



International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
Improving lives through impact evaluation

Request for Qualifications: Impact Evaluation of Interventions to reduce Maternal and Neo-Natal Mortality in Kerala, India

3ie Policy Window Two

RFQ PW2.18.IN.PG

Issue date: 22 August, 2013

Deadline: 23:59 GMT 6 October, 2013

Introduction

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) seeks applications for a policy window preparation grant under the Policy Window Two grants programme to conduct an impact evaluation of a programme to reduce maternal and neo-natal mortality in Kerala, India, implemented by the Department of Health at the Directorate of Health in Kerala, and in partnership with the National Rural Health Mission, Government of Kerala.

Overview of Policy Window Two

3ie's Policy Window Two (PW2) grants programme is designed to fund impact evaluations that are commissioned by the policymakers and programme managers who implement development interventions.

PW2 grants are awarded in two phases. In the first phase, 3ie issues a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from researchers interested in collaborating with the designated government or NGO implementing agency in the design and conduct of one or more impact evaluations of the agency's development interventions. The qualifications will be reviewed and scored by at least one internal reviewer, one external reviewer, and one representative of the implementing agency.

The selected research team receives a policy window preparation grant (PWPG) up to a predetermined amount. Please see <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/funding/policy-window/how-to-apply/> for the 3ie policy window preparation grant agreement and grant administration agreement templates.

The PWPG is to cover costs associated with activities, such as travel to meet with the implementing agency, preliminary checking of administrative data, piloting surveys, site visits, researcher time, etc. necessary to develop one or more impact evaluation designs.

During the PWPG, the research team will provide one or more workshops for the relevant implementing agency officials and other stakeholders in order to build capacity for identifying programmes to be evaluated, determining evaluation questions, and participating in impact evaluation design discussions.

The PWPG grantee will submit the proposed design, including a proposed budget, in the 3ie PW2 application form. Please see <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/funding/policy-window/how-to-apply/> to view the PW2 application form and the review form, which fully defines the selection criteria. The proposed design is due within three months of the signing of the PWPG grant agreement.

The proposal will be reviewed and scored by at least one internal and at least three external reviewers. It is 3ie's intent, although not guarantee, to fund the proposed evaluation, conditional on the proposal receiving adequate scores on all criteria. 3ie may provide comments and request a resubmission of proposals that do not receive adequate scores. 3ie reserves the right not to award any follow-on research grant.

If the proposal is accepted, 3ie will award the research team a grant to conduct the impact evaluation under 3ie's standard terms and conditions. Please see <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/funding/policy-window/how-to-apply/> for the 3ie grant agreement and grant administration agreement templates.

Background to RFQ PW2.18.IN.PG

Kerala has been an outlier among Indian states for indicators of maternal and infant mortality. Compared to a national maternal mortality rate (MMR) of 221 deaths per 100,000 live births, the MMR in Kerala is estimated to be 81. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in Kerala is 13 as against the national figure of 47¹. However the state is concerned that the rate of the decline of MMR has diminished to unacceptable levels and IMR has been stagnant for more than a decade. Both the rates are far below what has been achieved in the OECD countries. The working group that developed targets for the twelfth plan has recommended that Kerala should aim to bring the MMR to less than 40 and the IMR to 8.

The intervention to reduce these rates commenced with an assessment of the causes of maternal and infant mortality. A group of experts from government and private hospitals, facilitated by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, UK and the Kerala Federation of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists analysed the causes of maternal mortality and recommended corrective steps. The

¹<http://cbhidghs.nic.in/writereaddata/mainlinkFile/06%20Demographic%20Indicators%202011.pdf>

team developed a set of quality standards to improve obstetric practice in Kerala. The interventions needed to achieve the quality standards are currently being piloted in six government and two private hospitals. The implementation process is being continually assessed by a monthly review. The final version of the standards will be developed after pilots are completed before the end of 2013. These standards will then be scaled up gradually to all government hospitals with the staff of the pilot hospitals acting as trainers. There are more than 120 government hospitals and many more private hospitals in Kerala.

The exercise is being repeated for IMR-related interventions. The initial assessment of the causes of infant mortality, carried out with the assistance of Indian Association of Paediatricians is complete. Since majority of the infant deaths are neo-natal, interventions will focus predominantly on neo-nates. An initial planning exercise has commenced with the support of ACCESS Health International. Once the interventions are developed, the pilots completed and interventions finalised, all of the staff of the paediatric wing will be trained to adopt the standards.

Implementing both the interventions will call for some modification of infrastructure, procurement of additional consumables and investments in capacity addition, process reengineering and behaviour modification. The project has clear structural, process and output indicators, and the health management information system will be modified to accommodate them. This study will assess the impact of the revised method of managing obstetric and neo-natal care. The effectiveness of the newly developed protocols will be tested in government hospitals and also in private hospitals that decide to adopt these protocols.

Instructions for applicants

Responses to this RFQ shall include five components:

1. Completed organisation information form, which can be found on this page of the 3ie website: <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/funding/policy-window/how-to-apply/>
2. Curriculum vitae (not to exceed three pages each) of all proposed principal investigators (PIs), along with a signed letter from each indicating the share of working time during the three months of the preparation grant expected to be spent on the proposal preparation work and confirming availability for that expected share of working time. It is expected that these PIs will participate in the proposed impact evaluation.
3. If applicable, curriculum vitae (not to exceed three pages each) of additional researchers who will be involved in conducting the impact evaluation, if approved.
4. Copies of up to three impact evaluation studies with proposed PIs as named authors.

5. Proposed budget, not to exceed \$20,000, for the proposal preparation costs. The proposed budget must follow 3ie's direct cost and indirect cost policies.

The first three components should be submitted in a single Microsoft Word-compatible file, with all font sizes greater than or equal to 11 points. The signed letters from the PIs and sample impact evaluation studies may be submitted as separate PDF files. The budget should be presented in 3ie budget format and follow 3ie budget guidelines. Any budget notes may be submitted as a separate Microsoft Word compatible file with all font sizes greater than or equal to 11 points.

Please submit all files in a single email message not to exceed 5MB to PW2@3ieimpact.org no later than 23:59 GMT on 6 October, 2013.

Incomplete submissions will be considered ineligible.

This RFQ does not constitute a guarantee of award. Please direct any questions about it to PW2@3ieimpact.org by 23:59 GMT on 6 September 2013. A single document with all questions and answers will be made publicly available on the [3ie Request For Qualifications Kerala webpage](#) within three working days of that date.

Eligibility

Only institutions, not individuals, may apply. The lead institution making the application must be located in India, with national researchers as the lead PI(s). The application may include other researchers, including from outside India, who are not employees of that institution. (Applicants are advised that including a researcher with a good international reputation in an advisory capacity is encouraged).

Selection criteria

The qualifications submitted in response to the RFQ will be reviewed and scored according to the following criteria:

Credentials of PIs	45%
Credentials of other researchers	15%
Institutional capabilities	20%
Sector experience and involvement	15%
Associate membership of 3ie	5%

The application(s) submitted as the deliverable(s) for Phase I will be reviewed and scored according to the following criteria:

Qualifications of proposed staff	20%
Involvement of developing country researchers	20%
Quality of technical proposal, internal validity	25%
Quality of technical proposal, external validity	25%
Cost	10%