



Pathways to Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research: the SHAPE-ID Toolkit

Find tools and resources to make informed decisions about interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research with the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and societal partners.

Develop collaborative conditions

Abstract

Collaborative inter- and transdisciplinary research don't just happen by chance: it takes extra effort to build a successful team and establish effective working relationships when the group consists of individuals coming from different backgrounds, working cultures and knowledge traditions.

This publication compiles resources collected as part of the SHAPE-ID project to support researchers, funders/policymakers, research organisations and societal partners in developing collaborative conditions.

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Online source – SHAPE-ID Toolkit

This publication is an extract of the SHAPE-ID Toolkit. For a general overview, visit: [10.5281/zenodo.4743703](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743703).

The Toolkit provides tools and resources to make informed decisions about interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research with the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and societal partners.

Contributors & Co-producers

The SHAPE-ID resource collection series is an artefact of collective wisdom. Some resources were generated by the SHAPE-ID team, but many were already available online and the toolkit acts as a gateway to locate them. The SHAPE-ID collection series is based on discussions with and inputs from the SHAPE-ID consortium members, namely Anna Buchner, Maureen Burgess, Bianca Vienni Baptista, Caitriona Curtis, Isabel Fletcher, Giorgia Galvini, Catherine Lyall, Maciej Maryl, Jane Ohlmeyer, Christian Pohl, Andrea Ricci, Carlo Sessa, Jack Spaapen, Sibylle Studer, Doireann Wallace, Piotr Wcislik, Keisha Taylor Wesselink, Declan Whelan-Curtin.

SHAPE-ID resource collection series

- Understand inter- and transdisciplinary research: [10.5281/zenodo.4743671](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743671)
- Develop collaborative conditions: [10.5281/zenodo.4743673](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743673)
- Co-create a research project: [10.5281/zenodo.4743675](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743675)
- Fund collaborative research: [10.5281/zenodo.4743677](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743677)
- Evaluate inter- and transdisciplinary research: [10.5281/zenodo.4743679](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743679)
- Disseminate inter- and transdisciplinary research findings: [10.5281/zenodo.4743683](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743683)
- Improve inter- and transdisciplinary research skills: [10.5281/zenodo.4743685](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743685)
- Support collaborative researchers: [10.5281/zenodo.4743687](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743687)
- Develop a career in inter- and transdisciplinary research: [10.5281/zenodo.4743689](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4743689)

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Resource highlights

- ▶ SHAPE-ID Reflective tool for researchers and knowledge co-creators: Considering Collaboration: [10.5281/zenodo.4743695](https://zenodo.org/record/4743695)
- ▶ SHAPE-ID Top Ten Tips for working in multi-stakeholder collaborations: [10.5281/zenodo.4743693](https://zenodo.org/record/4743693)

Subtopics

Build relationships across different sectors



Collaborate across disciplines



Build research teams



Resources per subtopics

Build relationships across different sectors [▲](#)

In this blog, Max Kemman reminds us that “knowledge asymmetry” exists across different sectors and disciplines.

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Many tools and resources exist to help build relationships across different sectors. The Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru) Collaboration Kit is a “workshop in a box” that provides resources for practitioners engaged in or leading interdisciplinary collaborations, including teaching, research and community engagement initiatives (requires membership).

[VISIT SITE](#)

The CoNavigator tool, developed by researchers at the University of Copenhagen, takes this a step further by providing a hands-on tool for interdisciplinary collaboration to help teams navigate through complex themes and problems, and improve interdisciplinary collaboration and understanding.

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The Action Catalogue is an online decision support tool that is intended to help researchers, policy-makers and others wanting to conduct inclusive research find the method best suited for their specific project needs.

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Early career participants from across Europe used their combined knowledge to create a best practice guide for international research collaborations during a LERU Doctoral Summer School.

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Located within the context of “team science” (see also [Understand ID/TD](#)) Bennett et al.’s Collaboration and Team Science Field Guide provides many lessons of wider relevance to anyone attempting to work collaboratively.

[READ PDF](#)

Another useful resource is this article on using virtual events to facilitate community building.

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The Community Tool Box is a free, online resource for those working to build healthier communities and bring about social change. It offers thousands of pages of tips and tools for taking action in communities

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Wageningen University has produced this collection of more than 60 tools and methods that are particularly suited for working in multi-stakeholder partnerships.

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This short article on How to Avoid Collaboration Fatigue reminds us that stakeholders may have many other demands upon their time.

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Under the heading of early stakeholder involvement in projects, this blogpost addresses the challenging topics of stakeholder inertia and lack of interest.

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SHAPE-ID partner Christian Pohl has also produced his Top Ten Tips for working in multi-stakeholder collaborations.

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And we have produced a series of questions for those considering taking part in collaborative research.

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Collaborate across disciplines [▲](#)

Forced or “artificial” collaborations rarely thrive.

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This blog describes how the Toolbox Dialogue method provides a structured way for collaborators to articulate, share and discuss their research perspectives with one another, starting with core beliefs and values.

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Learn from others’ mistakes: use this “play” devised by Dr Laura Meagher as a self-reflection or discussion tool to avoid some of the common pitfalls.

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Better yet, take steps to avoid future conflict by drafting a collaborators’ “pre-nup”. You may find that some aspects are not required in your field but perhaps the NIH Collaborators’ Pre-nup will prompt further thinking about how you and your collaborators can establish an effective working relationship.

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Build research teams [▲](#)

This briefing note on building and managing interdisciplinary research teams covers topics such as selecting collaborators and identifying team members and distributing team responsibilities.

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This briefing note on troubleshooting some common interdisciplinary research management challenges addresses issues around negotiating interdisciplinary collaborations including some of the qualities to look for in inter- and transdisciplinary collaborators.

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Useful characteristics to look for in an interdisciplinary researcher are summarised in Key Advice 3.1 in Chapter 3 of this open access book, *Interdisciplinary Research Journeys*.

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In this short film (run time 17 min), Mark Reed reflects on his own experiences of working in an interdisciplinary team.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

The Team Scholarship Resources produced by University of California, Irvine curates a number of links for those adopting a team based approach and introduces the term “convergence” as a way of solving complex problems focusing on societal needs.

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SHAPE-ID has produced a short list of questions for individuals and groups thinking about engaging in collaborative research.

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