International Initiative for Impact evaluation

Request for Qualifications: Impact evaluations of transparency and accountability initiatives in governance of extractives

3ie Transparency and Accountability in Natural Resources Governance Thematic Window (Thematic Window 8, TW8.TAI)

Issue date: 23 September 2014
Deadline: 23:59 GMT, 22 October 2014

1. Introduction

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), requests research or evaluation organisations or consortia to submit qualifications for a proposal preparation grant to be considered under its Transparency and Accountability Thematic Window (TW8.TAI) grant programme. The prepared proposal will be for rigorous impact evaluations of completed, ongoing or planned initiatives that aim at improving the transparency and accountability of governance of natural resources, especially in the extractives sector for commodities such as oil, gas and minerals. 3ie’s overall Thematic Window grant programme is designed to support the generation of rigorous evidence on important topics in international development for which evidence is lacking.

The selected research teams are encouraged to use the proposal preparation process to identify questions and develop proposals for rigorous and policy-relevant impact evaluation of the transparency and accountability in governance of natural resources projects, programmes, initiatives and policies. This will be done along with the implementing agencies involved in the implementation of the programme or initiative being evaluated.

2. Overview of the Transparency and Accountability in Natural Resource Governance Thematic Window

3ie’s TW8.TAI is designed to develop and fund rigorous, mixed-methods impact evaluations commissioned by policymakers and programme managers to answer questions about the attributable impact of transparency and accountability initiatives in governance of natural resources that they implement. 3ie promotes theory-based impact evaluations that make use of rigorous counterfactual methods (experimental or quasi-experimental) to examine the full causal chain to answer questions about what works, why, how and at what cost.
The research will be funded by the Government of the United Kingdom through its Department for International Development (DFID), under the umbrella of a thematic grant-making window managed by 3ie. In total five to six impact evaluations will be funded through TW8.TAI.

The grants under this window will be awarded in two, contingent phases.

2.1 Phase one: qualifications and proposal preparation

The first phase begins with this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). 3ie requests research team(s) to engage collaboratively with the implementing agency to design one, two or three proposals for rigorous impact evaluation question(s) of the agency's development interventions.

The qualifications will be reviewed and scored by at least one internal 3ie reviewer, two external reviewers, one reviewer from DFID and one implementing agency representative.

The selected research team(s) receives a preparation grant (PG) up to a predetermined amount. Please see the 3ie PG agreement and grant administration templates for more details.

The PG covers costs associated with activities required to prepare a rigorous proposal, including costs of engaging with the implementing agency and 3ie. Costs include one or more field visit and one or more visits to meet with the relevant staff of the implementing agency and to conduct capacity-building workshops with them. These visits and capacity-building workshops help ensure dialogue between implementing agency staff and the research team, initiating and sustaining a regular process of engagement and communication on impact evaluation questions and designs. Through this process, the team ensures that the implementing agency understands impact evaluations so that they can participate effectively in identifying questions and developing the evaluation design.

At the end of this preparatory period, the PG grantee will submit the proposal(s), including proposed budget(s), in the 3ie evaluation proposal form. The proposed design(s) is (are) due within three months of signing the PG grant agreement. More details are provided below.

2.2. Phase two: full proposal and impact evaluation

The full impact evaluation technical proposal and budget will be reviewed and scored by at least two internal and at least three external reviewers, including a representative of the implementing agency and DFID. If more than one impact evaluation technical proposal is submitted, it is 3ie’s intent, although not
guarantee, to fund at least one proposed evaluation, conditional on the proposal receiving adequate scores on all selection criteria (see section 4.5 for the selection criteria). 3ie may provide comments and request a resubmission of a proposal that does not receive adequate scores. 3ie may also suggest additional research and expertise in the team if the proposal is selected for further financial support. 3ie reserves the right not to award any follow-on impact evaluation grant.

If a 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 proposal preparation grant for the 3ie grant agreement and grant administration agreement templates.

3. Background

A key challenge in the management of natural resources is the lack of institutional mechanisms that can enable government accountability for the management of extraction licenses and negotiated contracts, and the allocation of and use of revenues generated through natural resources\(^1\). The potential benefits of better governance of natural resources are likely to be huge. In 2010, in Africa, exports of natural resources alone were worth US$333 billion\(^2\). In Nigeria, the country’s anti-corruption agency estimates that up to US$400 billion worth of oil revenues have been stolen or wasted over the past 50 years. On the other hand, good management of natural resources in Botswana has arguably aided its rapid development\(^3\).

The past decade has witnessed many initiatives that aim to tackle development problems associated with having high-value natural resources, including government corruption, institutional erosion, civil conflicts and economic crowding-out effects. Many of these initiatives focus on improving transparency and, to a lesser extent, accountability in governance of natural resources. Transparency and accountability initiatives can be categorised by the level at which they operate (global, national and local), the actors they involve (e.g. governments, companies or civil society organisations), and the interventions they include (e.g. standard setting, naming and shaming, information provision, capacity building or awareness creation). Ultimately, the aims of these initiatives are empowerment of civil society actors, prevention of corruption and promotion of income redistribution of poverty alleviation efforts.

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2 http://www.one.org/us/policy/natural-resource-governance/
Under this thematic window, research teams will be given grants to develop impact evaluation designs on the interventions falling under the broad programmes described below. The research teams can also choose to evaluate other programmes, not provided in the list below, that are being implemented or are planned in the DFID priority countries (listed in Appendix A). Preference will be given to programmes in DFID priority countries; however, applicants may apply for conducting impact evaluations of TAI programmes in other developing countries as well. Programmes selected for evaluation by the research teams should focus on improving transparency and accountability of governance of resources in the extractives sector.

Natural Resource Governance Institute’s engagement: The Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) works with innovative agents of change within government ministries, civil society, the media, legislatures and international institutions to promote accountable and effective governance in the extractive industries. Country engagement starts with an analysis of the broad range of challenges countries face. Specific country targets are then approached through technical assistance, research, capacity building, and by convening dialogue between stakeholders. Common lines of work in target countries include support to capacity building initiatives at the national, regional and international level; work with Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) processes to achieve policy relevant, comprehensive and user-friendly EITI reporting; EITI data informing policy debates and reforms, improving the use of and quality of EITI data; and consensus building and prioritization planning through facilitating the use of the Natural Resource Charter benchmarking framework as a tool on which national self-assessment exercises can be based.

UKaid-supported pilot programmes on releasing the transformational potential of extractives for economic development: DFID is planning to fund the implementation of pilot programmes that focus specifically on building tools and capacities for the use of extractives data to improve accountability. In the past few years, there has been a huge increase in information about extractives in the public domain, in both developed and developing countries. Through the pilot programmes that will be implemented across five UK government-priority countries, DFID aims to demonstrate the potential of using technology to make extractives data more accessible, user-friendly and interactive. Additional information on this is available in Appendix B.

Other initiatives include those by World Resources Institute (http://www.wri.org/) and EITI (http://eiti.org/).
4.1 Eligibility

1. Only legally registered organisations, and consortia of registered organisations not individuals, may apply.
2. The lead organisation and principal investigators (PIs) may be located anywhere. However, it is necessary to include PIs that are residents of the country in which the programme or initiative is being implemented.
3. Ideally, a research or academic organisation based in the country of the programme or initiative being evaluated and one that will have clear, on-going and substantive implementing roles in the study, including for design, analysis, policy engagement and research communication for uptake into policy and practice need to be part of the team.
4. The research team is required to have at least one PI that is directly involved with the implementing agency of the study country.

4.2 Preparation process and expectations

3ie expects the chosen study team to hold at least two capacity-building workshops to build capacities of the implementing agencies to generate wider discussion about and understanding of impact evaluation amongst the staff of the implementing agency during the preparation grant period. The selected study team is expected to engage with the implementing agency to explain the rationale for conducting an impact evaluation, what will be learned from it and the implications for programme design, data collection, analysis and use of results.

During the preparatory phase, the research teams are also asked to secure the cooperation and agreement of the in-country implementing agency programme staff for the chosen evaluation questions and study designs. 3ie anticipates that the workshops for implementing agency staff and other key stakeholders will ensure an on-going process of involvement, communication and consensus-building on the impact evaluation questions and designs between the implementing agency staff and the research team.

Workshop presentations and discussions with the implementing agency staff should have the following components:

- Identify programmes to be evaluated;
- Determine evaluation questions and timeframes for evaluation;
- Discuss a feasible evaluation design including identification methods;
- Discuss data collection methods; and
- Carry out scoping and other background information needed to develop a policy engagement and research communication plan, using 3ie guidance and templates.
Research teams are also expected to take stock of relevant administrative and pre-existing data that may strengthen the evaluation and do formative, preparatory, and engagement work and field visits with the implementing agency.

In addition to the two capacity-building workshops mentioned above, at least one member of the study team (preferably the lead PI) will also be expected to attend a grantee inception workshop, organised by 3ie, that will bring together representatives from implementing agencies, DFID representatives and other research teams selected for Phase 1. This two day workshop will be held 21-22 January, 2015 in London and the budget for economy-class travel for one member from the research team should be included in the budget. Additionally the economy-class travel of one relevant staff member of the implementing agency will also need to be covered by the selected research team from the preparation grant awarded to the team by 3ie.

The purpose of this workshop is to ensure coordination between programme implementers and the evaluation study team. The aim of these inception workshops will be to discuss the evaluation questions, to articulate and have a common understanding of the programme’s theory of change and to discuss the most appropriate methods for impact evaluations to be used depending on specific programme components and geographic locations. The inception workshop will also familiarise programme staff and impact evaluation researchers about 3ie’s processes and standards to be followed during the study. During the workshop, programme staff and study team members will also finalise their full implementation plans and discuss timelines and implications of the evaluation design for the implementation plans.

Study teams must demonstrate their ability to conduct the study for which they win an award and their availability to start and finish the study within the timeframe indicated in this RFQ. During the preparation stage, grantees are responsible for developing their research proposals. 3ie will also plan one or two phone calls or Skype meetings to ensure that the preparatory work is progressing well and that there is sufficient understanding and awareness of the proposed evaluation within the evaluation team and the implementing agency.

4.3 Budget

3ie aims to fund six to eight proposal preparation grants. The preparatory grant size for preparing the proposal will vary according to the number of proposals a team submits.
A preparation grant of up to amounts mentioned above will be made to the qualifying research team. The grant will cover costs associated with the necessary activities for producing impact evaluation research questions. Eligible activities include a short and relevant literature review, formative field research, researcher time and travel to meet with implementing partners, engagement workshops (inception and capacity building), preliminary checking of relevant administrative data and site visits, and travel and stay for the grantee inception workshop and time to develop and formulate a sound, high-quality impact evaluation proposal.

The preparation grant will be paid in two tranches. The first tranche will be 60 per cent of approved budget, paid on contract signing. The second tranche will be 40 per cent of approved budget, which will be paid after review and approval of the impact evaluation proposal.

### 4.4 Timeline

The following table includes an indicative list of deliverables and deadlines for the preparatory phase (phase 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity or deliverable</th>
<th>Key dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for submitting queries related to the RFQ</td>
<td>30 September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for posting responses to queries on the 3ie website</td>
<td>3 October</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for submission of applications to RFQ</td>
<td>22 October</td>
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<td>Selection decision announced</td>
<td>10 November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial due diligence undertaken and preparatory grant agreements signed</td>
<td>30 November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of preparatory grant deliverables including full proposal</td>
<td>30 March 2015</td>
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### 4.5 Selection criteria

The qualifications submitted in response to the RFQ will be reviewed and scored according to the following criteria:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Preparation grant: Phase one</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weight (%)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credentials of the principal investigators (including past experience with undertaking, planning, analysing and writing impact evaluation studies)</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involvement of researchers and research organisations from developing countries in the team and proposed work</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational capabilities to undertake impact evaluation in the transparency and accountability in natural resources governance sector</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sector experience of the study team and experience of working with researchers in focus country</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate membership of 3ie</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Full impact evaluation application: Phase two**

| **Qualification of research team** | 30 |
| Involvement of developing country researchers | |
| Quality of technical proposal and internal validity | 35 |
| Demonstrated relevance of research question to the need of the implementing agency and potential for uptake of study findings | 25 |
| Cost | 10 |

### 4.6 Qualification review process

Qualifications will be reviewed and scored by one 3ie internal reviewer and at least three external reviewers. It is 3ie’s intent, although not guarantee, to award the proposal preparation grant, conditional on the applicant receiving adequate scores on all criteria. 3ie may provide comments and request applicants to make changes to strengthen their capacities. 3ie reserves the right to not award any grant in case no applicant meets the requirements.

### 5. Instructions for applicants

RFQ applications must include all of the following information:

1. Covering letter
2. Please indicate in your covering letter the country and the implementing agency you would be working with or would like to work with on the impact evaluation. Please include previous experience and relevant impact evaluations that highlight this.
3. Completed organisation information form, located on the 3ie website.
4. Curriculum vitae (CV), not to exceed three pages each, of all proposed 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. Applicants are required to provide only information relevant to the grant in their CV.

5. If applicable, include CVs (not to exceed three pages each) of additional researchers who will be involved in conducting the impact evaluation, if approved. Applicants need to provide only information relevant to the grant in their CV.

6. Copies of up to three impact evaluation reports or publications relevant for this call, with proposed PIs as named authors.

7. Proposed budget, not to exceed US$30,000, for the proposal preparation costs. The proposed budget must follow 3ie’s direct cost and indirect cost policies, including the cost of two engagement workshops.

6. Submission guidelines

1. Please submit all files in a single email message not to exceed 10MB to tw8@3ieimpact.org no later than 23:59 GMT, 22 October 2014.
2. Components three and four, above, should be submitted in a single Microsoft Word or .rtf file in font size equal to or larger than 11 point.
3. The signed letters from the PIs and sample impact evaluation studies relevant to the grant may be submitted as separate pdf files.
4. The budget should be presented in 3ie budget format and follow 3ie budget guidelines. Budget notes may be submitted as a separate Microsoft® Word or .rtf file in font size equal to or larger than 11.

Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Please direct any questions related to this RFQ to TW8@3ieimpact.org by 23:59 GMT, 30 September 2014. By 3 October 2014, a single document with all questions and answers will be made publicly available here.

This RFQ does not constitute a guarantee of an award.
Appendix A

List of UK government priority countries

1. Afghanistan
2. Burma
3. Ghana
4. Nigeria
5. Sierra Leone
6. Liberia
7. Democratic Republic of Congo
8. Mozambique
9. Kenya
10. Uganda
11. Zambia
Appendix B

Releasing the transformational potential of extractives for economic development (supported by DFID)

Introduction

There has been a huge increase in information about extractives in the public domain in developed and developing countries. More data is expected as the EITI standard and company reporting requirements are extended to other countries. But how to use this information to best effect to improve growth and governance and tackle poverty remains unclear for many stakeholders. Studies have concluded that much of the focus has been on the supply of data with insufficient support to enable citizens, companies or governments at national and local levels to use this information to ask questions about how extractives are managed or how to design policy. Some parts of the private sector has begun to argue against further transparency in this sector given the huge flow of data. Demonstrating the usefulness of this data in driving accountability and policy change is important to mitigate this risk, and support responsible investors use data as a tool for improved sector governance.

Emerging lessons from other programmes, suggest that more attention needs to be given to ensuring government buy-in and participation as well as working on the demand side, and exploring opportunities in more fragile contexts and higher capacity countries. Equally, more effort is required in building capacity of local civil society as well as international NGOs, working sub-nationally, with investors, and supporting non-tech as well as technological solutions. There is also a need to ensure that the information is accessible to different citizens, including, for example, marginalised groups, women and girls, and that they have the opportunity to participate in increasing accountability to deliver policy change which benefits them. This data component will work to make information accessible to potential users and ensure that it drives accountability.

DFID is well-placed to support further work in this area based on experience of partnering with technology experts, the World Bank, EITI and Revenue Watch Institute in 2013 for the #followthedata project. This partnership developed prototype online applications through hackathons in Nigeria and the UK to demonstrate the potential of using technology to make extractives data more accessible, user friendly and interactive, and showcased these at the Global EITI conference in May 2013 and the Open Government Partnership Summit in October 2013. The Governance, Open Societies and Anti-Corruption Department also supports Making All Voices Count: a Grand Challenge for Development, a partnership between DFID, which provides grants to support innovative solutions and uses technology that amplify the voices of citizens and enable governments to respond effectively, and which does not have a specific extractives focus.
Possible format of work DFID is considering to support

Much of the work in this area to date focuses primarily on the supply-side and works through international organisations. DFID will therefore work with government as well as local civil society and the private sector, at country level and sub-nationally, using non-technology as well as technology approaches and explore intensive brokering and mentoring for users. DFID will maximise impact by regular exchange of information and lesson learning, and partnering directly with others in designing and delivering online applications and country data pilots.

DFID is considering three focus areas over a five-year period:

1) Provide seed funding to develop and pilot technology-based solutions, such as computer and mobile phone applications, which make complex extractives data accessible and relevant to users.

2) Pilot work with data users in 5 countries to make information about extractives usable by means of technological and non-technological approaches. The pilots will build capacity of different data users in civil society, governments and working with investors. The pilot managers will work with communities, parliamentarians, media, civil society organisations to interpret this data and hold governments to account for how extractives are managed. They will also work with governments to analyse data and respond to citizens when designing and implementing policy for managing extractives. The pilots will incorporate work with investors to improve citizens’ understanding of extractives data by setting in industry context. Pilots will operate at sub-national as well as national levels and seek to cover fragile as well as higher-capacity contexts.

3) Promote and enable lesson learning between extractives and other sectors (for example aid transparency, trade, construction) and experts involved in open data to maximise impact of data work for development. As part of the wider data revolution, DFID will partner with data and sector experts, including extractives companies, technology experts and foundations to document lessons learnt, influence international policy on open extractives data and respond to opportunities for innovation. This work will be supported through a steering group.