



Top Ten Tips for developing inter- and transdisciplinary research funding programmes from **SHAPE-ID partner**, [Professor Catherine Lyall](#)

1

Successful programmes take deliberate steps throughout to achieve integration and coherence. Additional small-scale funding for network- and community-building in the early stages of a research initiative contributes greatly to the degree and extent of integration.

2

The language used in a funding call is important: inclusive, accessible and jargon-free language can open up a topic in a way that invites different perspectives and encourages projects that challenge prevailing approaches.

3

Consider which level(s) are to be the chief platform for inter- or transdisciplinarity: at programme level (for larger-scale initiatives); at theme level (i.e. a sub-programme level) where certain topics might be integrated across projects; or at project level, within a project team or individual project members.

4

Who will provide the necessary inter- or transdisciplinary leadership: the funders, the academic Programme Director or a team of individuals in charge of component projects? How will external advisory boards be used to best effect?

5

When selecting leaders for inter- or transdisciplinary research programmes, leadership skills and integrative vision may need to be weighted more heavily than a conventional academic track record within a single discipline.

6

A great deal of tacit knowledge about the management of inter- or transdisciplinary research programmes can be held by funding agency staff: how will this people-embodied knowledge be captured to ensure continuity if key staff leave?

7

Capacity building—the development of knowledge and strengthening of skills, competencies and abilities of people, networks and the research community—is critical to the growth and longevity of inter- and transdisciplinary research. As well as supporting such activities, funders should recognise that the Arts and Humanities often have less experience in co-creation and collaborative research and so may require additional support to improve their readiness to participate in and lead such research.

8

Ensure that learning from past experiences of inter- and transdisciplinary investments becomes embedded within collective organisational memory. This requires greater continuity of research networks and communities, and also of research careers so that future career options are available for inter- and transdisciplinary early-career researchers and their expertise is not lost at the end of a programme.

9

Incorporating flexibility into a programme's budget allows not only evolution but also an opportunity for research leaders to develop new ways to facilitate genuine inter- and transdisciplinarity and encourage organisational and cross-institutional learning.

10

Inter- and transdisciplinary capacity-building is a long-term process: in understanding the needs of societal partners, funders need to recognise that negotiating and co-producing knowledge collaboratively can require more time to achieve the genuine integration and mutual understanding needed to solve a problem effectively.

Further Resources

- SHAPE-ID toolkit: [Top Ten Tips for Evaluation](#)
- SHAPE-ID toolkit: [Fund Collaborative Research Projects](#)

About the Author

Prof Catherine Lyall is author of [Being an Interdisciplinary Academic. How Institutions Shape University Careers](#) and co-author of [Interdisciplinary Research Journeys. Practical Strategies for Capturing Creativity](#)