

PROJECT UPDATE: International Research Collaborations

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PROJECT BACKGROUND: Member interest in the issue of global research agreements became accentuated after the June 2008 GUIRR meeting (“New Partnerships on a Global Platform”) and its focus on the growing complexity of international relationships. The notion of ‘government’ no longer necessarily means a federal agency; instead, it can be the World Bank or the United Nations, government associations, the State Department, or a state government. The same is true for universities – the partner engaging in collaborative activity may be a university department, a faculty member, an educational association, or some other entity. So too is the case with industry, which may now be globalized or local, large and established or a small start-up venture. A teleconference on July 15, 2008 confirmed interest in further examining what presently constitutes a sound research agreement in any given sector and also identifying the current barriers and work-arounds to their formation. A newly formed GUIRR working group has concluded that, while there is clearly no “one-size-fits-all” master agreement, identification of the elements of international research agreements would provide valuable guidance to the research community *writ large*.

SUMMARY STATUS: The working group convened its second day-long face-to-face meeting at the National Academies Keck Center on March 26, 2009, with 15 team members in attendance. The group solidified a statement of purpose for the so-called “I-Group” as well as a statement of purpose for a workshop planned for March 2010.

The proposed workshop will include two plenary sessions with scheduled session leaders, six topical groupings/tracks (issues that impede collaboration and formation of partnerships), and a final summary session. Issues/themes to addressed in the workshop include the following: (1) Cultural Differences and Nuances (Plenary Panel, Day 1); (2) Legal Issues and Agreements (Plenary Panel, Day 2); (3) Differences in Ethical Standards; (4) Research Integrity and the Responsible Conduct of Research; (5) Intellectual Property; (6) Risk Management; (7) Business, Financial, and Currency Topics; and (8) Export Controls.

I-Group will assemble a widely diverse, inclusive, and international group of subject matter experts who are willing to contribute to the critical thinking and discussions necessary to create a body of knowledge essential to the completion of a primer and reference materials. The following deliverables will be produced: (1) a summary report of the workshop; (2) website for posting questions and supporting a “tool box” with international participation; and (3) other tools that will be useful to practitioners. In planning the workshop, the group will begin with the end in mind; that is, it will seek to assemble thematic workshop champions and teams that can later draft chapters for the primer.

I-Group members are currently seeking funds to support the proposed workshop. In addition, the group has created an online, dedicated web portal for posting relevant resources. A considerable number of materials have been posted to date.

