

SCIENCE FOR SOCIETY

– COLLABORATION PLANNER FOR INDUSTRY-UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration Planner II – Guidance

The “Collaboration Planner” was designed by the Science for Society ([link](#)) team at AU Corporate Relations and Technology Transfer at Aarhus University. The purpose of this document is to enable PhDs and Postdocs to communicate successfully with industry and to highlight the value of collaborative work. It seeks to help researchers and companies set expectations and understand their respective academic, commercial and legal obligations. In essence, the Collaboration Planner can be regarded as a communication process. The process is simply outlined by this document. Science for Society offers an associated training workshop to all research groups at AU.

Through use of the Collaboration Planner, it is hoped that both parties can plan prospective research and can understand what each party will bring. Both sides will gain empathy for the other and feel able to explain the value of the relationship. The document expects the researcher to be applying entrepreneurial skills learnt during the Science for Society workshop. It should describe the “value” that is generated for the University and for the company. It should also highlight who will be involved, what they will do and when. It must also include the resources that each party will offer, the duration and location of the research activity and detail the budget of the collaboration, including any in-kind payments.

It is important to understand that this process will ask you to focus on the unmet need first. In addition, you will be asked to record your assumptions on what companies think and want in this document. You will then plan interviews to speak with companies and with end users to “test” your assumptions. When you and the company agree on a definition of the unmet need, the process will ask you to record your assumptions on current potential solutions in order to understand how your solution is superior.

This planning document enables the researcher to begin discussions with Corporate Relations and Technology Transfer. When a researcher contacts this office, the Contracts Team will assign a legal manager to the project. This manager will be responsible for writing a legal contract and will have a number of questions for the researcher. With this in mind, the Collaboration Planner has been designed so that the researcher will already know these key questions in advance.

Key Points:

- The principles behind the Planner ask your team to test your commercial assumptions. You will be asked to write them down and conduct interviews to obtain data.
- Discuss your current assumptions on what companies want. Write these assumptions down in the Planner
- Discuss the Unmet Need. Write down your own definition in the Planner.
- Discuss the end user of the technology. Have the AU research team met with end users?
- Who will be responsible for each part of the Planner? Who will work on the budget? Who will interview end users? Who will be the representative to the legal manager at Corporate Relations and Technology Transfer?

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Collaboration Plan for [Enter title of project]

The Collaboration Planner was designed by the Science for Society team at AU Corporate Relations and Technology Transfer. The objectives are: a) to enable PhDs/Postdocs to communicate value to potential commercial partners and design sustainable collaborations b) to help both sides set expectations and understand respective obligations.

Technical Problem (“Unmet Need”):

[The AU research team should provide a brief summary of the technical problem that they believe is a key problem that exists in society. They should seek to interview end users and a range of companies to test their assumptions.]

Proposed Solution:

[Enter brief summary of how the collaboration will address the technical problem].

Need: Is the collaboration addressing a key need in society? Who has this problem?

Approach: State how the collaboration will approach the problem? How does this approach compare with different approaches on the market?

Benefits: What is the benefit of using this technology in comparison to all other approaches?

Competition: Who else is trying to solve this problem?

AU Objective:

[How will the collaboration create value for the University staff?]

Company Objective:

[How will the collaboration create value for the Company?]

[Has the company explained their 'business model' and the reasons the company collaborates with Universities?]

AU staff: [Enter AU staff in the collaboration]

Company staff: [Enter AU staff in the collaboration]

Reproducibility of Research data:

[How will the collaboration address the issue of ensuring reproducible research results?]

Historic interaction and collaboration agreements:

[Enter summary of any historic collaboration between the University and the commercial partner, including any previous legal agreements. If there are no historic agreements, present a summary on how the concept of the collaboration began.]

Material Transfer:

[Enter brief summary if any research materials will need to be acquired from the commercial partner and transported to AU or vice versa].

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Publication & PhD Exams:

[Enter brief summary on if AU staff will need to publish the data obtained within the collaboration. Enter any PhD exam dates of AU staff] and discuss this with the company.

Research Plan:

Describe the research activities that will be conducted during the collaboration. These activities should be presented in the Gantt chart below.

Budget:

Describe the budget for each phase of the collaboration.

Should the research be described as sponsored research?

Example work packages within a collaboration:

Phase (1) Validation of commercial assumptions ->

Phase (2) Development of prototype ->

Phase (3) Testing of prototype

The budget should be milestone-based such that if initial validation experiments in phase 1 fail, then the collaboration would be directed towards alternative proposed solutions.

Project Management:

Budget – record a monthly budget with the cost of each deliverable specified across each month.

Milestones – set success criteria for a proposed technical solution to be discussed within Review Meetings.

Review Meetings – key decision meetings that would review data and release further funding

Potential feasibility experiments – Are there any experiments that should be performed first to test if the technology meets the success criteria? If the collaboration may fail, what experiments could highlight this risk?

Key Questions: Who is doing what? Why are they doing it? Does it reduce risk? What is the “Plan B” if the experiment fails?

Task		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Launch meeting at AU										
Transport of Research Materials										
Experiment 1	PHD1		150.000	50.000						
Experiment 2	PHD1			50.000						
Review Meeting	ALL				MILE-STONE					
Experiment 3	PHD2					150.000	50.000	50.000	50.000	
Experiment 4	PHD2					150.000	50.000	50.000	50.000	
			150.000	100.000		300.000	100.000	100.000	100.000	850.000