



The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

PROCESS EVALUATION OF 3ie, 2008-2011

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Background

The mission of 3ie is to increase development effectiveness through better use of evidence in developing countries. To fulfil this mission, 3ie promotes the production and use of evidence from quality impact studies in low- and middle-income countries. The main supporting activities are described in the next section, which provides an overview of 3ie's strategy (the full strategy is available at http://www.3ieimpact.org/strategy/pdfs/3ie%20Strategy_Report.pdf).

The 3ie Board of Commissioners is commissioning a process evaluation of 3ie's operations since its start up in 2008 until the end of 2011. A separate study of 3ie's policy impact is being commissioned. This process evaluation will be an input for that, longer-term, impact study.

Overview of 3ie's strategy

3ie was created to meet the challenge of the evaluation gap: that is, the problem of the insufficient production and use of evidence in designing and implementing development policy and programs. This purpose is reflected in 3ie's mission to "Increase development effectiveness through better use of evidence in developing countries", through which we aim to contribute to 3ie's vision of "improving lives through impact evaluation".

3ie's strategy lays out five areas of activity (components) to be undertaken by 3ie over the period 2010-13 toward the fulfillment of that mission. Although not formally adopted, the same approach was in place since the founding of 3ie.

The first component, accounting for 75-80 percent of 3ie's expenditure, is the production of new evidence from support to quality impact studies. These studies are produced by teams of researchers and evaluators working together with the implementing agency who will make the first, direct use of the evidence produced. 3ie is not concerned with studies as ends in themselves, but rather as means to the end of improving the effectiveness of policies and programs in improving people's lives. Hence 3ie will experiment with different funding window models to determine the best ways to achieve policy impact. It is also recognized that policy impact is a product of both study design – having designs that can answer not just the questions of what works, but also why and for how much – and of study process, ensuring stakeholder engagement and buy in from the outset.

The findings from one study of an intervention in one time and place may not be readily generalized to other settings. 3ie's second activity stream addresses this

issue by supporting the production of syntheses of bodies of evidence around different interventions.

Ensuring the use of evidence is the crucial link in the causal chain between producing studies and improving policies and programs. 3ie engages in this issue at several levels. Each study team supported by 3ie is required to have a dissemination strategy, developed with the assistance of 3ie's advocacy and communications team. The findings from individual studies inform program management and feed into national debates on spending priorities. As evidence is gathered and synthesized around particular interventions and for particular sectors, 3ie will work with official and non-governmental agencies and networks to promote awareness and use of evidence as to what works and why.

In the long run 3ie will contribute to closing the evaluation gap by contributing to building a culture of using evidence in the design and implementation of policies and programs (component 3), and by helping build national capacity to conduct impact evaluation (component 4) in low and middle income countries. 3ie's activities relate to influencing the policy-culture focus on ensuring effective communication by 3ie and its grantees, and on carrying out research to better understand how research contributes to policy change. The main thrust of capacity building is through promoting international collaborative partnerships giving local researchers and evaluators the opportunity to work with each other and with international researchers. 3ie also works to build capacity to use evidence, through general advocacy for impact evaluation, through facilitating developing countries own demand for impact evaluation, and through facilitating opportunities for experience sharing.

Implementing this strategy places great demands on 3ie as an organization, so the final set of activities address building 3ie's own capacity.

Evaluation questions and study design

The evaluation will address the issues of relevance of 3ie's strategy, and the efficiency and effectiveness of 3ie's operations to assist the organization in reaching its stated goals. These issues are to be addressed across the causal chain. The complete set of evaluation questions and articulated study design are to be proposed by the study team in the full design document during Phase I of the study. Some of the areas expected to be covered are listed here, but this list is not exhaustive.

Relevance: the proposal should evaluate whether the strategy that has been adopted addresses 3ie's mandate (closing the policy evidence gap with rigorous impact evaluations) in the right way, both in terms of the strategic work areas prioritized and the weight (allocation of financial and staff resources) given to each area. The study may also address the extent to which 3ie has meant the priority concerns of developing country policy makers and other members of 3ie.

Efficiency, sustainability, and accountability: the proposal should outline how the study will evaluate 3ie's operational efficiency (measures of administrative costs per study, including review process), internal procedures (financial, human resources), the governance structure and functioning (performance of Board, membership as a governance mechanism and as a way of creating ownership), account ability to members, financial viability, locational issues (including the decentralization decision), and the working of the hosting arrangement with GDN. In each of these areas, the study should will review the current functioning (and changes made over time) and recommend improvements, if applicable.

The study will also review 3ie's internal monitoring and donor reporting systems, and make recommendations as to how the MIS can be strengthened. The set of monitoring indicators currently being collected is attached as Annex 2.

Effectiveness: covers a range of questions from outputs to outcomes. Possible evaluation questions under this heading include:

- 3ie outputs: what is the quality of 3ie supported outputs? (and are the procedures for selecting grantees appropriate, rigorous and transparent? Are our peer review processes effective?). To what extent have 3ie supported evaluations and other outputs contributed to new knowledge?
- 3ie presence: 3ie's influence in changing the culture of evaluation as reflected by policy-makers and practitioners, and its standing within the development community. Specifically, in what ways, if any, has 3ie promoted a culture of the use of evidence? Has 3ie support enabled a net addition in the number of impact studies being conducted? Has 3ie facilitated the conduct of impact evaluations in addition to those receiving 3e grants?
- Has 3ie contributed to an improvement in the quality of impact evaluations?
- Have the activities undertaken by 3ie, and the balance of time and resources between them, been appropriate? Has the organizational structure and capacity of 3ie been at the appropriate level?
- Channels for policy impact: how effective are the mechanisms put in place to ensure policy impact likely to be?
- What changes might 3ie undertake to enhance its policy impact in the future?

In order to address the above questions, primary data will be collected and secondary information sources analyzed. The following elements are envisaged to be a part of that design:

For the areas of relevance and efficiency:

- 3ie's monitoring and financial data, as well as all other relevant documentation will be provided by 3ie.

- Interviews with Board members, representatives of 3ie members, grantees, policy-makers whose programs are being evaluated and other key stakeholders.
- The proposing team will carry out a comparative study with similar grant making bodies, for comparison in terms of review processes, policy engagement and so.

For the area of effectiveness:

- The evaluation team is expected to carry out interviews with key informants from 3ie members, associate members, Board and staff, grantees, policy makers in countries with 3ie-supported activities, and other major actors in the field of development evaluation.
- Analysis of 3ie's web presence

Time line

The evaluation proposal shall serve as a concept note for the evaluation. A complete evaluation design is to be submitted by the successful team within six weeks of the award. This evaluation design will be discussed with the evaluation steering committee, and has to be approved by them before the study proceeds.

The study should commence as soon as possible thereafter. A draft report should be produced by 1 April 2012 for discussion by the 3ie Board. The final report will be due by June 20 2012.

Review process for proposals

Proposals must be submitted by 11.55 pm Delhi time on Monday 26th September 2011. Proposals should be submitted to evaluation@3ieimpact.org. Proposals submitted after the deadline, or to other 3ie email addresses will not be considered.

All proposals will be reviewed by a panel comprising three members of the 3ie Board, and the 3ie Executive Director (non-voting position). The same three commissioners will act as the steering committee for the evaluation.

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- (1) *Quality of evaluation design (60%)*, which is divided into the areas of (a) addressing the main evaluation questions laid out in the TOR (20%); (b) strength of proposed evaluation design (30%); and (c) and realism of time-lines (10%), and
- (2) *Experience of the evaluation team (40%)*, which is divided equally into (a) experience with similar type of strategy/institutional evaluation (20%) and (b) composition of the team, with mix of the appropriate

quantitative and qualitative skills (20%).

Proposals will be scored on these criteria, and the award made either to (1) the cheapest of the two top ranked proposals, or (2) the top ranked proposal if its score is more than ten points greater than that of the second ranked proposal.

Only shortlisted teams will be contacted.

The budget for the study is expected to be in the range US\$100-150,000.