

A large, stylized graphic of the '3ie' logo dominates the right side of the page. The '3' is a light blue, thin-lined number. The 'ie' is a darker blue, with the 'i' having a light blue dot. The letters are partially enclosed by thick, curved blue lines that form a large, abstract shape.

3ie Strategy 2024-2026

Encouraging the use of
rigorous evidence to
improve lives



This strategy was developed through a consultative process involving our board, staff and other key stakeholders.

Executive editor
Marie Gaarder

Managing editor
Paul Thissen and Tanvi Lal

Publications and web design
Akarsh Gupta

Production manager
Malika Rao

Suggested citation
International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, 3ie, 2024. *3ie strategy 2024–2026*, Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, 3ie

© International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, 3ie, 2024

3ie: An evidence partner

When decision-makers at the West African Development Bank wanted to incorporate reliable evidence into its processes, they turned to 3ie. Program directors and in-country teams weren't looking for one single product – people at different stages of program cycles had a range of needs: rapid evidence products to directly inform immediate decisions; evaluations of large-scale programs to improve the implementation of regional interventions; or capacity-development to ensure that colleagues across all member states had up-to-date tools for conducting evaluations and accessing evidence.

In response, 3ie has delivered tailored evidence services for each case through our ongoing multi-year program. Our work with the Bank reflects our broader strategy: to be an evidence partner which can provide timely rigorous evidence at any phase in decision-making cycles while offering guidance on building an institutional culture that prioritizes evidence.

We're the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, more commonly called 3ie. We're a mission-driven non-profit organization dedicated to using evidence to transform people's lives in low-and middle-income countries. Our 90+ staff are based all over the world. Our largest office is in New Delhi; we also have offices in London and Washington, DC.

Our vision and mission have evolved since our founding in 2008, as the world we live and work in has changed. Yet, there is a constant, consistent element to our purpose. We believe using evidence in decision-making can help improve people's lives. This is central to what 3ie stands for and what we strive to achieve in our day-to-day work.

Our Vision

Improving lives through evidence-informed decision-making

Our Mission

We partner with governments and development institutions globally to understand and meet their evidence needs, facilitate the use of existing evidence or generate new evidence and support efforts to institutionalize evidence-informed decision-making. We address barriers to evidence use by investing in, managing and maintaining a variety of innovative global public goods aimed at improving the use of and access to rigorous evidence.



Our evolution

When 3ie was founded in 2008, there was little rigorous evidence of what worked in international development programming. As of 2024, we are one of a growing cadre of organizations that are producing thousands of development effectiveness studies. There is also an increasing use of synthesis approaches—from systematic reviews to rapid evidence assessments—to inform policy questions.

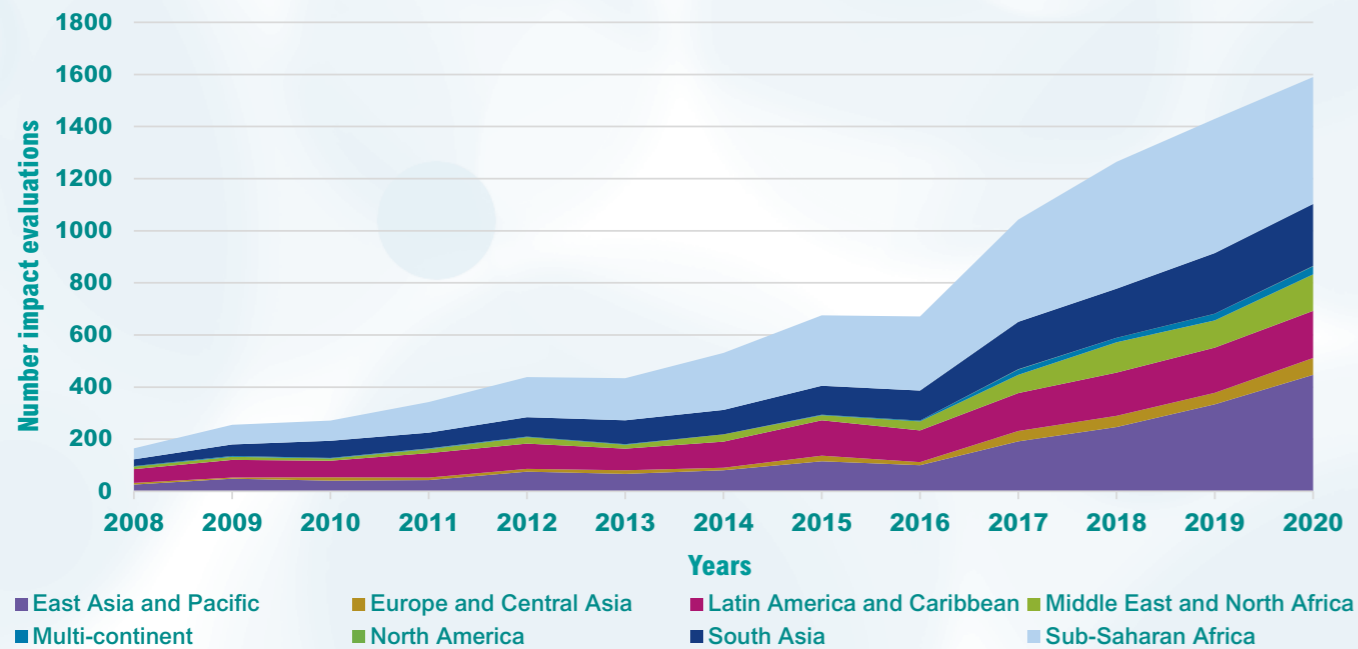
The practice of designing and implementing impact evaluations and systematic reviews has also evolved during this period. Studies today are far more likely to produce relevant, informative results for decision-makers than those from years past. In part, this is because of our leadership on methodologies that include a focus on theories of change, process evaluations, and costing analyses, and because organizations like us advocated for transparent practices like sharing of data.

However, the field is still far from where it needs to be. When it comes to impact evaluations, we are currently working on ensuring gender and equity issues are addressed in new evaluations, and that research is conducted according to the principles of transparency, reproducibility, and ethical evidence (TREE).

When it comes to the use of evidence, while it has increased it is not at the level one would expect given the abundance of evidence in existence and the methods that are available. Policy and research questions need to be addressed with the appropriate methods to respond to them, and decision-makers need to become better at identifying crucial decision-points that should be informed by data and evidence and build in the institutional incentives to do so.

To adapt to this changing evidence landscape and fill the most critical needs to encourage evidence-informed decision-making, 3ie has now become a trusted partner for international development evidence production and use. Our tailor-made approaches fill evidence needs along the entire program cycle, and our professional program management capacity allows us to work with the broadest possible range of organizations. We also advise partners on how to reshape their institutional structures to nurture critical thinking and evidence-use. Moving beyond impact evaluations and systematic reviews, we meet policy-makers where they are and bring them evidence they can use.

The number of new impact evaluations published each year



Source: developmentevidence.3ieimpact.org

Pathways to impact

- 1 Facilitating, advocating, and demonstrating the **use of evidence** by decision-makers
- 2 Increasing the **evidence base and improving** access to existing evidence
- 3 Prioritizing **capacity sharing/collaboration** on evidence production and facilitating its use
- 4 Producing **tools, guidance, and innovations**, shared as public goods



Strategic Objectives

Strategic objective 1

Improve the use of evidence by international organizations, development institutions, and low- and middle-income country governments.

- Convene partners to understand and address barriers to institutionalizing evidence use.
- Facilitate evidence translation and brokerage to improve access to evidence.
- Continue local and global advocacy to promote the use of evidence by international organizations, development institutions, and low- and middle-income country governments.
- Deliver services to develop or share capacity to strengthen the culture of evidence use.

Examples of relevant work include:

- Government counterparts in Côte d'Ivoire and Benin, in addition to officials at the West African Development Bank, are collaborating with 3ie to bring evidence into program design as part of the West Africa Capacity Building and Impact Evaluation (WACIE) program.
- We continue to work with the Government of India in a long-term learning partnership focused on its Natural Rural Livelihood Mission, one of its large-scale poverty reduction programs, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- In October 2023, we launched the Global Evidence Commitment alongside the Inter-American Development Bank, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), UK's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Germany's KfW Development Bank. These initial signatories, who are responsible for deploying very large resource flows aimed at improving human welfare, have committed to seek to advance the use of rigorous evidence to enhance the development- and cost-effectiveness of their programs.
- Our *Living Evidence Gap Map on Food Systems and Nutrition*, produced with support from BMZ through GIZ's "Knowledge for Nutrition" program, provides an up-to-date view of the evidence landscape for policymakers in that rapidly-evolving field.
- Our new Research Commissioning Centre will provide demand-driven research for policymakers at the UK's FCDO and beyond.

Strategic objective 2

Lead and support evidence generation to help fill gaps in critical areas.

- Deliver high-quality, customized evaluation and synthesis services for a variety of decision-makers to inform their actions.
- Engage with policymakers to deliver high-quality context-relevant and demanded evidence services aligned with regional and global needs.
- Help fill current and evolving evidence gaps in critical areas such as peacebuilding, gender and livelihoods, food systems and nutrition, climate change, governance and democracy, health, among others.
- Build and strengthen partnerships locally, regionally and globally to strengthen capacity to produce evidence and understand evidence-to-policy linkages.

Examples of relevant work include:

- Working in challenging contexts in a field with little rigorous evidence, we are conducting novel impact evaluations of peacebuilding interventions in Sudan and Guatemala through our PeaceFIELD initiative. This collaboration with the United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund and the International Security and Development Center is supported by the German Federal Foreign Office and Global Affairs Canada.
- Bringing together insights from 289 unique impact evaluations on interventions to improve farmers' access to markets, our new systematic review shows which approaches are effective in improving agricultural yields and farmers' incomes, among other outcomes. This synthesis of evidence from 53 low- and middle-income countries.
- Our new impact evaluation on support for Venezuelan migrants in Colombia shows what types of approaches can be effective to improve the lives of the increasing number of people who have been forced to flee their homes.
- Our Swashakt program is working with nine projects across India to identify what works to enhance viability, scalability and returns of women's collective enterprises and promote women's economic empowerment, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation.

Strategic objective 3

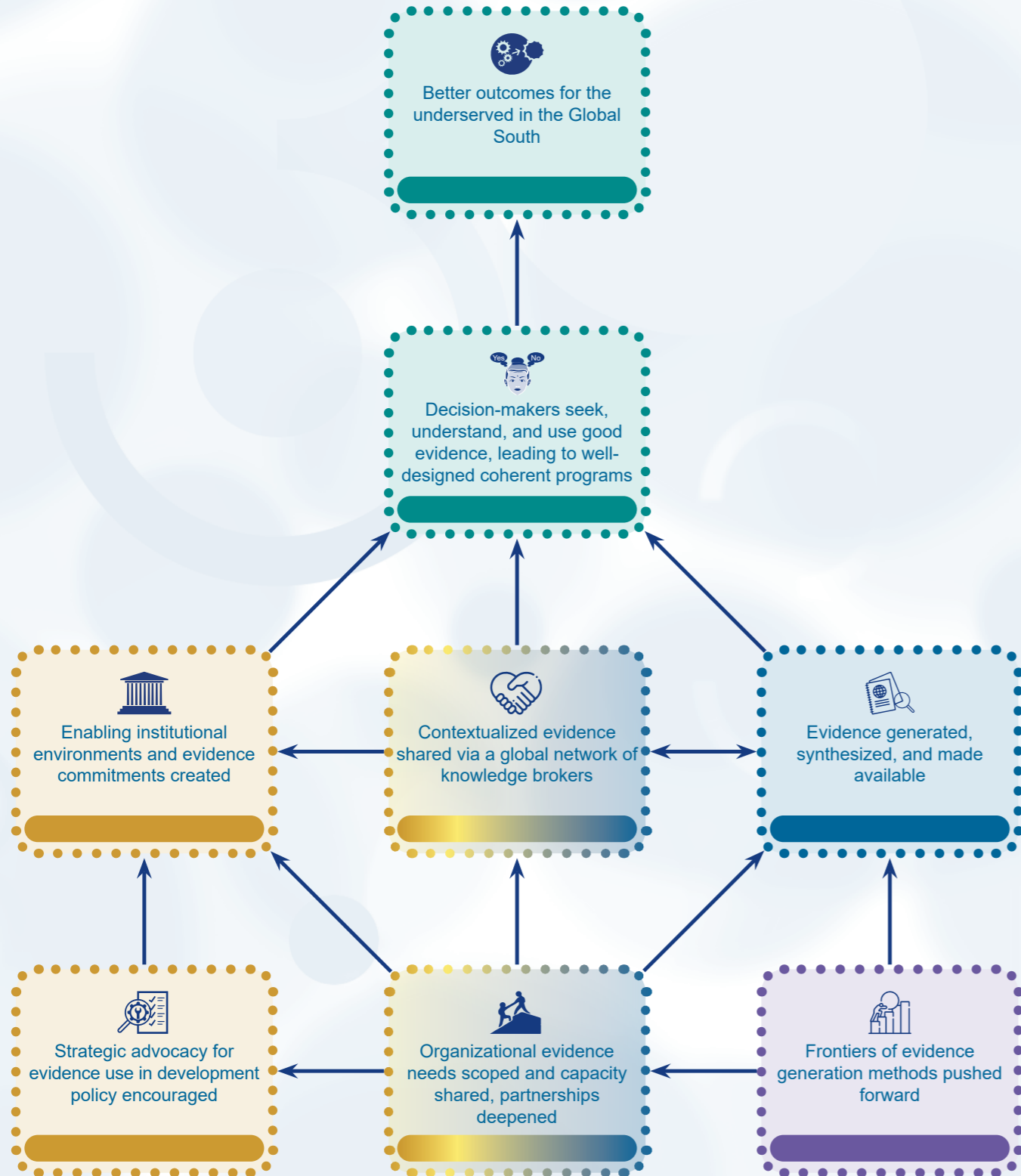
Push the frontiers of evidence for sustainable and equitable progress.

- Support state-of-the-art, high-quality methodological approaches that ensure rigorous, relevant and rapid technical work, including using big data, artificial intelligence, and cost evidence.
- Encourage collaborators to follow best practices in transparency, reproducibility, and open data.
- Continue to invest in improving access to and use of evidence from the Development Evidence Portal through a system of continuous evidence surveillance as the foundation of an integrated and living evidence architecture for international development
- Explore new approaches to improve evidence-to-policy linkages.

Examples of relevant work include:

- Our new review framework for Transparent, Reproducible, and Ethical Evidence (TREE) provides evaluation teams a practical tool to ensure the rigor and credibility of their evaluations while also adhering to the principles of ethical research.
- We continue to innovate and identify new ways to make evidence accessible through the Development Evidence Portal, including using artificial intelligence approaches to develop an integrated and living evidence architecture for international development
- We are collaborating with the Center for Effective Global Action to develop new tools to better incorporate cost analyses into impact evaluations.

Theory of Change



● Strategic Objective 1 ● Strategic Objective 2 ● Strategic Objective 3 ● Outcomes

Note : This graphic presents a streamlined version of 3ie's complete theory of change.



How we work

3ie has, since our inception, always emphasized the importance of **partnership with organizations and evaluators based in the Global South**, and we are widely recognized for this approach. We will continue to grow our network of collaborators, and we intend to participate in more capacity-sharing with local organizations and governments. With our **evidence synthesis** expertise, help desk experience, and the Development Evidence Portal at our disposal, 3ie will collaborate with evidence centers around the world to promote evidence-informed responses to relevant policy questions.

Many of our **impact evaluation programs** include re-granting to local organizations, and we have a track record of effectively managing such programs on topics like latrine use in rural India, women's empowerment, and agricultural insurance. The model we have found to work best is a hybrid model in which we fund local organizations and work with them in parallel, ensuring quality and consistency in approaches.

We will pursue policy-focused evidence programs in **critical sectors** as noted in our second Strategic Objective. There are key challenges in our time, and it is urgent that we help address these with the best possible evidence and all the best methods and data we can muster. Our work draws on our extensive experience of managing large thematic programs that combine our unique capabilities in evidence synthesis and impact evaluation in a targeted and strategic way and our field-leading understanding of what good evaluation/research and inclusive processes look like.

We are expanding our work in **evidence for policy and learning** by creating a new unit within 3ie to focus specifically on working with funders and Global South policymakers on facilitating the use of evidence in programming and policy decisions. To provide the right combination of services, we surround our core strengths in impact evaluation and evidence synthesis with the other capabilities necessary to enable institutions to use evidence more effectively. We are able to meet organizations where they are in their evidence journey.

3ie is an **innovator**. Our mission demands that we continue to improve the state-of-the-art in evidence generation, synthesis and effective evidence use. As part of a collaborative effort across the evaluation community, we recognize and amplify the great work of others that are improving the field. We are a part of many working groups that are focused on moving important innovations into practice (e.g., the Costing Community of Practice). 3ie identifies and fills gaps when it comes to evidence for international development. We see the potential for breakthroughs in areas of data science, big data, machine learning, cost analysis, heterogeneous effects and inequities, unintended effects, evidence on pathways to evidence use.



Our path forward

Our independence and depth of expertise will enable 3ie to continue to work on projects at the frontiers of development practice, improving the creation and use of evidence.

- We will continue to refine our approach to delivering customized evidence services.
- We will implement projects that are consistent with our mission and vision.
- We will continue to advocate for institutionalizing evidence use in local, regional and global contexts.
- We will empower Global South stakeholders through inclusive and effective partnerships to ensure our work is locally led and relevant.
- We will invest in strengthening relationships with low- and middle-income country governments to nurture demand and buy-in for evidence-informed decision-making.
- We will expand our capacities to improve evidence-to-policy linkages.
- We will enhance our geographic expertise to improve our understanding of the contexts we are working with.

Tracking our progress

We track whether we are achieving our aims based on metrics which are aligned with our mission and vision. Most importantly, we track our impact, particularly the uptake and use of evidence and the influence of our initiatives. Furthermore, we track performance metrics to ensure that we are on pace in terms of conducting activities to generate evidence, share capacity, encourage evidence use, and push forward the frontiers of evaluation methodologies. Finally, our financial indicators at the project level, unit level, and organization level ensure that we maintain 3ie's financial health for the long term and that we deliver excellent value for money for our partners.

Values

We are committed to ensuring that 3ie maintains a respectful and ethical culture that enables us to be effective in helping our donors and partner institutions to learn and grow. Our values are central to who we are as an organization.

Respect



- We respect human rights and treat everyone with dignity and fairness.
- We follow and advocate ethical and safe research practices that take context into account.
- We respect our stakeholders' time and value clear and responsive communication.

Innovation



- We are a learning organization.
- We strive to be creative, adaptive, flexible and solutions-based in addressing complex development problems.
- We balance time-tested approaches with innovation.

Quality



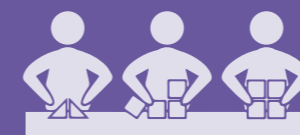
- We promote the use of relevant and rigorous research methods.
- We believe in and promote high standards, be it in research, in fostering quality open data, or in engagement and communication.
- We strive to strengthen the capacity of L&MICs partners to achieve excellence.

Inclusion



- We see strength in diversity and value the knowledge that comes from people's diverse experiences.
- We believe in and promote gender equity and have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination.
- We believe research is a public good that should be accessible to as many people as possible.

Co-creation



- We believe the best solutions come from co-creation. We seek and strengthen partnerships to address complex development problems.
- We advocate for transparent and stakeholder-responsive practice in the evidence community.
- We promote context-relevant and engagement-driven research.