

Useful Considerations in International Research From Cornell University

All of these issues will not apply to every research protocol, but the relevancy of each should be considered by the investigator. Please consider those that are relevant to your international research project.

1. Context in which the research will take place
 - How do local officials or leaders influence the population?
 - How does the economic prosperity or poverty of the area influence the prospective study population?
 - How might locally sensitive issues (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, politics, religion, sexual orientation, union membership) affect the risk of participation in this research?
 - What relevant current events should be considered in assessing risk to participants?
2. Communication with participants is appropriate to context
 - In what language will the research be conducted, and how do you know that this language is most appropriate to the research population?
 - What is the investigator's local language proficiency, or how does the investigator plan to communicate with participants?
 - How do you know that literacy levels and language complexity of research materials are appropriate for the research population?
3. Consent procedures meet or exceed U.S. norms for autonomous decision-making
 - If there is risk of coercion in gaining consent, how will you mitigate this risk?
4. Consent procedures are consonant with local customs and norms
 - Are research participants able to give their own consent? (considering age, gender, and citizenship, for example)
 - Are there privacy laws that may interfere with informed consent assurances?
 - How appropriate is the use of written consent? (Written consent can be culturally inappropriate, intimidating, and in some contexts is considered riskier than participation in the research itself.)
 - Will the consent procedures be pre-tested?
5. Confidentiality
 - How might the local setting for data collection impact your ability to maintain privacy?
 - Are investigators required by law to report illegal activity that they discover?
 - Are there privacy laws that may interfere with confidentiality?
 - How will confidentiality be maintained?
6. Compensation is appropriate
 - How do you know that compensation is provided in a locally appropriate form?
 - How do you know that the amount of compensation does not provide undue influence in the local economic context?
7. Safety of participants (and research staff)

- Are there special safety considerations for research staff in this area?
- How do you know that travel to the research site is safe for participants?
- Is the country or area politically stable?

Source:

Cornell University. (2014). Human Research Participant Protection Program: Guidance on IRB Review of International Research.

<http://www.irb.cornell.edu/documents/Guidance%20on%20IRB%20Review%20of%20International%20Research.pdf>