



The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

Request for Expressions of Interest

Replication Window 3: HIV Prevention

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Submission deadline: Rolling through 31 May 2015

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), with funding from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation \(BMGF\)](#), is issuing a request for expressions of interest (REOI) for researchers interested in conducting replication studies under 3ie's Replication Window 3: HIV Prevention (RW3).

This document provides instructions to applicants submitting expressions of interests. It also provides instructions to applicants submitting full proposals. This latter set of instructions should be followed only by applicants who have submitted an expression of interest and have been invited by the RW3 Team to submit a full proposal.

Background

3ie was set up in 2008 to meet growing demand for more and better evidence of what development interventions in low- and middle-income countries work and why. By funding rigorous impact evaluations and systematic reviews and by making evidence accessible and useful to policymakers and practitioners, 3ie is helping to improve the lives of people living in poverty.

3ie's Replication Programme was established as a global public good to help improve the quality and reliability of impact evaluation evidence used for policymaking. The programme is designed to highlight the benefits of internal replication of impact evaluations and to provide incentives to conduct replication studies of influential, innovative, and controversial impact evaluations of development interventions. The replication programme provides funding for researchers to conduct internal replication studies through the replication window.

Three decades of work on HIV prevention have yielded a series of effective biomedical, behavioural, social, and structural interventions among specific population groups in small-scale settings and/or in controlled trials. To date, few of these have been adopted at a population level to prevent HIV. Although most of them show clear potential for a major impact in reducing HIV and the associated human and economic costs, the importance of the effort to prevent HIV and the magnitude of effort required to scale up any evidence-based intervention require the study results to be carefully reviewed, understood, and confirmed.

Scope of the call

The aim of this call is to invite researchers to express interest in conducting internal replications of influential, innovative, or controversial impact evaluations of biomedical, behavioural, or social and structural HIV prevention interventions.

By internal replication, 3ie means the reconciliation and re-analysis of the findings of an original study using the study's own raw data and perhaps also using data from different sources for the same population. 3ie's Replication Programme does not include external replication — replications of interventions in different settings to assess the external validity of an impact evaluation of a particular intervention.

Biomedical approaches to HIV prevention have included work on developing an HIV vaccine and topical protection treatments, medical male circumcision, barrier approaches, and substance abuse treatment. Behavioural interventions focus on individuals, to discourage risky behaviours and reinforce protective ones. Typically these interventions address knowledge, attitudes, skills, and beliefs through education, outreach, and other avenues. Social and structural interventions address factors outside of individual knowledge or awareness that have the potential to influence HIV infection of individuals. They can address social (e.g. stigma and discrimination and gender inequality), legal and-political (e.g. laws and regulations), cultural (e.g. religious and ethnic beliefs), and economic (e.g. poverty) factors.

Researchers interested in conducting a replication must select an original HIV prevention study that is already included in 3ie's [Impact Evaluation Repository](#). 3ie will only fund one replication study per impact evaluation under RW3.

Accepted replications will be published on the [3ie website](#) and in hard copy through the [Replication Paper Series](#).

Replication timeline

The replication studies are expected to be complete within one year.

A key element of the contract is the data acquisition period. For replication of studies for which the data and necessary log files are not already publically available, the contract includes a three-month data acquisition deadline. Replication researchers are responsible for contacting the original authors and obtaining the replication data. The deadlines for the draft replication report and the final replication report are then calculated from the date that the data and necessary files are acquired.

During the data acquisition period, 3ie will also send the replication researcher detailed comments from reviewers on the replication plan. A revised

replication plan must be approved prior to the release of the first tranche. These final replication plans will be published on the [Replication Status Page](#) on 3ie's website.

If the replication researcher is not able to obtain the data and necessary files by the three-month deadline, the replication is aborted. The researcher can be reimbursed for up to 8 hours of recorded time trying to obtain the data. They are eligible to submit a proposal to replicate another study. This study will be selected by the researcher and agreed to by 3ie before the proposal is submitted.

The contract also includes a three-month period in between the submission of the draft replication report and the final replication report. 3ie will provide the comments to the researcher within the first six weeks of this period.

Eligibility

The call is open to any individual who can agree to the terms of one of the replication programme contracts. The contracts are independent consulting contracts with individuals or consulting contracts with institutions. Any independent researcher resident in the United States must have a valid US work authorisation.

There is no limit on the number of expressions of interest researchers may submit.

Instructions for applicants submitting expressions of interest

The main intent of the EOI process is to assess the choice of the original study.

The EOI application should consist of the following documents:

1. An expression of interest document inclusive of a statement explaining the applicants' choice of study and the main replication questions (not to exceed three pages). The statement should include a discussion of the contribution of the study to the literature and the study's influence or potential influence on policy.
2. CV of the principal investigator (not to exceed five pages).

The expression of interest may include a list of other names and short bios at the applicant's discretion. This information combined must not exceed two pages.

Submission and review process for expressions of interest

Expressions of interest should be submitted to replication@3ieimpact.org no later than **23:59 GMT 31 May 2015**.

All expressions of interest must be sent via two attachments to a single email message. The cover email message must include a certification that the applicant has read and is willing and able to sign either the [RW3 Individual Consulting Contract](#) or the [RW3 Institutional Consulting Contract](#).

The RW3 Team will review all expressions of interest. The team will invite applicants to submit proposals if their expressions of interest meet the following criteria:

- The original study is eligible for inclusion in the funding window.
- There is a strong justification for replicating the original study based on the study's contribution to the literature or influence on development programmes or policy.
- The primary investigator has a sufficient analytical/empirical background to conduct the replication study.

The RW3 Team will review expressions of interest on a rolling basis and will invite selected applicants to submit full proposals. The RW3 team will send notifications to applicants within four weeks of receiving an EOI.

Application process for researchers invited to submit proposals

The instructions below pertain only to those who have received invitations to submit full proposals to RW3.

Full instructions to applicants invited to submit proposals will be provided at the time of notification. Applicants will have forty-five (45) days from the date of invitation to submit a proposal.

The proposal shall consist of three documents: 1) a technical proposal not to exceed eighteen (18) pages (including any attachments, tables, figures, etc. but excluding a cover page if desired) submitted as a single Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat file with font size no smaller than 11 point, 2) a budget submitted as a Microsoft Excel file in the 3ie budget template, and 3) a budget narrative submitted as a Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat file. At this time, the working language of 3ie is English and we are only able to accept proposals in English.

The technical proposal must include the following components:

- CV of the principal investigator (not to exceed five pages);
- Names and CVS or biographies of additional researchers or consultants (not to exceed 5 pages each);
- Proposed replication plan (not to exceed 10 pages). This plan should identify the proposed categories of replication to be included (pure replication, measurement and estimation analysis, or theory of change analysis) and what avenues of inquiry the proposal plans to pursue. Please visit the [3ie Replication Studies Status](#) page for sample

replication plans.

The budget must be submitted as a line-item budget in the 3ie budget template. All proposed costs must comply with 3ie direct cost policies. No indirect costs or fringe rates are permitted under independent contract agreements with individuals.

The budget narrative must be submitted as a Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat file and should provide detail on each line item category.

Submission and review process for full proposals

Proposals must be submitted to replication@3ieimpact.org within 45 days of invitation. All proposal documents must be attached to a single email message.

Proposals will be scored according to the following selection criteria and weights by at least two internal and two external reviewers. Each criterion will be scored on a point scale from 0-10.

- Qualifications of applicant (40%)
- Understanding of the original study and relevance of proposed replication questions (20%)
- Proposed replication plan (40%)

Further information on scoring may be found on the [RW3 review form](#).

There is no pre-set funding limit for replication studies included in RW3, however all proposals will be judged on cost-reasonableness. 3ie may ask applicants to provide additional documentation to justify the cost proposal.

Proposals receiving a weighted average score of five across all four reviewers will be sent to the RW3 selection panel, consisting of the same four reviewers and the 3ie Deputy Director who heads both the Replication Programme and the HIV and AIDS Evidence Programme.

The panel will meet and make the final determination based on the selection criteria, cost-reasonableness, and contribution to the body of studies being funded under this window. 3ie will strive to notify applicants of their status within a month.

3ie anticipates awarding up to six fixed-priced independent or institutional consulting contracts for replication.

Contract terms

The contract terms can be found on the [RW3 webpage](#). The contracts are independent consulting contracts with individuals or consulting contracts with

institutions. In cases where the principal investigator desires to pay others involved in the study, s/he may include those costs as expenses in the budget and then provide the receipts for these expenses as part of the time and expense reports. These expenses and the budgeted daily rates of the principal investigators must comply with 3ie direct cost policies. No indirect costs or fringe rates are permitted under independent contract agreements with individuals.

The replication researchers will be required to follow the 3ie Replication Contracts Notification and Communication Policy, with draft replications being shared with original authors. The contract also includes a three-month period between the submission of the draft replication report and the final replication report. 3ie provides the comments to the replication researchers within the first six weeks of this period.

Note that deliverables, such as proof of data availability and revised replication plan may be submitted in advance of the contract deadlines. 3ie will review deliverables upon receipt.

3ie makes payments based on review and approval of deliverables according to fixed percentages of the ceiling price of the contract. Principal investigators of the replication studies are required to submit expense reports with each tranche. The final payment is made based on a reconciliation of the expense reports with the original budget and constitutes the lesser of the actual costs and the ceiling price of the contract.

The four tranche payments are:

- 20% when the data and codes are obtained from the original authors and a final replication plan has been approved by 3ie
- 30% after submission of complete pure replication to 3ie and to original authors
- 30% after the acceptance of the draft replication report
- 20% after the acceptance of the final report