



## Fundação Getulio Vargas and Research Governance

The Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), founded in 1944 in Rio de Janeiro and ranked among the world's top 100 think tanks, advances education, research, and innovation with a mission to foster Brazil's sustainable development; Research is supported by strong governance structures: the Research and Innovation Commission, Institutional Review Board, Central Office of Scientific Integrity, and the Research and Innovation Office (RDO).

## Challenge

Even as funders increasingly incentivise, and sometimes require, international and multidisciplinary collaboration, many partnerships remain transactional, fragile, or asymmetrical. Resources and capacity matter, but a persistent bottleneck is human: trust gaps, cultural misunderstandings, misaligned incentives, and too little space for candid negotiation. Too often, collaborations fall short of expectations or are disbanded due to strategic differences and management challenges (Hagedoorn, Link, & Vonortas, 2000).



## Guiding Question

What can research managers and Research Development Offices (RDOs) do to actively foster equitable global partnerships beyond formal agreements and frameworks?

## Focus/Approach

Grounded in practice-based evidence, this poster synthesises lessons from:

- (i) my work coordinating national and international partnerships at Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), Brazil, across institutions, researchers, funders, and societal stakeholders; and
- (ii) my involvement as an organiser and speaker in the British Academy-funded Equitable Partnerships Workshops (award held by FGV's Director of Research and Innovation, Goret Paulo).

It distills how trust and cultural understanding shape collaboration, and how intentional encounter design can support expectation alignment and sustained partnerships.

## Key Insight

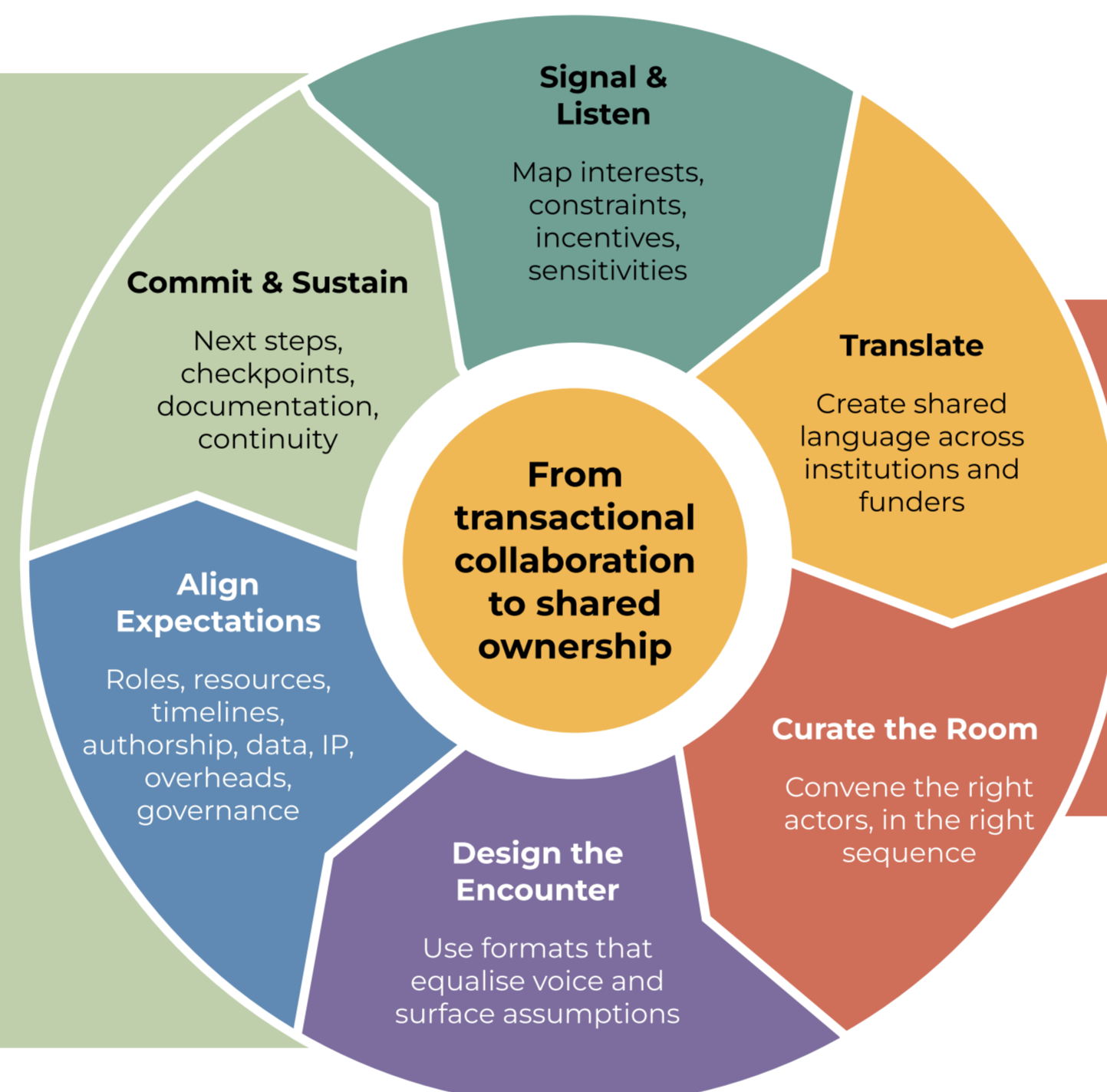
Equity is not achieved through policies and agreements alone. It is also built through human infrastructure: trust, cultural understanding, and structured opportunities to negotiate expectations early. This aligns with partnership evidence highlighting trust, transparency, open communication, attention to power dynamics, and capacity strengthening as core enablers of effective research partnerships (Hoekstra et al., 2020).

## The RDO Matchmaking Role

RDOs can act as matchmakers by:

- bridging researchers, funders, institutional leaders, and societal stakeholders; translating institutional priorities and funder requirements into shared opportunity spaces;
- curating who meets, when, and for what purpose; and
- creating continuity beyond individual champions through follow-up and institutional memory.

This helps shift partnerships from transactional collaboration to shared ownership, supported by explicit norms, communication practices, and attention to equity and power dynamics (Hoekstra et al., 2020; Ross et al., 2010).



The RDO Matchmaking Cycle

## Core Takeaways

- Trust is infrastructure.
- Culture shapes outcomes.
- Encounters are catalytic when designed, not improvised
- RDOs can engineer equity in practice through matchmaking, translation, expectation-setting, and continuity



## Lessons from the Workshops

Trust moves faster in person: face-to-face exchange helps surface uncertainties early and supports relationship-building (Hoekstra et al., 2020). Cultural matching prevents silent misalignment: working norms become discussable rather than assumed, reducing hidden friction and inequity (Hoekstra et al., 2020).

RDOs create continuity: facilitation plus follow-up helps translate dialogue into action and keeps expectations revisitable as the work evolves (Ross et al., 2010).



## Toolkit for Research Managers and RDOs

- Start with shared purpose, not deliverables
- Make asymmetries discussable (including power, incentives, and administrative burden)
- Name expectations early (authorship, data, IP, governance, overheads, timelines)
- Equalise voice through facilitation and structured formats
- Use structured prompts ("What would make this equitable for you?")
- Create a memory system (decisions, responsibilities, timelines, checkpoints)
- Build reciprocity pathways (mobility, co-leadership, capacity strengthening)
- Commit to checkpoints and revisit agreements as conditions change

## Conclusion

Equity is not only a principle, it is a practice. Beyond resources and formal agreements, equitable global partnerships depend on human infrastructure: trust, cultural understanding, and continuity. By acting as matchmakers and encounter designers, research managers and RDOs can create the conditions for candid negotiation, early expectation alignment, and shared accountability, converting good intentions into durable collaborations with shared ownership and real-world impact

## References

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- Ross, L. F., et al. (2010). The challenges of collaboration for academic and community partners in a research partnership. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 5(1), 19–31.

## Let's connect!

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