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Reconfiguring Research and Innovation Constellations

Quadruple Helix Collaborations (QHCs) is a form of collaboration in research and development between the four major sectors of society: industry, government, research institutes, and the public. QHCs have received increased attention in the past decades due to their promise of increased efficiency and responsibility.
In order to gain an empirical understanding of these collaborations and whether they live up to their promise, the RiConfigure project has gathered insights from real life QHCs.

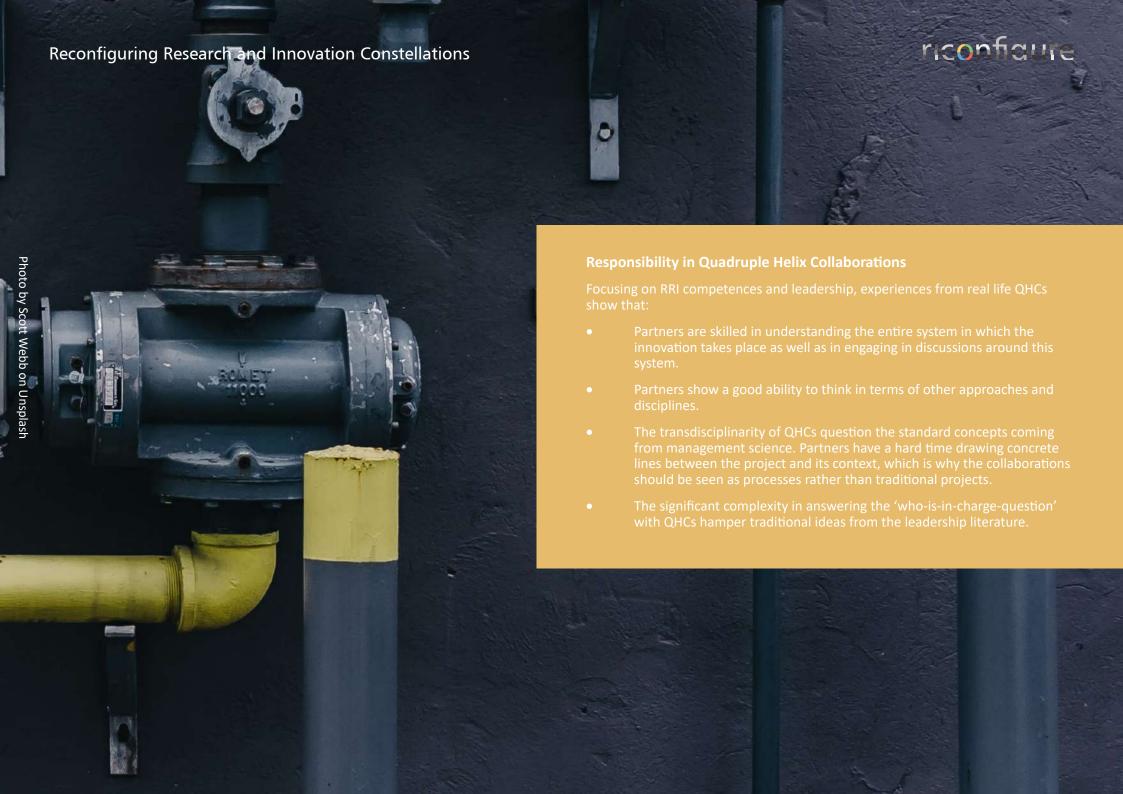# Reconfiguring Research and Innovation Constellations

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**The practice of Quadruple Helix Collaborations**

Focusing on the concrete collaboration practices, experiences from real life QHCs show that:

- It is challenging to actively involve stakeholders from all four helixes – especially those from civil society – securing funding for all partners and aligning the (implicit) interests or goals for the innovation process.

- The involvement of the fourth helix (civil society) happens more effectively in cases where public funds and public missions are involved or where the collaboration aims for social innovation.

- Building institutional structure is important to QHCs. However, this process it is not a one-time exercise but needs regular efforts and adaption throughout the collaboration.

- Securing funding and establishing a financial framework that is both output-oriented and benefits all partners is one of the key perquisites for QHCs.

- Financial contribution of partners is closely related to the (often tacit) power structures that emerge in QH constellations.

- Legal instruments are useful to plan and organize the collaboration process, as they allow for fostering trust and defining responsibilities and (shared) goals.

- A common vision and shared goals are one of the most relevant elements for QHCs to work and to overcome barriers.

- Regular personal meetings and face-to-face interaction events, workshops, co-creation spaces, bi- and trilateral meetings of different kinds are key resources for QHC, as they help aligning goals, fostering trust, and making processes transparent.

- External actors may have great impact on the QH practice and therefore need to be considered in order to maintain the collaboration.

- QHCs are versatile and fluid forms of constellations, therefore contingency planning and openness towards change within and outside the QH arrangement may prove beneficial for the longevity and effectiveness of the collaboration.

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**Responsibility in Quadruple Helix Collaborations**

Focusing on RRI competences and leadership, experiences from real life QHCs show that:

- Partners are skilled in understanding the entire system in which the innovation takes place as well as in engaging in discussions around this system.

- Partners show a good ability to think in terms of other approaches and disciplines.

- The transdisciplinarity of QHCs question the standard concepts coming from management science. Partners have a hard time drawing concrete lines between the project and its context, which is why the collaborations should be seen as processes rather than traditional projects.

- The significant complexity in answering the 'who-is-in-charge-question' with QHCs hamper traditional ideas from the leadership literature.

## Quadruple Helix Collaborations and Governance Structures

Focusing on governance at both a strategic, tactical and operational level, experiences from real life QHCs show that

- The drive towards collaborative innovation has been gaining saliency in policy frameworks in the last years, and the term Quadruple Helix itself is currently having some traction, albeit it is not yet fully established.

- When QHC are formed, they do not spring into existence primarily because of some compelling policy framework but rather because of a mutually recognized benefit of the presence of stakeholders from all sectors.

- Governance frameworks impact actual QHCs at various points and in various ways, resulting in a sort of "patchwork" of measures and legal arrangements from which the collaboration actors get resources and support.

- Policy frameworks can play an important role when they may envision civil society as major strategic actor or can make the participation of CSOs a requirement to access innovative funding schemes.

- QHC are constantly in the making, constantly building themselves as projects go along in a dynamic interaction with existing governance frameworks.

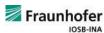For more information about the RiConfigure project and its findings go to **www.riconfigure.eu.**

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