



How To Develop Research Function In a Non-Profit Organization

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Agenda

I. Purpose of this document

II. Thought process to develop research function

III. Practical tips to develop research function

Purpose of this document

IS...

- **General** recommendation to **start discussion** to develop research function
- One solution option, which **should be customized** by each organization
- Instruction for **non-profit** organizations, taking global health delivery **actions**

IS NOT...

- **Specific** recommendation to **follow** to develop research function
- Ready-made solution, which **can be applicable to any** organization
- Instruction for **profit** organizations and **pure research** non-profit organizations*

Definition of “Research Function”

- “Research Function” in this document is
 - To extract learning, expertise and insight from organizations’ experiences
 - To deliver them to external communities
 - To leverage them to design new activities of the organizations



“Research Function” in this document is different from evaluation of impact from organizations’ activities only for their internal reviews

Issues discussed in this document

1. How does thought process to develop research function look like?

- What kinds of thought steps are required?
- What are key issues in each step of the thought process?
- What kinds of activities are required to solve the issues?

2. What are practical tips to develop research function?

- What are common pitfalls in research function development?
- What are useful information sources?

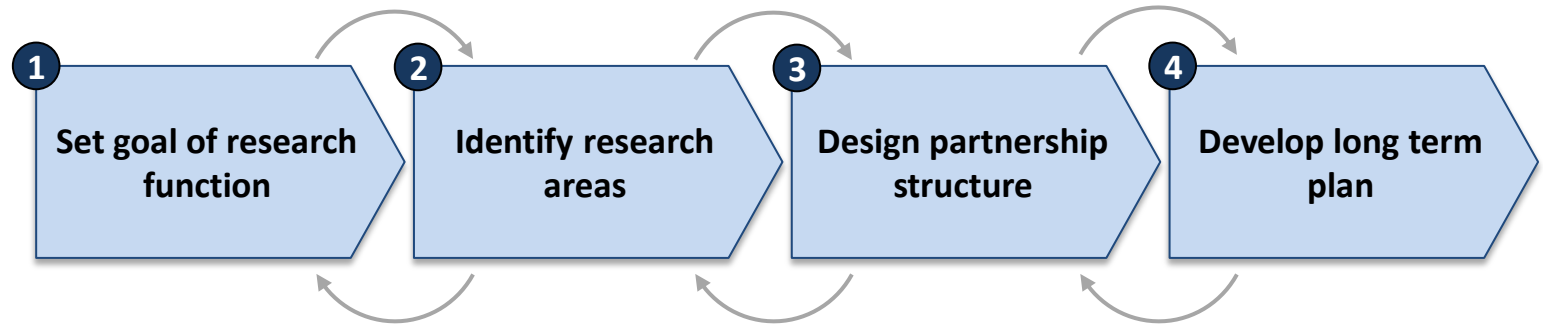
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Overview of thought process




Key issues

- What is the aspiration of the whole organization?
- How could the research function contribute to the aspiration?
- What are the potential research areas?
- How should the research areas be assessed?
- Who are potential research partners?
- Who are potential donors?
- How should the relationship be designed?
- How does the five year plan look like?
- How should the progress be monitored?

Expected outcome

- Clearly written goal statement
- Shortlist of research areas
- Shortlist of potential partners
- Options of partnership structure
- Five year strategic plan with KPI*

 It's important to iterate these four steps to reach the point where everything is consistent and all key stakeholders can agree with

1 Set goal of research function

- Checklist to validate goal of research function



Alignment: Is the goal aligned with the aspiration of the whole organization?




Agreement: Is the goal agreed by key stakeholders?



Assessment: Is the goal measurable by any direct/indirect indicator?

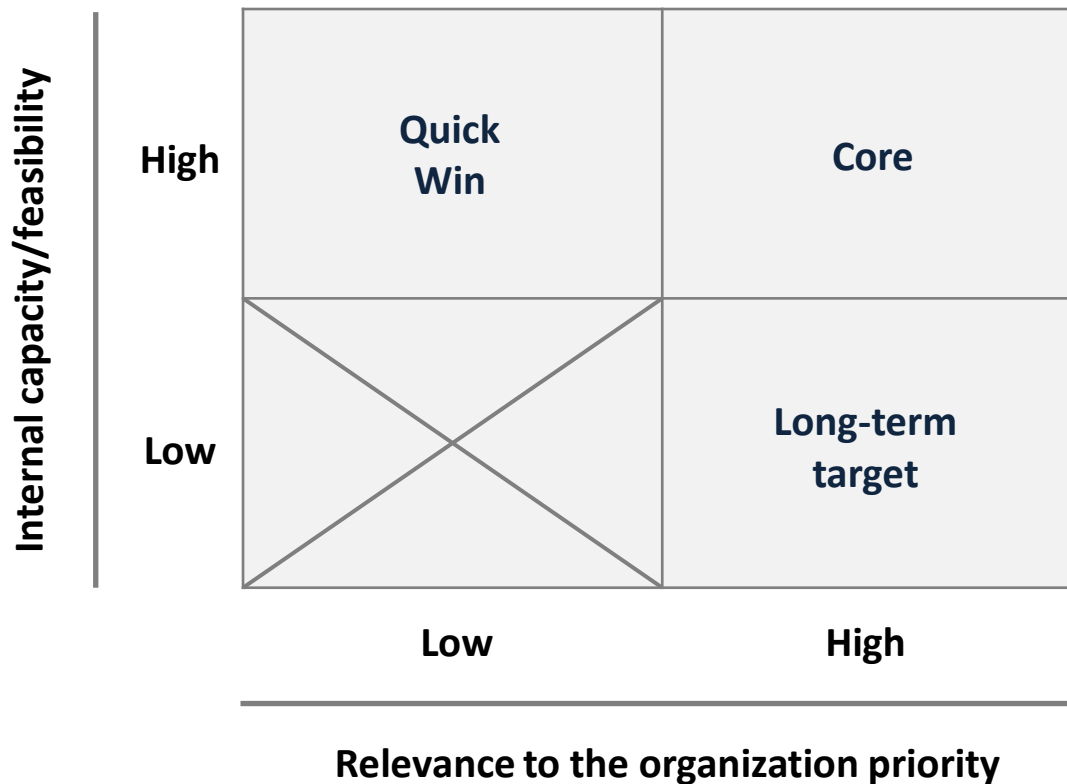


Appreciation by external communities: Is the goal appreciated by donors, research communities, and other non-profit organizations in the related field?

 Goal should be discussed based on a clearly written goal statement to avoid repeating “vague” discussions

2 Identify research areas - Framework to assess research areas

Framework structure



How to assess the axis

- **Internal capacity/feasibility:**
Based on organization experience and research staff capacity/capability
- **Relevance to the organization priority:**
Based on organization aspiration and external expectation

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Design partner relationship structure - How to find potential academic partners

Approach 1: **Leveraging public databases**

1. Search on public databases (e.g., Google Scholar, PubMed) by relevant key words
2. Identify the highly relevant papers (e.g., top 10 papers) and those authors
3. Screen out the researches for developed countries
4. Identify the research intuitions of top papers (e.g., top 5 papers) in the research field

Approach 2: **Leveraging experts**

1. Contact with authors of papers, which are highly related to the organization's research interest
2. Ask the authors about active research institutions in the research field

3 Design partner relationship structure - How to find potential donors

Approach 1: Identifying donors of potential research partners

1. Identify potential research partners
2. Look for donor information of those research institutions through their published reports (e.g., annual reports and website)

Approach 2: Identifying donors of research programs of similar non-profit

1. Identify non-profit organizations, which are conducting research programs related to the organization's interest
2. Look for donor information of those research programs

Approach 3: Identifying donors active in related researches all over the world

1. Identify active donors to related non-profit initiatives all over the world
2. Check their donation programs
3. Identify donors, which donate to similar research programs with the organization

3 Design partner relationship structure

- Example of potential relationship structure

Structure

Pros/Cons

**Option 1:
Non-profit lead model**

```

    graph TD
      A[Existing/new donors] -- Funding --> B[Non-profit]
      B <--> |Collaboration| C[Research partner]
  
```

- ⊕ More flexibility to select partners
- ⊖ Difficulty to convince donors without credentials
- ⊖ Review of contracts with existing donors needed

**Option 2:
Partner lead model**

```

    graph TD
      A[Existing/new donors] -- Funding --> B[Research partner]
      B <--> |Collaboration| C[Non-profit]
  
```

- ⊕ Broader and easy reach to funding especially in early stages
- ⊖ More marketing of the organization to research fields needed

**Option 3:
Joint collaboration model**

```

    graph TD
      A[Existing/new donors] -- Funding --> B
      subgraph B [Collaboration]
        C[Non-profit] <--> D[Research partner]
      end
  
```

- ⊕ More flexibility to select partners and donors
- ⊖ Trust from partners needed
- ⊖ Complexity in collaboration with partners in early stages

Case study of partner relationship (1/2)

- Center for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia

Background

- The Centre for Infectious Disease Research in **Zambia** (CIDRZ) is a non-profit organization affiliated with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (**UAB**)
- Mission of CIDRZ is to battle against HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases in Africa
- CIDRZ takes three-pronged approaches; **clinical care, research, training**

Partnership and result

Partner ship

- CIDRZ research group comprises....
 - 6 faculty members **from UAB**
 - 16 **Zambian** investigators
 - Numerous collaborators from **3 local** (e.g. University of Zambia) and **8 international** (e.g, Columbia University) partners
- CIDRZ has a **central research operations group** with units dedicated to study regulation, training, data management, and quality control / quality assurance
- The research group **meets weekly**

Result

- CIDRZ has **completed 43** research projects, has another **20 ongoing** studies and another **20 being planned**

Implication

- Appropriate **mix of local and international** partnership would be valuable to be recognized globally
- **Internal research and training functions** would be needed to attract potential partners

Case study of partner relationship (2/2)

- Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare

Background

- The Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH) is **Kenya's** most comprehensive initiative to **combat HIV**
- AMPATH is dedicated to all 3 academic missions; **service, teaching, and research**

Partnership and result

Partnership

- **AMPATH Consortium** was established in 1997, including **7 international medical related academic institutions** (e.g., Indiana University School of Medicine, Brown University School of Medicine, Lehigh Valley Hospital Allentown)
- Partnership includes **“Student, Resident and Faculty Exchange”** and since 1990, over 190 medical residents at Indiana University have taken elective rotations in Kenya

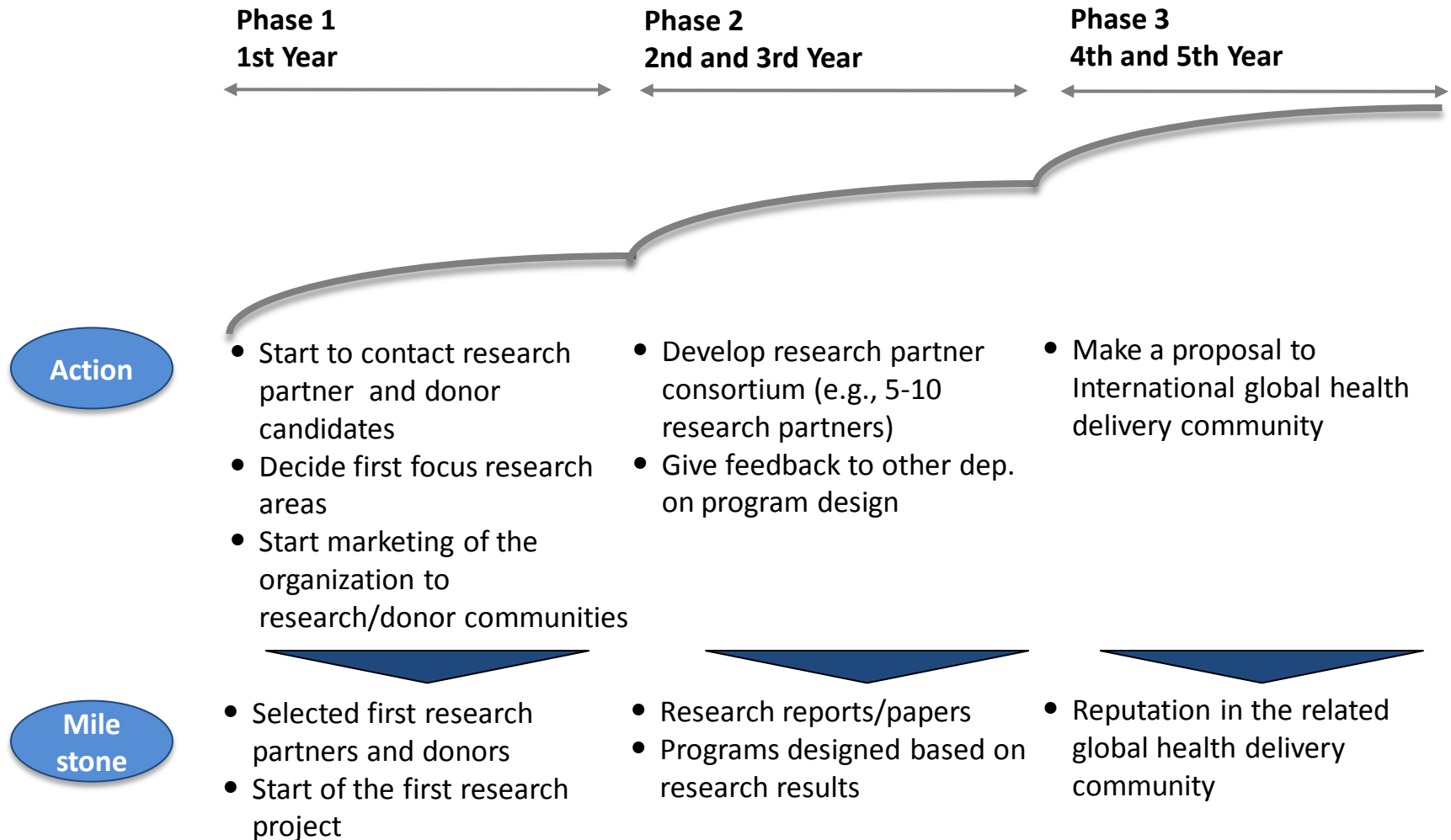
Result

- **25 active research grants** total **\$20 million** in direct costs (founders include NIH, NIAID, Lilly Endowment, etc)

Implication

- **Structured exchange program for students, residents, and faculties** could be attractive to international research institutions
- Appropriate partnership could give **additional access to donors**

4 Develop long-term plan - Example of five year plan



4

Develop long-term plan

- Example of key performance indicators

Qualitative indicators

- **Feedback** from other departments **in the organization** (discussion in board meetings)
- **Feedback** from external **research institutions**
 - E.g., Hearing in meetings and conferences
 - E.g., Direct mails with surveys
 - E.g., Discussions between the organization CEO and heads of research partners



Quantitative indicators (Key Performance Indicators)

- **Number of research reports**
 - Academic papers and presentation
 - Reports for the organization program design
 - Reports for donors
- **Number of meeting attendances**
 - Research conferences
 - Forum/speaker sessions/breakfast session hosted by the organization
- **Amount of funding for research projects**

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Common pitfalls in research function development

Pitfalls

- Stuck to set a goal for research function, repeating the same and vague discussions



Potential solutions

- **Write down** the goal first and revise it during iterating the thought process (keep in mind that “goal” discussion never ends)

- Difficult to make other “implementation” departments involved



- Emphasize that research function is valuable to **receive feedback** from external for future activity design of the other implementation departments

- Spend too much time to conduct comprehensive analysis to find potential partners



- **Talk with researchers** in the field first, which may not be comprehensible, but will be enough to start discussions

- Try to tackle with all ideal research areas from the beginning



- Think about what the organization **need to give up** especially in the early stage (funding for research programs is very tough)

- Don't design how to measure the result of research function



- Set measurable key performance indicators, which will be useful for **revising the strategic directions**

Useful information sources

Academic paper database

- Google scholar: <http://scholar.google.com/>
- PubMed: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>
- Ebscohost: <http://search.ebscohost.com/>
- ProQuest: <http://www.proquest.co.uk/en-UK/>
- ScienceDirect: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/>
- JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/>

Donor

- Global fund: <http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/>
- World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org/>
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA): <http://www.unfpa.org/public/>
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation:
<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Pages/home.aspx>
- William J. Clinton Foundation: <http://www.clintonfoundation.org/>
- Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation: <http://www.kff.org/>

Non-profit in case studies

- Center for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ):
<http://www.cidrz.org/>
- Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH):
<http://ampath.pharmacy.purdue.edu/>