



# Equitable Research Partnerships Toolkit

## Tool 8: SWOT Analysis

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SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities) is a classic analytical tool. It can be applied when examining equity across an entire research partnership or when developing a specific strategy that might be implemented within a partnership.

#### Why use the SWOT Analysis tool?

A SWOT analysis facilitates systematic thinking, about both the internal and external factors, that may influence equity. This tool addresses equity by:

1. Producing qualitative data about equity in the research partnership, identifying strengths that might be built on, and weaknesses that might be overcome.
2. Identifying external factors which influence equity in the partnership, but that research partners do not have the power to control or change.

#### When to use the SWOT Analysis tool?

Phase	Rating	Descriptions
Planning	•••	The SWOT Analysis tool is designed to be used at any stage of a research partnership.
Implementation	•••	The SWOT Analysis tool is designed to be used at any stage of a research partnership.
Dissemination	•••	The SWOT Analysis tool is designed to be used at any stage of a research partnership.
Sustaining	•••	The SWOT Analysis tool is designed to be used at any stage of a research partnership.

**Ratings**  
••• Designed for this stage | •• Can be used as is in this stage | • Can be adapted for use in this stage



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How long does it take to use the SWOT Analysis tool?

### Rapid approach

- A SWOT can be rapidly utilised by an individual as a strategic planning exercise. This may take around 30 minutes.

### Intensive approach

- Ideally, a SWOT analysis of equity would be conducted by a group, including representatives from each organisation in the partnership. This might take one to three hours, depending on the size of the group, and the stage of the research.

What resources do you need to use the SWOT Analysis tool?

- [The SWOT matrix template](#)
- A face-to-face or virtual meeting space and facilities for projecting (or screen sharing) the SWOT matrix
- A facilitator and notetaker

How to use the SWOT Analysis tool?

- Download the [SWOT matrix template](#).
- Decide on a topic and/or introduce the topic of the SWOT analysis to the group. See below for suggested topics.
- Explain to participants that strengths and weaknesses are internal factors, characteristics of the partnership or partners for example, and that they can positively or negatively influence equity. Emphasise that because these factors are internal, they can be controlled by the partnership.
- Ask participants to share topic related ideas about the strengths and weaknesses of the partners or partnership.
- Enter the strengths and weaknesses into the SWOT matrix as they are discussed.
- Explain to the participants that opportunities and threats are external factors that positively or negatively influence equity. Emphasise that because these factors are external, they cannot be controlled by the partnership, but are nonetheless important to be aware of.
- Ask participants to share topic related ideas about opportunities and threats.
- Enter the opportunities and threats into the matrix as they are suggested.
- When the matrix is complete, ask participants to discuss the results of the SWOT analysis. See below for suggested questions.



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Suggested questions and topics to explore using the SWOT Analysis tool

### Topics

You could conduct a SWOT analysis about equity in the partnership overall or examine equity in a specific aspect/activity of the partnership. These could include:

- Participation in study design
- Co-authorship of research outputs
- Public and policy engagement activities
- Grant writing
- Postgraduate student teaching and supervision
- Sharing benefits resulting from the research
- Conference attendance

### Questions

- Are there any internal strengths that are well matched with external opportunities?
- Are there any internal weaknesses that are exacerbated by external threats?
- What actions can be taken to exploit the partnerships internal strengths and the external opportunities available to the partnership?
- What can be done to overcome internal weaknesses and avoid external threats?

### Tips for using the SWOT Analysis tool

- In advance of the SWOT analysis meeting, do some reading to familiarise yourself with different factors that influence equity in research partnership and how they might be addressed to maximise equity. Try one or more of the following readings:

- ESSENCE and UKCDR (2022). *Four Approaches to Supporting Equitable Research Partnerships*. Available from: <https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/resource/ukcdr-and-essence-2022-four-approaches-to-supporting-equitable-research-partnerships/>
- Faure, M. C., Munung, N. S., Ntusi, N. A., Pratt, B., & de Vries, J, (2021). Mapping experiences and perspectives of equity in international health collaborations: a scoping review. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 20(1), 1-13. Available from: <https://equityhealthj.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12939-020-01350-w>



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- Horn, L., Alba, S., Blom, F., Faure, M., Flack-Davison, E., Gopalakrishna, G., Masekela, R, (2022). Fostering Research Integrity through the promotion of fairness, equity and diversity in research collaborations and contexts: Towards a Cape Town Statement (pre-conference discussion paper). Available from: <https://osf.io/bf286/download>
- Schroeder, D., Chatfield, K., Singh, M., Chennells, R., & Herissone-Kelly, P, (2019). *Equitable research partnerships: a global code of conduct to counter ethics dumping*. Springer Nature. Available from: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-15745-6>

### Expected outputs and outcomes from using the SWOT Analysis tool

#### Outputs

A completed SWOT analysis matrix, containing qualitative data about factors that might positively or negatively influence equity in a research partnership.

#### Outcomes

- Increased understanding that research partnership equity is a goal that is influenced by internal and external factors.
- Increased awareness of the factors that might influence equity within a specific research partnership.

### Completed example of the SWOT Analysis tool

Download the [SWOT Analysis completed example](#).

The completed example is based on a hypothetical Global North-South partnership that has been established for over five years. Partners considered the history of working together and existing agreements about how to work together strengths. However, the SWOT analysis also identifies weaknesses that have not yet been addressed, including a lack of infrastructure to enable, and agreements to guide, sharing data and other intellectual property resulting from the research. The partners have also identified opportunities and threats that stem from outside the partnership. These mainly relate to the availability of funding and expectations of research funders and publishers.

### References and further reading for the SWOT Analysis tool

- This tool has been informed by Better Evaluation. SWOT Analysis. Available from: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/methods/swot-analysis>