

Reflective tool for reviewers of inter- or transdisciplinary research proposals



When to use?

When evaluating the feasibility and impact of an inter- or transdisciplinary approach in research proposals

Ask yourself...

- How was the problem formulated? Were several experts (disciplines/practitioners) involved in the problem formulation or is such an involvement still planned?
- How diverse are the disciplines, methods and researchers and how suitable is the combination of disciplines?
- Is stakeholder involvement relevant to the problem and if yes, is there an appropriate plan for stakeholder/user identification and engagement from the outset of the project?
- Is there a clear justification for the choice of disciplines based on the needs of the research questions?
- Is the study sufficiently anchored in relevant literature and – in the case of transdisciplinary research – embedded in an analysis of the specific context?
- Does the methodology provide moments for joint reflection and for iterative adaptation?
- How will communication be tackled?
- Does it describe how the disciplines involved will be integrated (in the design and conduct of the research as well as in subsequent publications) and how this relates to the type of interdisciplinarity involved; does it demonstrate how the quality of integration will be assured?
- How is the collaboration organised – is there an understanding of the challenges of inter- and transdisciplinary integration, including methodological integration, and the ‘human’ side of fostering interactions and communication, and an effective strategy to achieve this?
- If the project includes stakeholder involvement: is co-producing knowledge with stakeholders envisaged, and are potential outcomes for stakeholders outlined?



- Is the leadership role and management strategy to deliver the desired outcomes clearly articulated and budgeted for?
- Do the researchers involved have demonstrable inter- and transdisciplinary skills, experience, and networks?
- In particular, is there evidence of inter- and transdisciplinary leadership?
- Does the proposal budget for, and justify, the additional resources needed?
- Is it clear how inter- and trans-disciplinarity will be reflected in the project outputs and outcomes?
- Is there a reflection about societal impact from the outset of the project? Is it clear how effects on society – as perceived by different involved parties – will be documented (and facilitated)?
- Is there a reflection about risks? Is the research setting flexible and resilient in the sense that unexpected events and group dynamics can be handled?

Several commentators have previously suggested sets of questions that reviewers might adopt to probe quality indicators which have informed this checklist; see [Lyall and King's report on international good practice in the peer review of interdisciplinary research](#) for further details.

