1. Collaborate with other patients' organisations/healthcare professional associations that share similar goals and ambitions to that of your own organisation, e.g. to raise disease awareness in a given disease.
2. Agree the scope, objectives and timeframe of any collaboration in advance of starting any project or alliance.
3. Review the scope and objectives of the project or alliance at regular intervals to ensure that things are running as planned, and to identify ways that the collaboration could be improved if required.
4. Where possible explore how best to share resources, e.g. educational materials, access to information.
5. Assign clear roles, responsibilities and tasks for any project or alliance and ensure that they are clearly communicated to the relevant individuals.
6. Ensure that each party is appropriately acknowledged for their input or contribution.
7. Work together to maximise each party's strengths and be sensitive to any limitations or constraints they may have.
8. Be prepared to invest time, effort and resources in establishing, building and maintaining any relationships.
9. Ensure that you keep in regular communication using emails, telephone and face-to-face meetings. Any written communications should be as clear and concise as possible.
10. Appoint one individual to take responsibility and manage the collaboration on behalf of your patient organisation.
11. Be flexible and willing to discuss how to resolve any potential areas of conflict.
12. Always be open, transparent and ethical.
13. Develop an agreement specifying:
    • The objectives and scope of the project/interaction
    • The roles, responsibilities and tasks of each party
    • Timelines
    • The amount and source of any relevant funding
    • How each party will be acknowledged for its contribution and involvement.

[NOTE: This document is part of the IAPO toolkit 'Working with partners and stakeholders', which can be accessed from the IAPO website.]