



Top Ten Tips for writing inter- and transdisciplinary research proposals **from SHAPE-ID partner, [Dr Isabel Fletcher](#)**

1

Remember your proposal will be read by a range of people, not just those within your research area: don't assume knowledge of your discipline – describe (concisely) why your research is important, innovative, impactful etc.

2

Don't just describe your proposal as interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary. Explain why an inter- or transdisciplinary approach is necessary to achieve the intended research outcomes.

3

Inter- and trans-disciplinary proposals may be evaluated by those with expertise in collaborative research rather than your discipline. Write clearly for a general reader – use the minimum of technical language and abbreviations and define specialist terms briefly when they are first used.

4

Collaboration and integration take many forms and work to achieve. Outline what kind(s) of collaboration/integration you envisage (theoretical, methodological, etc.) and the specific ways in which you hope to achieve this.

5

Explain the methods that you plan to use and, if they are novel, give examples where they have been successfully used in other fields.

6

Bear in mind the extra costs associated with inter- or transdisciplinary research (such as, for example, additional network building), and budget for them accordingly.

7

If the research involves new collaborations, assume that these relationships will take time to develop and provide opportunities (formal and informal) for this to happen, especially at the start of the project.

8

If the research includes non-academic partners describe what they bring to the research, what and when they are expected to contribute, and how they will benefit from taking part.

9

Plan for a range of outputs to be produced across the lifetime of the project – this protects against failure and satisfies the needs of different collaborators. Academic publications are usually of little importance to societal partners who will often need more focused outputs – a programme of activities or new tool to pilot – in order to justify their continued involvement in the project.

10

Criteria for authorship vary considerably across disciplines. Describe how authorships for project outputs will be allocated - or a process for agreeing on this early in the project - otherwise this can become a major problem.

Further Resources

🔗 SHAPE-ID toolkit: [Creating Collaborative Conditions](#)

About the Author

Dr Isabel Fletcher is a qualitative social scientist whose research is based in science and technology studies, but also incorporates approaches from sociology, food policy and public health policy. She has research interests in UK and European policy approaches to food, nutrition and eating, and the ways in which interdisciplinary research is used to address complex social problems. Isabel has worked in a variety of interdisciplinary contexts on a wide range of topics including public health models of obesity, food security policy, and sustainable diets.

