



Integrating Aquaculture-Agriculture to Combat Food Insecurity in Malawi Project

Terms of Reference | Data Collection Firm Baseline Survey

1. Background

1.1 Description of the project

The Integrating Aquaculture-Agriculture to Combat Food Insecurity in Malawi Project is aimed at increasing the productivity, income, and access to markets of small-scale food producers, especially women, engaged in integrated aquaculture-agriculture system (IAAS) comprising fish, crops, livestock, and agroforestry sub-systems to combat food insecurity. The project has a two-pronged focus: (i) the development of small-scale and low-cost aquaculture-agriculture production systems that are economically sound and environment friendly and can be easily replicated by small-scale producers, especially women, and (ii) strengthening the role of small-scale producers and micro-small- and medium-sized enterprises, especially women-led, in the value chain. The expected ultimate outcomes include: (i) improved food security through increased production of fish, crops, and livestock; (ii) improved income, nutrition, and employment status of poor small-scale producers, especially women and disadvantaged groups such as the youth, people with disabilities, and landless; and (iii) enhanced restoration, protection, and natural regeneration of forests. The project's impact evaluation, led by 3ie, includes a baseline survey focusing on outcomes (i) and (ii).

The project will target approximately 3500 small-scale producers, especially women, and will be conducted in eight districts spread across Malawi's three regions. These are (i) Mwanza and Thyolo districts in the southern region; (ii) Dowa, Ntchisi, and Nkhotakota districts in the central region; and (iii) Chitipa, Rumphu, and Mzimba districts in the northern region. The final list of districts will be confirmed in due course.

1.1.1 Main activities of the project

Activity 1: Promote integrated fish, livestock, and bio-fortified crops: integrated pond-based polyculture of tilapia and small indigenous fish with livestock (chickens and goats); climate-smart post-harvest fish processing; and growing of orange sweet potato nutrient-dense food.

Activity 2: Promote reforestation and planting of native bamboo species in riparian zones and wetlands: enhanced ecosystem services benefit from the relationship between planting trees, water table protection, fish farming, soil fertility, etc.

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Activity 3: Increase participation of women in off-farm value chain activities: strengthening and developing cooperatives/farmer organizations, SMEs, particularly women-led.

Activity 4: Increase access to climate-smart farming inputs (resilient fish seeds; strengthened fish hatchery operations; fish feeds, etc.) and markets (fresh and processed) by smallholder farmers, especially women.

Activity 5: Increase equitable provision of inclusive agricultural extension and advisory services (aquaculture, crops, livestock, and forestry): strengthen capacity of informal, public, and private stakeholders in climate-smart integrated farming systems and their value chains to scale up innovative practices.

1.1.2 Action areas

1. Co-operative and value chain development: Strengthen the organization of smallholder farmers through market linkages between farmers and private sector actors (co-ops and SMEs) in the aquaculture value chain.
2. Climate resilient aquaculture and agriculture production: Increase farmers' knowledge of managing climate risks to support resilient aquaculture production.
3. Agriculture market diversity: Increase agricultural market diversity and resilience to climate shocks.
4. Women's rights and gender equality: Promote women's participation in decision-making both at the household and community level.
5. Sexual and reproductive health and rights: Improve SRHR for women, men, boys, and girls through social behavior change communication.
6. Forestry and biodiversity re-saturation: Improve the forest cover through community woodlots.

1.1.3 Objectives

The objective of this consultancy is the implementation of a baseline survey to evaluate the impact of the IAAS program and a gender transformation intervention. The survey will be conducted on a sample of producer households in intervention districts across Malawi. The preliminarily identified districts include: (i) Mwanza and Thyolo districts in the southern region; (ii) Dowa, Ntchisi, and Nkhotakota districts in the central region; and (iii) Chitipa, Rumphi, and Mzimba districts in the northern region. This list of study districts is subject to confirmation by the 3ie Impact Evaluation Technical Team (TT) during or at the time of contracting. The outcomes of interest include food security, income, nutrition and employment status of poor small-scale producers, especially women and marginalized groups such as the youth, and people with disabilities. Outcomes will also include metrics related to gender transformation.

The baseline survey is a key input to the project's impact evaluation and will be tailored to meet the technical requirements of the impact evaluation design. The impact evaluation is experimental with random assignment at the Extension Planning Area Section (EPAS) and village levels to the following intervention and comparison groups:

- Treatment A will receive the full bundle of integrated aquaculture-agriculture interventions (IAAS)
- Treatment B will receive the gender transformation intervention in addition to the IAAS activities.
- The control group will not receive project interventions for the duration of the experiment.

The following table summarizes the treatment and comparison groups and the approximate number of units in each one:

| Group | Treatment sample | Comparison sample |
|---|--|--|
| Treatment A - full bundle of IAAS interventions | 1000 fish farm households 100 villages or group villages 80 EPAS | 1000 fish farm households 100 villages or group villages 80 EPAS |
| Treatment B – full bundle of IAAS plus gender transformation intervention | 1250 fish farm households 125 villages or group villages The same 80 EPAS as above | Same as above |

1.1.4 Activities and specifications of the service

The firm in charge of the consultancy (henceforth, “the firm”) will be responsible for the following principal activities:

- a. Adaptation, including translation and back translation of questionnaires, manuals and data entry programs.
- b. Development of protocols for secure data collection, and transmission and implementation of research ethics protocols.
- c. Securing all local and national authorizations required for implementation of the baseline survey prior to fielding the survey.
- d. Training of all staff working on the survey.
- e. Surveying sample households in each village.
- f. Collecting GPS coordinates of fish ponds and non-fish ponds.
- g. Surveying community leaders.
- h. Surveying small and medium enterprises.
- i. Data management and quality assurance.

The following chart summarizes the select requirements and deadlines:

| Item/Set) | Description | Unit of observation | Quantity | Place where the service occurs | Timeframe of the service |
|------------------|---|----------------------------|---|--|--|
| 1 | Adaptation of measurement questionnaires, manuals & data entry programs | Households | Household survey, community leader survey and small enterprises survey | Rural areas of Malawi | 1.5 month from the signing of the contract |
| 2 | Household surveys | Households | 3250 completed household surveys in approximately 325 primary sampling units/villages | Rural areas of eight districts across Malawi, namely: Mwanza, Thyolo, Dowa, Ntchisi, Nkhotakota, Mzimba, Chitipa, and Rumphu (final districts to be confirmed) | 5 months from the signing of the contract |
| 4 | Surveys of community leaders | Community leader | 325 community leaders / neighborhood representatives (1 per village/ community) | Same as above | 5 months from the signing of the contract |

| Item/Set) | Description | Unit of observation | Quantity | Place where the service occurs | Timeframe of the service |
|-----------|--|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|
| 5 | Survey of small and medium enterprises | SME | 160 SME surveys (one per EPAs) | SMEs serving EPA Sections in evaluation sample | 5 months from the signing of the contract |

Organization and schedule of fieldwork

The field staff of the survey firm will be organized in autonomous teams, each headed by a supervisor and composed of a maximum of four members. The following table shows the predicted work schedule for the brigade in each village:

| Day | Activity |
|---------------------------|--|
| Phase 1. Traveling | |
| 0 | Trip from the preceding village. Contact and authorization arrangements with the community leaders (supervisor). |
| Phase 2. Surveys | |
| 1-2 | Survey of households, community leader and SME representative |
| 1-2 | Submission of the data to the server, and trip to the next village. |

The survey needs to be completed in a maximum of three months.

Data collection and transmission technology

In order to standardize data collection in all of the samples and monitor field operations, the field teams will collect the information using the technology platforms indicated, such as hand-held electronic devices for data capture and real-time data transfer using digital servers for data storage, popularly called computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). 3ie already has survey instruments programmed into SurveyCTO and would require the use of SurveyCTO for data collection. 3ie will provide the CAPI to the survey firm for data collection.

Ethical and secure data collection, entry and transmission procedures and safeguards

Any personal identification information during household surveying should be securely kept with the field team, which must inform the evaluation team and take appropriate remedial actions in case of any loss of sensitive data.

Data ownership

3ie would retain the right to the full data, with complete access to all names, addresses, georeferencing codes and survey data for individuals, households and institutions gathered through this exercise. The agency must be available to respond to queries after submission of the datasets.

a. Adaptation of questionnaires, manuals and data entry program

3ie will provide the firm with the programmed household survey questionnaires, listing of sample units, and survey manuals.

The questionnaires will be developed and provided in English and Chichewa. For their final validation, the questionnaires will be translated into English by an independent consultant hired by the firm and approved by 3ie. The TT will approve the final versions of the questionnaires. The firm will also be responsible for modifying the SurveyCTO questionnaire form in accordance with the TT's specifications.

The firm will pilot-test Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) (CAPI) or Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)(-based surveys with at least 20 households in non-sample areas to ensure the contextual and unbiased appropriateness of the questions and the technical functionality of the electronic platform and devices. After the pilot, the firm will work closely with the TT to adapt, revise, and finalize the CAPI/CATI survey instruments and tool and for printing of the documents, as required. All costs will be borne by the survey firm.

b. Develop protocols for ethical data collection, entry and transmission

The firm will develop comprehensive protocols to ensure ethical data collection and robust protection and privacy of respondents at every stage. The field team must securely maintain all personal identification information, and TT must be promptly informed in case of any loss of sensitive data. These protocols will specify who will have access to the data and outline the methods for secure data handling.

c. Train all staff working on the survey

Conduct extensive training prior to the survey, including training on ethics and gender sensitivity in the field. All staff working on the project must attend the training, including team lead, field managers, data managers, supervisors, enumerators, and back checkers, independent of their previous experience in household surveys. The TT will provide a model training calendar – consisting of plenary sessions, group work sessions, and field practice – and models of the materials to support the training (PowerPoint presentation, exercises, etc.). The firm must adapt these models to the final versions of the questionnaires, copy them, and provide the physical infrastructure and necessary instructors, considering a maximum of 20 people per class for the group work sessions. The training will be 15-days long with at least three days of practice surveys in the field. The firm will also conduct refresher training during data collection to ensure data quality.

d. Household survey

Objectives and content of the questionnaire

The objective of the household survey is to collect information about productivity, income, nutrition, food security and gender empowerment for a fish farm household. It is expected to take approximately 120 minutes on average per household. It is anticipated that completing the questionnaires will require at least 1-2 visits to each household. The agency must conduct repeat visits to complete the survey in case the informant is unavailable. A specific protocol will be agreed upon with the TT to define technical aspects such as waiting days if the informant is not present, revisits, replacements, and others. The household survey will be applied to the primary fish farmer in the household and in case the primary fish farmer is not a woman, relevant sections pertaining to the gender transformation modules of the survey will be applied to an adult woman in the household. If the household has multiple adult women, the CAPI will randomly select the woman to be interviewed. Female enumerators will administer modules to female respondents.

Different modules in the questionnaire will be designed for male and female household members, with consideration for adapting questions based on the respondent's age where needed. The modules will need to be administered separately by male and female enumerators. Accordingly, the data collection partner should have enough male and female enumerators available and should have experience managing household surveys requiring male-female enumerator pairs.

The household survey will include, but not be restricted to:

- demographic characteristics of all members of the household (e.g., age, sex, marital status, education, earnings from both salaried or wage employment of individual household members)
- household ownership of or access to (i.e., on lease) fish ponds, aquaculture inputs, pond production, harvest and sale, and household income from aquaculture
- household production and income from agriculture and livestock
- household consumption expenditure
- participation of individual household members in aquaculture-related decision-making and fish-rearing and fish-selling activities
- aquaculture-related knowledge of the respondent or any member of the household
- health and nutrition status of household members
- household food security
- shock experience
- empowerment (e.g., decision-making power, self-efficacy, and so on) of female household members using the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)-type and other tools

Georeferencing

Georeferencing must be done for each household surveyed and their corresponding fish ponds. Georeferencing of a random sample of other non-fish ponds must also be done to improve the performance of machine learning analysis. Approximately 1000 non-fish ponds will be georeferenced based on a sampling protocol to be agreed with the TT. The firm will be responsible for having the necessary GPS instruments according to the specifications agreed upon with the TT.

e. Survey of small and medium enterprises

Establish the methodological aspects essential to the survey of SMEs with the same categorization and level of detail defined for the household survey in the previous section: objectives and content of the questionnaire; coverage, size, and design of the sample, and georeferencing, etc. If the field staff is different from the staff responsible for the household surveys, explicitly establish that; if it is the same, adapt the schedule of activities of the field brigades accordingly.

f. Survey of community leaders

Establish the methodological aspects essential to the survey of community leaders, with the same categorization and level of detail defined for the household survey, with emphasis on the content of the questionnaire and the size and design of the sample. The field staff will usually be the same as the household survey, and the field brigades' schedule of activities must explicitly take this into account.

g. Data entry and management and quality assurance during data collection

The firm's monitoring activities during data collection should include, but not be restricted to:

- Ensuring the fieldwork locations are in accordance with the field plan approved by TT
- Conducting random field checks in a timely manner to ensure proper administration of survey and data collection

- Ensuring the supervisors sit through a full survey with enumerators in the initial few weeks
- Conduct spot checks (visual observation) of at least one interview with each enumerator on any given day. The spot-check sample should constitute at least 15% of the survey sample. Spot checks data should preferably be collected through SurveyCTO for real-time monitoring
- Ensure back-end data scrutiny of all uploaded questionnaires to confirm that all information recorded is clear and consistent and, where necessary, clarify with respondents any inconsistencies in their answers with those of the enumerator
- Deploy a separate team of back-checkers in the field to confirm the veracity and quality of data collected
- Conduct high-frequency checks and report them to TT. The details on data checks, as well as reconciliation undertaken, must be vetted by the TT. The TT will conduct its independent checks in parallel
- Develop systems to match back-check data with the main sample data and act for error reconciliation and provide regular feedback
- Ensure regular feedback sessions with the field team
- Report field errors observed and troubleshoot any data system errors that may occur during data collection

The data collection agency's responsibilities related to preparation of final data, transfer and quality assurance include:

- Providing access to internet or other platforms through which data can be transferred from hand-held devices to the server
- Providing copies of the datasets and data entry error reports/logs that show the frequency of discrepancies noted and actions taken to rectify to the TT
- Scrutinizing all errors and inconsistencies detected during data entry and consistency programs by revisiting households if major errors are detected
- Correcting and revisiting households should the TT notice errors and inconsistencies in data entry
- Providing the raw and final copies of the datasets, along with a complete codebook, after properly labeling all variables to the TT within two weeks of completion of fieldwork
- Maintaining logbooks and documentation of fieldwork which would be submitted at the completion of the survey
- Providing the final dataset in STATA, CSV and/or ASCII formats

Note: The agency must be available to respond to queries after the submission of the datasets. 3ie will be supported by a team of specialized data quality assurance experts who will conduct independent data quality assurance and coordinate closely with the firm to implement adjustments and course-corrections to the survey, as needed.

1.2 Impact evaluation technical team

The impact evaluation's technical team (TT) comprises 3ie research staff and consultants.

1.3 Inputs provided by the technical team

The TT will provide the firm with the following inputs for the survey:

- List of primary sampling units
- Reference questionnaires
- Data entry programs
- Training materials for the field teams
- Enumerator and supervisor manuals

The firm will be responsible for providing all the inputs and materials not listed in this section but are required to perform the service.

1.3.1 Selection and Training of Staff

Positions and qualifications

For the overall management of the survey, the firm will nominate a central team that includes a Project Manager, a Head of Field Operations, and a Head of Data Management. During the entire term defined below in section 4, 'Activities and Schedule,' the members of the central team will be exclusively dedicated to the survey and will not be able to participate in other projects or professional activities within or outside of the firm.

For data collection, the firm will mobilize the necessary field teams to complete the work within the established timeframes. Each team will be directed by a supervisor and composed of a maximum of four enumerators and should be headed by one supervisor. Each household interview will be conducted by two enumerators, one male and one female.

The responsibilities and minimum qualifications of the staff are the following:

- **Project Manager:** Responsible for developing the project within the established timeframes and maintaining permanent communications with the TT, the technical assistants designated by the TT, the relevant local government officials, the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada (CDF Canada) representatives, and other relevant stakeholders.

Profile: Professional with at least a post-graduate degree in economics/rural management/business management/finance/engineering with a minimum of 10 years of experience in managing large-scale socio-economic household surveys.

- **Head of Field Operations:** Responsible for the adaptation, pilot and back-translation of the questionnaires, other measurement instruments; selection and training of the field teams using the field manual provided by TT; developing the survey plan according to the guidelines given by the TT; defining the quality control procedures that will be applied by the team supervisors, and assuring the logistics and control of the field operations.

Profile: Professional with at least a post-graduate degree in economics/statistics/econometrics/rural management or other social sciences with a minimum experience of eight years in working with large household-level surveys in Malawi with the government and/or multilateral agencies and in the adaptation and piloting of questionnaires and the direction of surveys in the field. Experience working with other surveys where data is entered concurrently with the interview/data collection process preferred.

- **Head of Data Management:** The Head of Data Management is responsible for adaptation and debugging of the data entry programs based on the models and guidelines of the TT; selecting and training the enumerators, according to what is designated above in the section 'Data Collection and Transmission Technology'; the logistics and control of data entry in the field; and the consolidation and delivery of databases to the TT as the information is received from the field.

Profile: Professional with at least a post-graduate degree in computer applications or computer science or B.Tech in computer science or related fields with experience in developing applications using existing sophisticated data entry software (such as Survey CTO, CSPro, ODK) and managing large database construction and quality control with a minimum of five years' experience. Programming experience using SurveyCTO is desirable.

- **Field Supervisors:** The field supervisors are responsible for the collection and quality control of the data. In addition to supervision activities, field supervisors will participate in the pilot test. The field supervisors will travel with their teams and be responsible for day-to-day supervision and logistics, including contacting community leaders in selected villages and arranging appointments with respondent households. They must assign work to the enumerators, put the work plan and supervision procedures established by the Head of Field Operations into action in every village. Additionally, supervisors are expected to conduct spot-checks of the survey. Spot-checks will be done for 15% of the sample.

Profile: The preferred educational requirement for field supervisors is a university degree and a minimum of two years or more of experience supervising fieldwork for household surveys. Command over the languages prevalent in the operational area of the data collection work is essential. The ability to communicate in basic English would be preferred.

- **Enumerators:** The enumerators are responsible for filling out the questionnaires according to the usual best practices and the specific requirements of the survey.

Profile: The minimum educational requirement for enumerators is at least three years of education after school and a minimum experience of one or more years in household surveys. As some knowledge of separate dialects may be required in remote areas, it is advised that the agency recruit enumerators locally to survey areas. This is not a mandatory requirement and is left to the discretion of the agency. Command over the languages prevalent in the operational area of the team is essential.

- **Back-checkers:** Once data collection from a village is complete and CAPI questionnaires provided, the village will need to be revisited by one back-checker. The back-checker will be responsible for verifying the data submitted by ensuring that interviews were conducted according to protocol, the correct households were interviewed, field some modules of the questionnaires and match responses to check for fraudulent or erroneous data. A separate short questionnaire (approximately 20 questions) as well as the CAPI program for back-checks will be provided by the TT. Back-checks will be done for 15% of the sample. The sample for back-checks will be drawn randomly by the TT and provided to the survey firm. In addition to back-checking activities, they will participate in the pilot test and training.

Profile: Back-checkers should have experience conducting or managing household surveys. The minimum educational requirement for back-checkers is at least three years of education after school. The ability to communicate in basic English would be preferred. Command over the languages prevalent in the operational area of the team is essential.

The firm is required to recruit and train 25% more field supervisors, 30% more enumerators and 20% more back-checkers than needed to provide for replacement due to attrition. The list of members of the field teams (supervisors, enumerators, additional staff) will be submitted for consideration by the TT prior to their training and selection. 3ie reserves the right to review and approve the selection of the enumerators and supervisors after training. The CVs of the central team members (Project Manager, Head of Field Operations, and Head of Data Management) must be an integral part of the firm's technical proposal. If the members of the central team have worked together on successful past projects, that will be considered positively.

2. Characteristics of the consultancy

1. **Type of consultancy:** International consultancy (survey firm)
2. **Duration of the consultancy:** The duration of the project is five months. The firm must successfully implement data collection, taking the following activities into account
 - Preparation activities
 - Development activities
 - Documentation and data preparation activities
 - Schedule
3. **Work location:** Rural areas of Malawi where data collection will be performed as required.
4. **Qualifications:**

Applicants must meet these minimum requirements to be considered:

- Only legally registered organizations in Malawi, or consortia of such registered organizations, are eligible to apply. Applications from individuals will not be accepted. The survey partner should be based in Malawi and have relevant and extensive experience conducting large-scale household surveys in the Malawian context.
- The partner should have demonstrated experience and expertise in conducting CAPI using tablets, including managing all aspects of programming, data entry, ethical data storage and management, and data quality assurance.
- The partner will have demonstrated expertise in collecting data related to:
 - Household economic activities
 - Household consumption expenditure
 - Aquaculture (desirable)
 - Women's empowerment
 - Food consumption and dietary intake
 - Nutrition
- The partner will have demonstrated expertise in data quality assurance, including conducting high-frequency checks during data collection, identifying and cross-verification of data discrepancies and data cleaning.
- The partner must have sufficient expert staff, including skilled enumerators and supervisors, on board with full-time availability to work from the time of signing the contract with 3ie.
- For-profit organizations are eligible to apply, but the indirect cost recovery is limited to 10 percent of direct costs.

3. Key deliverables

- An inception report, containing the overall approach and methodology for carrying out the survey, a detailed plan of work, fieldwork plan, outputs and staff assignments with levels of effort by task and sub-task.
- Translated draft questionnaires in local language and independent back-translation in English by a separate independent translator hired by the survey firm.
- CAPI-based questionnaires, reports from pilot testing of questionnaires with comments and recommendations for changes, finalized CAPI-questionnaires in English and local language.
- Permissions and approvals (from local to higher authorities) for conducting the survey.
- All soft and hard copies of final questionnaires in English and local language.
- Adaptations to training manuals for field staff and supervisors in English and local language.
- Adaptations to protocols for ethical data collection, entry and transmission.
- A report about the training and list of field staff trained and preselected with background to demonstrate compliance with the selection criteria.
- Electronic versions of the survey data as it is being collected on a continuous basis.
- Complete datasets (including personally identifiable information) in STATA or ASCII format with a codebook and a clear report on how data were corrected/reconciled.
- A completion report of the survey, including the dates for field visits for each village, supervision checks, problems encountered and methods of resolution.

4. Proposal format

Proposals should include the following information:

- A description of the organization's experience and qualifications to carry out the proposed scope of work
- A work plan describing how the partner will complete the scope of work outlined above, a description of personnel roles and project management structure, duty of care policies and procedures in place, and risk identification and mitigation plans
- Indicative field plan with field team structure, team size (enumerators and supervisors) and expected productivity given the context to ensure timely completion of data collection
- Indicative data quality assurance plan charting out briefly how the survey firm will assure submission of high-quality data
- Financial proposal that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price for the project and a budget using the [3ie budget template](#)
- Estimated timeline for the completion of main activities, as well as a breakdown of the costs

The qualifications, methods and work plan should not exceed 15 pages, using 11pt Arial font, 1.15-line spacing and 1-inch margins.

5. Indicative budget

We expect proposed budgets up to a ceiling of USD 200,000 (including taxes). We will only consider proposals above this range if those include a substantive and compelling justification in the proposal. Please note that the number of completed surveys is approximately 3,250 households, 325 community leaders and 160 SMEs.

6. Selection

All proposals that qualify will be reviewed by a 3ie panel using a combined scoring method. The qualifications and methodology will be weighted at 70 percent, and combined with the price offer, which will be weighted at 30 percent. The technical part of the application will be assessed on the strength of the proposal that best fits 3ie's needs, as well as previous experiences of the provider in executing similar projects. 3ie may request a selected shortlist of firms to make presentations of their approach. 3ie may provide comments and request a resubmission if the proposal does not receive adequate scores. 3ie will also conduct due diligence for shortlisted applicants per the indicative assessment questionnaire linked under grantee resources on the 3ie funding webpage. 3ie reserves the right to not award the contract in case no applicant meets the requirements.

7. Submission

Please submit complete proposals to malawi_iaas@3ieimpact.org, with the subject line, 'Proposal for baseline data collection in Malawi.' The last date for submission of proposals is **15 August 2024 by 23:59 CAT**. Only complete submissions meeting the eligibility requirements will be considered. 3ie will only contact shortlisted survey firms. Requests for clarifications before final application may be directed to malawi_iaas@3ieimpact.org by 30 **July 2024**.