



# Embedding equity in international research collaboration

Providing a resource for research teams  
at the Wellcome Sanger Institute

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**We apply and explore genomic technologies at scale to advance understanding of biology and improve health**

£140 million per year budget

- 70 per cent as a core grant from Wellcome
- 30 per cent third-party grants (e.g. CRUK, UKRI, CZI, BMGF)

# Sanger's involvement in international collaborations

- Large international consortia comprising partner research teams from multiple institutes
- Smaller scale collaborations between ~2 research teams
- Strengthens collaborative links through:
  - International Fellowship Programme
  - MPhil in Genomic Science



# Collaborating with research teams in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)

There is a risk of (*inadvertently*) performing research in LMIC settings without local intellectual input or appropriate sharing of benefits

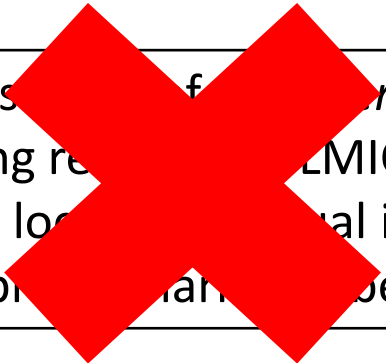


'Parachute' or 'helicopter'  
science



# Collaborating with research teams in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)

There is *not* (currently) performing research in LMIC settings without local input or appropriate financial benefits



'Parachute' or 'helicopter' science

Improve benefit sharing (fairness)

Collaborate fully with partners in an equitable manner

Align research agenda with local priorities (impact)

Better embed diversity of thought/skills/experiences in the research (problem solving)



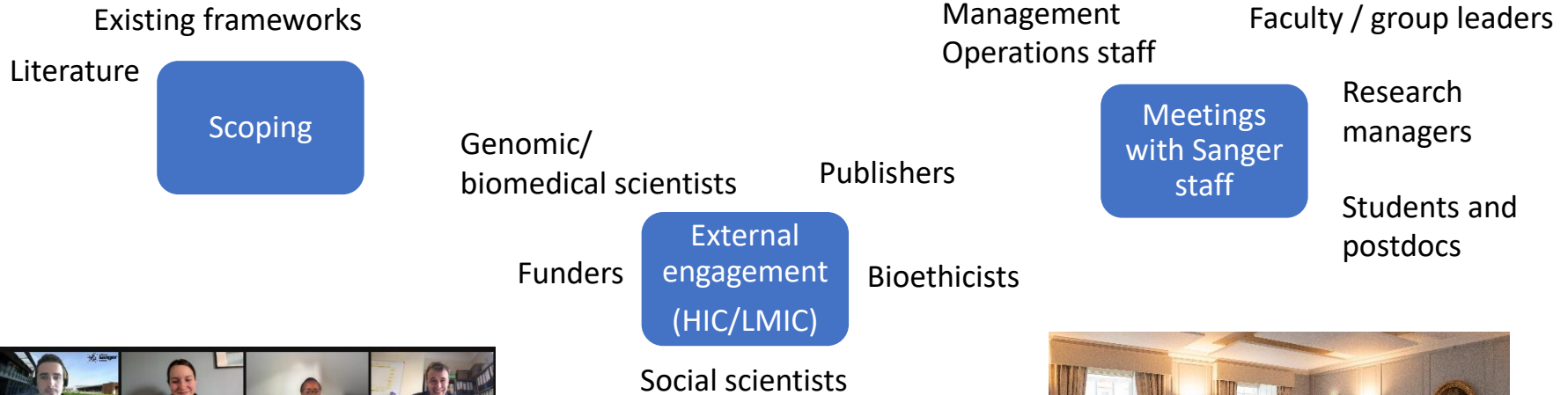
# Project aim

**To develop guidance for Sanger research teams who collaborate with partners based in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) to support embedding of fairness and equity throughout**

1. **Bespoke** and **accessible** for Sanger research teams (junior and senior academics, staff scientists, research managers, technicians, bioinformaticians etc.). Focus is research team <-> research team.
2. A **resource** (not policy or checklist)
3. Not to be imposed on partners, but rather **a tool for self-reflection** for Sanger research teams before collaborating with partners -> who will likely have their own priorities and perspectives on equity



# Engagement process

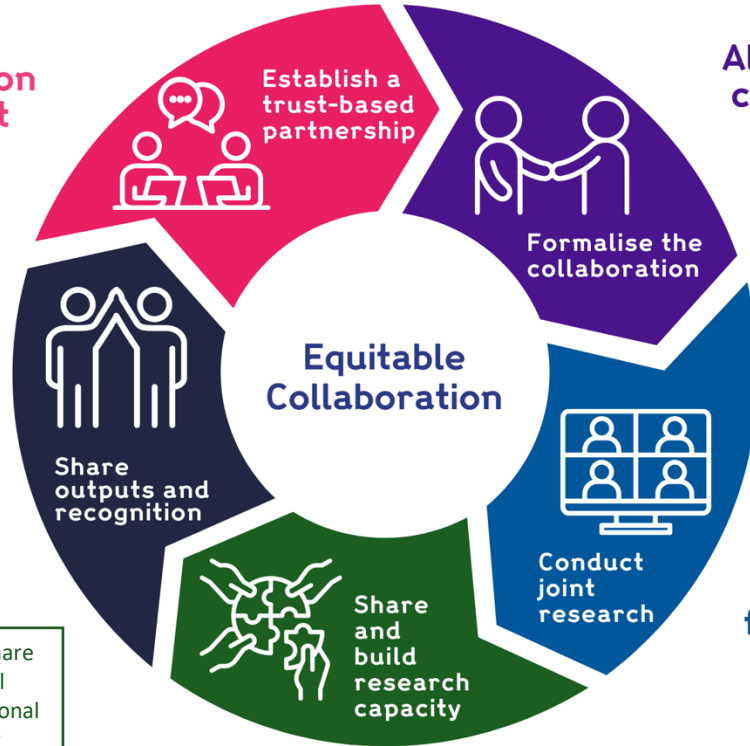


# A suggested “definition” of an equitable collaboration

‘a mutually advantageous partnership built on trust, where all partners are intellectual contributors to the project who work together to ensure that tasks and rewards are shared in a fair manner that addresses inequalities’



# Guidelines for research teams



- Consider equitable ways to find partners
- Prioritising trust
- Co-design agenda and strategies for equity

**Built on trust**

**All collaborators benefit**

- Jointly apply for grants and allocate funding
- Check contracts are mutually beneficial
- Develop principles of partnership

- Ensure all partners receive appropriate recognition
- Data sharing between partners and beyond
- Maintain relationships

**Tasks and rewards are shared fairly**

- Hold regular meetings to share progress and blockers
- Regularly evaluate equity
- Foster an inclusive working culture

- Sustainably & holistically share skills at the researcher-level
- Overcome limits in institutional and infrastructural capacity
- Adapt roles and responsibilities as capacities allow

**Everyone contributes ideas and knowledge from the start**

**Inequalities are addressed**

# Case Study – Project Jaguar



Mapping the diversity of immune cells across previously understudied populations in Latin America

**Co-led** by research teams across Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and the UK

**Distributed data analysis roles** with analytical leads in the Latin American research teams - enabling Latin American partners to **contribute more fully to the research process**, and supporting **expertise and capacity building**

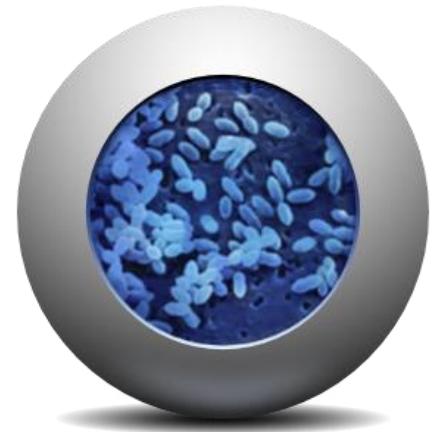


# Case Study – GPS Project

Global Pneumococcal Sequencing (GPS) Project – establishing a worldwide genomics surveillance network of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* to support disease control

Co-created a set of ‘**Collaboration and Publication guidelines**’ to ensure fair and transparent procedures and appropriate recognition and benefit for all partners.

Developing **sustainable genomic surveillance capacity** by supporting the decentralisation of data generation and analysis and supporting skills training for local researchers



# Next steps



## Outputs:

- 3-page summary guidance for Sanger research teams
  - 34-page full guidance, with more detailed guidelines, context, methodology, case studies, further resources
1. Disseminate internally (in progress)
  2. Share externally (upload online, Sanger website)



**Thank you**

**Any questions?**

Contact me on [dn7@sanger.ac.uk](mailto:dn7@sanger.ac.uk) for a copy of the guidelines