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### **Case study one: Governance**

A collaboration opportunity was presented to the international group. Academics from the institution were invited to travel to an overseas university, deliver a series of guest lectures on their area of expertise (plant biology) and provide generic advice on establishing research facilities. Their travel and accommodation costs would be fully covered by the international partners, but they would not receive any further compensation.

The international group had initial reservations about this collaboration. Web searches relating to the overseas universities returned limited results and its representatives, although forthcoming in their disclosures, had been sporadic in their contact. Further enquiries, including contact with an overseas embassy, revealed that the proposed partner institution had been established for a year and had reached out to a number of UK and other international institutions and organisations for assistance and collaboration. A number of these collaborations had taken place without issue.

The international group determined that, with appropriate safeguards in place, the project was a promising opportunity. Despite not being financially lucrative to the university, the partner country would benefit from being able to improve local farming techniques and allow the university to develop a presence in an overseas market and could attract additional investment opportunities.

Following consideration of relevant advice, the UK institution ensured that:

- Travelling academics only took and had access to the information they needed while travelling, with safeguards in place so that they were temporarily unable to access collaborative datasets and their institution's intranet whilst outside the UK
- Planned advice relating to research facilities were generic and high level, and not in conflict with the UK's strategic export controls
- The academics understood that they were not to accept any further gifts or offers from the overseas institution, and advised on how best to decline offers in a culturally sensitive manner, so as not to offend their hosts
- Legal advice was sought before the trip, which found no problem with the collaboration agreement but identified that Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) were illegal in the overseas country, and recommended further input from cybersecurity colleagues.

The collaboration went ahead without issue. Although there has been limited engagement since the visit, the academics found the trip useful and have recommended the international group as a useful and necessary service to colleagues.