-speaking countries](#), BMJ Global Health: 3:e000978.
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- Hoekstra, F., Martin Ginis, K.A., Allan, V., Kothari, A., Gainforth, H.L., 2018. [Evaluating the impact of a network of research partnerships: a longitudinal multiple case study protocol](#). Health Res. Policy Syst. 16, 107.
- Hoffmann, S., Pohl, C., Hering, J., 2017. [Methods and procedures of transdisciplinary knowledge integration: empirical insights from four thematic synthesis processes](#). Ecol. Soc. 22.
- KFPE (Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries), 2018, [A Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships](#), 3rd edition.
- Horton, D., Prain, G., Thiele, G., 2009. Perspectives on partnership: a literature review.
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- McLeod, A., Berdegué, J., Teng, P., Zimm, S., 2017. [Evaluation of partnerships in CGIAR](#). Independent Evaluation Agreement (IEA) of CGIAR, Rome, Italy.
- OECD, Global Science Forum, 2011. Opportunities, challenges and good practices in International Research Cooperation between developed and developing countries.
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- Tor, H., Hilde, I., 2017. Knowledge for Justice: Critical Perspectives from Southern African-Nordic Research Partnerships. African Minds.
- Upreti, R.B., Zimmermann, A.B., Debele, B., Cissé, G. with contributions from the NCCR North-South Regional Coordinators., 2012. [Partnerships in Development-oriented Research: Lessons Learnt and Challenges Ahead](#). Kathmandu. Nepal: NCCR North-South, South Asia Coordination Office.
- Wiesmann, U., Hurni, H., Ott, C., Zingerli, C., 2011. [Combining the concepts of transdisciplinarity and partnership in research for sustainable development](#), in: Research for Sustainable Development: Foundations, Experiences, and Perspectives. Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern, Vol. 6, Wiesmann, U., Hurni, H., an international group of co-editors (Eds.). Bern, Geographica Bernensia, 43–70.
- Zingerli, C., 2010. [A sociology of international research partnerships for sustainable development](#). European Journal of Development Research 22/2, 217-233.