

Consideration of Foreign Collaboration for Research Activity

Faculty Checklist – What to Know about a Partner (Subcontractor)

I. General Organizational:

- What is the organizational structure of this institution? How do decisions get made and who must or can approve decisions (such as partnerships or subawards)?
- Who is the “contracts officer” authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of this institution?
- What are the different departments or units within this organization? (get org chart if possible)
- What is the total annual budget? What is proposed collaboration’s budget relative to institution’s overall operating budget?

II. Personnel, Records:

- What are the hiring practices? How are employees (staff, faculty, etc.) selected and hired? How are personnel problems handled?
- How are terminations handled? What is the policy on termination and regarding layoffs? What severance and/or benefits are required by law in these instances?
- What is the status (position, tenure, etc.) of the personnel with whom you wish to collaborate at the institution?

III. Financial and Administrative Infrastructure:

- What kind of infrastructure do they have for administrative, financial, and legal issues?
- Do they have a manual of administrative and financial policies?
- Is the institution up to date on filings and other local compliance requirements?
- How do they handle cash disbursements and receipts? What are the payment practices?

Have they been engaged with other foreign collaborators before? Have they

- managed grants before? (If relevant, do they have experience with US Government grants, contracts, cooperative agreements?)
- What kind of banking relationships do they currently have?

IV. Physical Infrastructure and Assets:

- What is the physical infrastructure like? Do they have a steady supply of electricity? Is there a backup generator? If so, what buildings does it serve and how is use or prioritization determined? Do they have sufficient and private office space? (Other space as needed, like laboratory or storage.)

Who has access to locked rooms?

What kind of computer systems do they use? (If needed: How do they ensure confidentiality of data? Are their computers in a locked secure location? Are they password protected?)

How do they backup electronic files?

What is the permanent filing system like?

- Is there a business continuity/disaster recovery plan?
- If there will be any procurement of assets with Harvard funds, what is their procurement process? Is it sound, transparent, fair?

If staff will be on the ground or making frequent visits:

- Visa or other entry/exit requirements
- Access to reliable translators if needed
- Calendar of local holidays
- Knowledge of local customs, culture/religious considerations
- Location of US Embassy
- Access to emergency medical care
- Availability of safe and reliable lodging and transportation

While on travel, you should have:

- Means of communication during trips or travel to site (e.g., cell phone or handheld data with international coverage; locally purchased cell phone with international calling)
- Phone tree in case of emergency
- Sufficient cash in case of emergency