International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

3ie Systematic Reviews Call 7
Request for Proposals

Issue date: 30 September 2014
Deadline: 12 November 2014, 23:59 GMT, 0700 EST (GMT-5), 17:30 IST (GMT+5½)

1. Background

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) seeks to improve the lives of poor people in low- and middle-income countries by providing and synthesising evidence on what programmes work, in terms of which outcomes, for which populations of people, at what cost and under what conditions.

Systematic reviews are an important way of facilitating the widespread use of existing evidence to inform policy and practice. 3ie is announcing a call for proposals for systematic reviews to increase the international community’s use of evidence in policymaking. This is the seventh call for proposals under 3ie’s systematic reviews programme.

2. Systematic Reviews Call 7 questions

3ie, together with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) Canada, UN Women, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Foreign of Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), have developed six systematic review questions, which are provided below. Please see Appendix 2 for further supporting details about each question. Proposals to undertake systematic reviews on these questions are now requested from research teams that have experience and expertise in research synthesis. This is an opportunity to work on highly policy-relevant research that will directly inform the policies of these funding agencies.

There will be one award for each of these questions, but 3ie and its partners may choose to fund fewer reviews if insufficient proposals of adequate quality are received.
**Question 1** (DFATD Canada and UN Women)

What is the effectiveness of interventions to increase women’s participation in higher skilled, higher valued occupations in low- and middle-income countries?

**Question 2** (USAID OFDA)

What is the efficiency and effectiveness of providing humanitarian non-food item in-kind distributions in the immediate aftermath and recovery period following natural disasters and political instability?

**Question 3** (USAID OFDA)

What is the effectiveness of short-term hygiene interventions (such as hand hygiene, water treatment and waste disposal) conducted in emergency response situations?

**Question 4** (IEG)

What is the effectiveness of interventions aiming to improve the welfare of poor populations living in urban areas in low- and middle-income countries?

**Question 5** (3ie)

What are the effects of social employment programmes in low- and middle-income countries on economic and social outcomes for beneficiaries, their communities and the wider economy?

**Question 6** (3ie)

What is the effectiveness of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in promoting a) economic outcomes, livelihoods and empowerment of needy groups, and b) good governance?

3. **3ie’s approach to systematic reviews**

Systematic reviews use transparent decision-making processes to find, appraise and synthesise evidence in ways that can help policymakers, and other decision makers, make better decisions (Lavis 2009).

3ie supports systematic reviews that follow well-established procedures for searching, critically appraising and extracting data from published and unpublished literature, which is then rigorously analysed and synthesised to establish any consistent findings and any more variable and contextually specific messages. Identifying the likely effect size of a policy and or practice intervention, based on the evidence included in the review, is a key element of a 3ie systematic review. 3ie-funded reviews have these requirements:
• a clear theory or theories of change that specifies how, why and under what conditions a policy or intervention is supposed to work in order to achieved the desired outcomes. This requires analysis of the evidence from included studies along the causal chain;

• a policy influence plan (PIP), which is a detailed plan for engaging in ongoing two-way communication and, where appropriate, collaboration with key users when conducting the systematic review in order to ensure maximum uptake into policy and programming; and

• the presentation of the findings of a review in a user-friendly style, using language that does not require a technical background in research or evaluation.

3ie takes a broad perspective on the types of questions and evidence on which a systematic review can be based. Evidence of effectiveness requires mixed methodological approaches, including factual quantitative and qualitative studies, and counterfactual experimental, quasi-experimental and simulation studies, in controlled and real life settings. 3ie funds the following types of reviews (see also Table 1):

• reviews of effects of interventions from studies that have counterfactual evidence, and that examine intermediate as well as final outcomes. For an example review, see Baird et al. (2013);

• portfolio reviews examining intervention design and implementation fidelity. For an example review, see Phillips et al. (2014a);

• reviews examining barriers to and enablers of targeting, uptake, compliance and implementation, and drawing on a broad range of evidence. For examples, see Munro et al. (2007), Phillips et al. (2014b) and Snilstveit et al. (2014);

• reviews that rigorously analyse the full theory or theories of change underlying the implementation and outcomes of a policy or intervention, by using appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods. This may involve specifying more than one Populations, Interventions, Comparators, Outcomes and Study designs (PICOS) and search strategy, which should be presented and budgeted separately. For examples, see Harden et al. (2009) and Waddington et al. (2014).

3ie systematic reviews are generally restricted to interventions in low- and middle-income countries, though they may sometimes draw on evidence from high-income countries. A list of 3ie systematic reviews that have been completed, and others that are currently in progress, is available here. A more complete listing of systematic reviews in international development is available in 3ie’s systematic reviews database.
Table 1 Evidence eligible for systematic review research questions

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<th>Review sub-question</th>
<th>Type of evidence</th>
<th>Theory of change component</th>
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<tr>
<td>How are interventions designed and implemented?</td>
<td>Project and programme documents and completion reports</td>
<td>Intervention design</td>
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<td>Implementation fidelity</td>
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<td>What are implementation experiences and challenges?</td>
<td>Factual (qualitative and/or quantitative) evidence</td>
<td>Beneficiary targeting</td>
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<td>Knowledge and attitudes</td>
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<td>Uptake and adherence</td>
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<td>Implementation</td>
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<td>What difference is made to outcomes?</td>
<td>Counterfactual evidence from experimental and quasi-experimental impact evaluations and simulation studies</td>
<td>Impacts on intermediate outcomes</td>
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<td>Impacts on endpoint or final outcomes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Unintended impacts and adverse effects</td>
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<td>Societal or economy-wide impacts</td>
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<td>At what cost?</td>
<td>Cost-benefit evidence</td>
<td>Cost-benefit, effectiveness, utility evidence</td>
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3ie partners with the Campbell Collaboration in the production and quality assurance of systematic reviews. Similar collaborations exist between 3ie and the Cochrane Collaboration, the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre, and the Collaboration for Environmental Evidence. All 3ie-funded review teams should aim to register their reviews with one of these collaborating groups. 3ie’s staff can advise successful teams on the most appropriate group with which any particular review should be registered. However, 3ie staff cannot give advice on individual proposals during the application stage or be named as part of teams submitting proposals.

3.1 Induction workshop

All successful research teams will be required to attend a two-day induction workshop on undertaking systematic reviews for 3ie. This should be attended by two members of the proposed team, one of whom should be the principal investigator. Please see section 5.2 below for budget information.

3.2 Guidance on systematic reviews

There are a number of sources of guidance on how to produce a systematic review.

3.2.1 Reviews of intervention effects

- The standards required by the Campbell Collaboration and by 3ie, in terms of establishing the effectiveness and likely effect size of interventions, can be found here.¹
- General guidance on effectiveness reviews can be found in the Cochrane Collaboration Handbook

¹ Guidance on the steps required in registering a review with Campbell Collaboration is available here
• A 3ie paper, How to do a good systematic review of effects in international development: a tool kit published in the *Journal of Development Effectiveness*
• A 3ie paper on incorporating broader evidence into reviews of effects published in the *Journal of Development Effectiveness*

### 3.2.2 Qualitative reviews
• The Cochrane Collaboration provides qualitative evidence guidance on systematic reviews.
• A paper on Narrative Approaches to Systematic Review and Synthesis of Evidence for International Development Policy and Practice, published in the *Journal of Development Effectiveness*.

### 3.2.3 Useful impact evaluation resources:
• 3ie’s guidance on what constitutes impact evaluation can be found [here](#).
• A 3ie working paper, Theory-based impact evaluation: principles and practice (White 2009).

### 3.3 Team composition

The study team composition must meet these criteria:
• people with sector and substantive expertise in the topic to be reviewed;
• people with training and experience in conducting systematic reviews (including systematic searching, quality appraisal, data extraction and data analysis);
• an information specialist or experienced librarian to undertake and supervise searching;
• statistical expertise for quantitative analysis and statistical meta-analysis; and
• expertise in qualitative synthesis methods and theory of change analysis.

It is important that a systematic review team staff have *substantial dedicated time*. Proposals with insufficient dedicated staff time will not be successful. This requirement includes sufficient staff to ensure systematic searching of the existing literature, the independent double reading of full text articles, data extraction and quality appraisal of included studies, with third party referral in case of disagreement. Teams are required to consult search librarians or information specialists as part of the process of developing a protocol, and should budget appropriate resources for this step.

### 3.4 Advisory group and policy engagement

Successful teams are required to form an advisory group, preliminary details of which should be included in the application. The advisory group will be able to assist grantees with developing effective policy engagement activities. Detailed guidance on the composition and contribution of advisory groups will be sent to successful applicants, but applicants should provide preliminary proposals for their advisory group and policy engagement activities in their proposals. Applicants should add 10 per cent of their total budget for policy engagement and advisory group activities, and should budget additional resources accordingly in their proposals.
4. Outputs

The study outputs comprise these elements:

- title registration for the study, subject to approval by 3ie and submitted to the Campbell Collaboration or another recognised systematic review group;
- study protocol, subject to approval by 3ie and submitted to the Campbell Collaboration or another recognised systematic review group;
- the complete final review report that has been submitted to the Campbell Collaboration or another recognised systematic review group, which meets that group’s technical requirements;
- a summary report presented according to 3ie summary report guidelines (see below), subject to approval by 3ie and a completed 3ie policy brief template;
- a summary for the 3ie systematic reviews database, according to 3ie summary guidelines; and
- a list of all included impact studies with a summary in a format suitable to be included in 3ie’s impact evaluation database (please budget for this output in the proposal).

4.1 Policy-relevant outputs

3ie’s mandate is to fund high-quality and policy-relevant systematic reviews. To this end, the findings of 3ie-funded systematic reviews need to be accessible, in language and presentation, to non-specialist policymakers, policymakers and international development professionals. To help review teams produce these summaries successfully, 3ie has developed guidance on how to write and present them.

5. Application process

5.2 Questions

The list of questions on which we are requesting review proposals is available in Appendix 2.

5.2. Deadline for applications

Grant applications are only accepted through 3ie’s online grant application system until 12 November 2014, 12 p.m. (noon) Universal Time (GMT), 7.00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST; GMT-5), 5.30 p.m. India Standard Time (IST; GMT+5 ½). Grant applications are not accepted using email, regular post, fax or after these dates and times.

5.3 Budget

As an approximate guide, the average budget of studies financed under the last call for proposals was US$82,500. We expect costs to vary depending on a range of factors, including the scope of the review and the methods of synthesis employed. Unless otherwise stated in Appendix 2, reviews are expected to take approximately 12-18 months from granting the award to submission of the draft report. Applicants must give
serious attention to this timeline when preparing their timetables, milestones and deliverables.

In addition to including a budget for advisory groups and policy engagement (see section 3.4 above) applicants are required to budget for two people (including the principal investigator) to visit London for a two-day induction workshop in undertaking systematic reviews for 3ie. This budget should include travel to and from London on economy class transport, and no more than two nights’ accommodation in London at a maximum of £100 per night per person.

3ie encourages proposals and research teams from low- or middle-income countries (defined as L&MIC nationals resident in any L&MIC), and proposals including such researchers in the study team. 3ie strongly encourages applicants to bring in partners from other organisations to complete their teams.

The review criteria are in Appendix 1. Proposals will be reviewed by an expert panel consisting of one internal 3ie specialist and one external specialist in systematic reviews and subject areas, and representatives from the funding agencies.

Any queries regarding this call should be sent to sr7@3ieimpact.org. Answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) are available on this page.

Successful proposal teams will be notified in January 2015.
References


Waddington, H. and White, H., 2014. *Farmer field schools: from agricultural extension to adult education*. *Systematic Review Summary 1*, 3ie, New Delhi. Available at:

## Appendix 1

### Criteria for review of proposals to conduct systematic reviews

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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| Staffing (20%) | The skills and experience of the proposed team in the relevant research and policy areas and in conducting systematic reviews | Points are awarded according to these criteria:  
1. the PI(s) should have the right mix of experience and skills in systematic reviewing and in leading a project of this nature;  
2. team members must have relevant experience in research, evaluation and systematic reviews, substantive knowledge in the area to be reviewed, and relevant skills in quantitative and/or qualitative analysis; and  
3. PI(s) have appropriate skills and experience in working with policymakers and international development practitioners, and in presenting research evidence in non-technical language to people with little or no research background. |

| Quality of technical proposal (40%) | The proposal is for a high-quality systematic review, which will use appropriate evidence to answer the research question(s) posed, and appropriate methods of search, critical appraisal, data collection and synthesis of evidence along the causal chain. | Points are awarded according to these criteria:  
1. evidence of a clear and deep understanding of the principles and procedures of systematic reviewing that meet high-quality standards;  
2. use of appropriate methods and procedures to answer the research question(s). Counterfactual evidence should be used to answer questions on effects. For applicants wishing to provide a more comprehensive synthesis, broader evidence (including qualitative) can be used to answer questions on programme implementation and adherence;  
3. inclusion of a programme theory or theories of change that analyse evidence along the causal chain and explain heterogeneity in findings not just their central tendency; and  
4. location of the review question in international development policy and practice. |
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<th>Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project Management and Budget (10%)</td>
<td>The proposed accountability arrangements for the review, the value-for-money of the budget and the feasibility of the proposed timelines</td>
<td>Points are awarded according to these criteria: (1) clarity and appropriateness of the accountability arrangements; (2) the appropriateness and value-for-money of the budget; and (3) the feasibility of the proposed timelines for delivery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involvement of L&amp;MIC researchers or evaluators (15%)</td>
<td>The extent and nature in which L&amp;MIC evaluators or researchers are involved in the proposed study. L&amp;MIC researchers are defined as L&amp;MIC nationals resident in a L&amp;MIC country.</td>
<td>Points are awarded according to these criteria: (1) the substantial involvement of L&amp;MIC researchers or evaluators in the study team; (2) evidence that the proposed review will help to build capacity for undertaking high-quality systematic reviews and the use of research evidence in L&amp;MICs.</td>
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<td>Policy Influence (15%)</td>
<td>A detailed plan for engaging, communicating and collaborating, where appropriate, with key users of evidence when conducting the systematic review.</td>
<td>Points are awarded according to these criteria: (1) policy relevance of the question(s); (2) advisory group composition and engagement; and (3) the potential policy impact from the team’s plans for engaging with policy stakeholders, communicating and disseminating the findings of the review, and getting findings into policy and/or practice.</td>
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Appendix 2
Systematic Review call 7: questions and background

Question 1

Sponsored by DFATD Canada and UN Women

What is the effectiveness of interventions to increase women's participation in higher skilled, higher valued occupations in low- and middle-income countries?

Secondary questions:

- What are the barriers to, and facilitators of, the effectiveness of these interventions in increasing women’s participation on the labour market?

- What are the structural barriers (e.g. unemployment rate, economic growth, stagnation, migration, lack of appropriate financial and infrastructural facilities, cultural norms etc.) to women’s participation in the labour market?

Policy background

While there are many studies illustrating how women are key contributors to economic growth, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, there continues to be a significant economic gap between women and men in most parts of the world. The proportion of women in the formal workforce has increased steadily over the past decades, but there remain significant differences in workforce participation rates and women are concentrated in low-productivity, low-paying employment and businesses. Women receive less income for their labour than men, and are more likely to be found in irregular, informal, and vulnerable forms of employment. This economic gender gap is a result of various, often deep-rooted constraints that women face in taking advantage of market opportunities. Women have difficulty in obtaining the same specialised knowledge and skills as men, accessing equivalent business and financial services, input and technologies; and linking up with profitable markets. Women also face institutional constraints such as biased legal environments that limit women's ability to own or control assets and productive resources, or to engage in paid work and lack of gender-responsive work place policies. More broadly, women’s lack of decision-making power limits their ability to make or act upon choices about their own livelihoods or to influence community decisions that affect their livelihoods.

Underlying these constraints are discriminatory social and cultural attitudes and their manifestations that can significantly affect women's engagement with the economy and in productive activities. Most prominent are attitudes that view women's primary role as being in the domestic sphere, resulting in women performing the large majority of care work. That limits the time and energy that women have to devote to paid work. Cultural norms can also severely restrict women's mobility in the public domain acting as a strong deterrent to women's autonomy and entry into productive labour outside the home. Women's circumstances, and the barriers they face, are often not adequately reflected or addressed in government policy and actions. Reducing the barriers that women face to participating in the workforce and increasing their productivity and earnings gives them a greater chance of succeeding. Differences in women’s use of time and access to and control over resources and markets limit women’s earning ability, as does their
segregation into lower-paying jobs. Addressing these imbalances through evidence-based interventions can encourage women to join the workforce and increase their income, status, and well-being through higher-skilled, higher valued occupations.

A systematic review of the evidence on which interventions are effective in leading women in L&MICs into higher-valued and higher-skilled sustainable labour will contribute to DFATD’s and UN Women’s ability to develop and implement evidence-based policies and programmes in these areas, and will also contribute to the knowledge base of other development agencies with whom the results of the review will be shared through various knowledge dissemination activities.

The review will also help policymakers address inequities faced by women by examining the barriers that impede, and facilitators that encourage, women’s participation in higher skilled and higher paid employment. This is particularly relevant given that there are several key forums taking place for determining global policy issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment in development including the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014 review, Beijing +20, the review of the MDGs, and the new Sustainable Development Goals. These forums will guide the post-2015 development agenda, which will also focus on achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (Goal 5), and promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all (Goal 8).

**Review methods**

The systematic review question is proposed as a two-stage review:

Stage 1: An initial scoping review that screens and maps the existing evidence on the three research questions outlined above (duration 2-3 months).

Stage 2: A systematic review whose scope will be informed by the findings of the scoping review and determined in consultation with the funder and 3ie (duration: 12-18 months).

**Theory of change**

In the systematic review (stage 2), the review team will be expected to develop theory/ies of change indicating how they see the causal chain between the types of interventions (inputs) and the key outcomes of interest outlined below, as well as the assumptions under which the interventions are likely to be effective. The review team must analyse the evidence along the causal chain that is developed.

**PICOS analysis**

Eligible studies should meet the following criteria.

*Populations*: Women of all ages living in low- and middle-income countries as defined by the World Bank list of economies. The review should include interventions exclusively targeting women as well as interventions providing training to both women and men, provided the studies evaluating the latter separately analyse relevant outcomes for women.

*Interventions*: The interventions of interest fall into the two main categories as outlined below. The lists of specific interventions are not exhaustive and should be agreed between the review team and the advisory group prior to starting the scoping exercise.
• Interventions providing training and education to women, including:
  o Technical and vocational education
  o Apprenticeship and industrial attachments
  o Support for professional associations learning seminars targeting women
  o Programmes specifically addressing unpaid household production and unpaid care activities; informal education programmes
  o Lifelong learning (skill enhancement in adult life and returning to school adults; and extension services in agriculture)
  o Leadership training for women.

• Interventions facilitating the transition from education / skills training to higher skilled, higher valued employment, including:
  o Employment services including career guidance, data on local job opportunities, preparation of resumes, and links to employers
  o Programmes linking employers and graduates
  o Employment guarantee policies with skill enhancement / skill accreditation components (e.g. South Africa’s Expanded Public Works Programme)
  o Active labour market interventions addressing unemployment
  o Mentoring programmes (such as those linking female students with women who are working in related sectors)
  o General and targeted public awareness campaigns (addressing stereotypes surrounding gender and labour and promoting employment options / choice for women)
  o Business support programmes
  o Access to credit and other financial channels for microenterprise creation / development
  o Positive discrimination and affirmative action.

Comparisons: Comparison conditions may include no access to relevant interventions, access to alternate interventions, or pipeline (waiting list).

Outcomes:
• The primary outcome of interest is women’s employment, with a focus on women’s participation and retention in highly-skilled / non-traditional occupations.
• Intermediate outcomes of interest include:
  o Women’s participation in / drop out from / completion of the programme of interest
  o Knowledge and skills acquired
  o Other relevant intervention specific intermediate outcomes along the causal chain.
• Additional outcomes of interest are women’s empowerment outcomes, including:
  o Control over economic resources within the household
  o Decision-making over sexual reproductive health (marriage, reproductive decisions)
  o Women’s freedom of mobility (physical and social).
Study designs:
For the scoping review (stage 1), the review should include all study designs outlined below (to be included in stage 2) as well as any existing systematic reviews relevant for the research questions set out above.

For the systematic review (stage 2) question on effectiveness (question 1) the review should include studies of effectiveness using counterfactual analysis. Relevant study designs include:

- Randomised controlled trials
- Quasi-experimental studies with a known allocation rule (e.g. regression discontinuity design and natural experiments)
- Quasi-experimental studies with a comparison group using some methods to control for confounding (such as difference-in-differences estimation, instrumental variables estimation, statistical matching etc.)
- Interrupted time series designs.

For the systematic review (stage 2) questions on the role of structural factors, the review should include both qualitative and quantitative evidence, including:

- Qualitative research studies (i.e. interviews with/surveys of women and employers, case studies, oral histories)
- Quantitative studies of association
- Documentary analysis of implementation

Question 2

Sponsored by USAID OFDA

What is the efficiency and effectiveness of providing humanitarian non-food item (NFI) in-kind distributions in the immediate aftermath and recovery period following natural disasters and political instability?

Policy background
The USAID Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) does a great deal of work in the aftermath of natural disasters and humanitarian upheaval following social and political instability. OFDA’s work often extends into the recovery phase as well as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) work that are very much linked to building resilience.

A range of goods and services are provided to populations in humanitarian settings, including cash, food and non-food items. For the purposes of humanitarian assistance and this review, ”non-food items (NFIs)” are defined as household goods that typically include, but are not restricted to, plastic sheeting, blankets and other bedding items, hygiene kits (e.g. soap, shampoo, and other personal care items), kitchen sets (e.g. pots and pans), and water containers/jerry cans. NFIs do not include agricultural inputs or other livelihood assets, specialised shelter or water and sanitation items, food or nutritional inputs and the like.

The study will systematically review the evidence base on the efficiency and effectiveness of in-kind direct distributions of NFIs in humanitarian settings. Particular attention should be given to evidence comparing NFIs with cash or vouchers specifically
intended to help affected populations access such goods in local markets. Factors including programme design and implementation, as well as evidence of effects on outcomes and cost-efficiency (including procurement, delivery, registration and administration), should also be studied.

**PICOS analysis**
Eligible studies should meet the following criteria.

*Population*: People living in humanitarian emergency settings.

*Intervention*: Humanitarian aid provided in the form of in-kind non-food items (see examples above) in the immediate aftermath and recovery period following natural disasters and political instability.

*Comparison*: Humanitarian aid provided in the form of cash grants or vouchers (or electronic versions of these, e.g. debit cards or mobile money transfers) specifically intended for populations to purchase non-food items.

*Outcomes*: Evidence of effects should cover intermediate and final outcomes in relevant areas (appropriateness of items delivered; beneficiary satisfaction and dignity; level of unmet NFI-related humanitarian need post-intervention; safety of beneficiaries), as well as any evidence on cost-efficiency. Data should also be collected on other aspects of programme effectiveness, including those relating to design and implementation.

*Study designs*: Eligible studies examining impacts on outcomes should use counterfactual empirical methods. Evidence on process and implementation can draw on qualitative and quantitative empirical studies.

**Question 3**

*Sponsored by* USAID OFDA

**What is the effectiveness of short-term hygiene interventions (such as hand-hygiene, water treatment, and waste disposal) conducted in emergency response situations?**

**Policy background**

The USAID’s OFDA does a great deal of work in the aftermath of natural disasters and humanitarian upheaval following social and political instability. OFDA’s work often extends into the recovery phase as well as DRR work that are very much linked to building resilience. Some of this work involves interventions to improve water, sanitation and hygiene.

While the effects of hygiene promotion in development contexts has been extensively studied, the extent of evidence on hygiene interventions in emergency response situations has not been systematically reviewed. The study should systematically review the evidence base on effectiveness of hygiene interventions in humanitarian settings, including programme design and implementation, as well as evidence of effects on outcomes and cost-effectiveness (including procurement, delivery, registration and administration).
PICOS analysis

Eligible studies should meet the following criteria.

**Populations**: Populations living in emergency situations. Long-term displaced populations living in refugee camps should be excluded.

**Interventions**: A wide range of programmes are being conducted globally to promote hygiene interventions in emergency settings, including hand hygiene and related hygienic practices (e.g. water treatment, waste disposal). The study should focus on short-term hygiene interventions conducted in emergency settings.

**Comparisons**: Questions examining impacts on outcomes may use a range of comparisons, including other forms of hygiene promotion, other WASH intervention or exposure, or no assistance provided. Length of intervention and/or number of contacts between promotion intervention and target audience to be included in comparisons.

**Outcomes**: Primary outcomes are health impacts, including child mortality, diarrhoea morbidity and respiratory infections. Impacts on intermediate outcomes such as hand washing behaviours should also be collected. Evidence on design, implementation processes and cost-effectiveness may also be synthesised.

**Study designs**: Eligible studies examining impacts on outcomes should use counterfactual empirical methods. Evidence on process and implementation can draw on qualitative and quantitative empirical studies.

**Question 4**

**Sponsored by**: World Bank IEG

**What is the effectiveness of interventions to improve the welfare of the poor population living in urban areas in low- and middle-income countries?**

**Policy background**

The World Health Organization predicted that by 2050 the urban population will have doubled since 2009 and reached 6.4 billion, with most of all urban population growth occurring in cities of developing countries. While many urban immigrants benefit from better lives, the poorest population and those with low skill levels are often left behind and find themselves struggling with the day-to-day challenges of city life.

Improving access to urban services including infrastructure, housing, employment and social services is essential for health, security, livelihoods, and quality of life of the urban poor; it is also an important step to lift the poor out of extreme poverty. The World Bank has a long history of working with local governments to improve the livelihood of the urban poor. Over the last 10 years the Bank’s investment (excluding IFC and MIGA) in the urban development area totalled US$36 billion (1000 projects), 10 per cent of the total World Bank’s portfolio. With the new World Bank Group strategy clearly focusing on eliminating extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity (inclusive growth), it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of development support to the urban poor.
The infrastructure cluster of IEG, Public Sector, will have ownership of this review as the results will feed into IEG's major evaluation planned in 2016. The newly established World Bank Global Practice of Urban, Rural and Social Development (the GP13) would also benefit from the review, as it will help the GP13 fine tune its interventions in the urban development sector.

**PICOS analysis**

Eligible studies should meet the following criteria.

*Populations:* Poor populations living in urban areas in low- and middle-income countries

*Interventions:* (i) Interventions that target the urban poor including housing, employment, infrastructure services, social protection etc. The study should exclude slum-upgrading interventions which have already been systematically reviewed (Turley et al., 2013). (ii) Institutional models (e.g. centralised model, municipality, ring fenced authority, community participation, outsourcing of services to the private sector, etc.). (iii) Programme-based interventions such as sector-based, policy-based, finance-based programmes, and any other interventions that are commonly applied in the context of delivering urban services to the poor.

*Comparator:* Comparison conditions may include no access to relevant interventions, access to alternate interventions, or pipeline (waiting list).

*Outcomes:* Improvement in welfare, income level, poverty level, social and gender equity, health, environmental impacts, and other relevant indicators.

*Study designs:* Eligible research designs include those in which the authors use a control or comparison group, and in which: (i) participants are randomly assigned (using a process of random allocation, such as a random number generation); (ii) a quasi-random method of assignment has been used and pre-treatment equivalence information is available regarding the nature of the group differences; (iii) participants are non-randomly assigned but matched on pre-tests and/or relevant demographic characteristics (using observables, or propensity scores) and/or according to a cut-off on an ordinal or continuous variable (regression discontinuity design); or (iv) participants are non-randomly assigned, but statistical methods have been used to control for differences between groups (e.g., using multiple regression analysis, including difference-in-difference, cross-sectional (single differences), or instrumental variables regression).

*Theory of Change:* Hypothetical theories of change for each intervention are as follows.

**Housing:** Housing provision or housing financing — poor families having easier access to more comfortable and clean housing — better health and more long-term assets — poor families are willing and able to spend more on education, health and nutrition — human capital in poor families is built — better employment opportunities are available — leading to increased income and welfare and reduced poverty.

**Employment:** Job training and assistance — human capital is built — better or more employment opportunities — leading to increased income and reduced poverty.
Urban infrastructure: Provision of basic urban infrastructure services (transport, water and sanitation, solid waste disposal and power) — more mobility, less congestion, better air quality and cleaner environment — reduced transport costs and better health — more disposal income and better employment opportunities — leading to increased income and welfare and reduced poverty.

Social protection: Social assistance (such as cash transfers, school feeding, targeted food assistance and subsidies) and social insurance (such as old-age, survivorship, disability pensions, and unemployment insurance) — better health and nutrition, more schooling, and greater skills — human capital in poor families is built — better employment opportunities — leading to increased income and welfare and reduced poverty.
**Question 5**

*Sponsored by 3ie*

**What are the effects of social employment programmes in low- and middle-income countries on economic and social outcomes for beneficiaries, their communities and the wider economy?**

**Policy background**
Public programmes providing unskilled social employment are frequently used by governments and donors to provide social security to disadvantaged groups. Social employment schemes, also called workfare, may provide cash or in-kind payment, may or may not provide guaranteed employment, and may or may not involve the private sector in implementation. They typically aim to provide employment to needy households during lean seasons and are as such an important component of countercyclical economic and social policy (Subbarao et al., 1997). The systematic review should investigate the effectiveness of these interventions across low- and middle-income countries.

**PICOS analysis**
Studies eligible for the review should be based on the following criteria.

*Populations*: Households based in L&MICs. Eligible populations include direct beneficiaries of the schemes and their dependents, and those indirectly affected in the community and the wider economy.

*Interventions*: Social safety net schemes which aim to provide unskilled employment to needy groups of working age. Schemes providing payment in cash or in-kind (e.g. food) and operated by public or private sector, are eligible. Employment schemes whose primary objective is not to provide social security to needy groups should be excluded.

*Comparisons*: Differential access to the social employment scheme, access to an alternate social safety net programme, or no access to any source of social security.

*Outcomes*: Outcomes may include, but are not limited to, economic and livelihoods (employment, wages, income, poverty, consumption smoothing) and empowerment outcomes for disadvantaged groups. Outcomes may be measured among beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and at the societal or economy-wide levels.

*Study designs*: Studies examining effects should be limited to impact evaluations using counterfactual approaches.
Question 6

Sponsored by 3ie

What is the effectiveness of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), India’s largest rural livelihood programme, in promoting a) economic outcomes, livelihoods and empowerment of needy groups, and b) good governance?

Review sub-questions: 3ie is seeking answers to the following questions:

- How have MGNREGS and relevant Indian rural employment guarantee schemes been designed and implemented?
- What are the barriers to and enablers of effective implementation, including up-take on demand side (employment) and/or supply side (project/assets creation)?
- What are the direct and indirect effects of the schemes on livelihoods and economic outcomes, empowerment and governance? How do these effects vary by context and for different groups?
- What is the evidence on cost-effectiveness of the schemes?

Policy background

India has a long history of implementation of employment programmes (e.g. Drèze and Khera 2011). The MGNREGS succeeds several national and state-level programmes such as the Employment Guarantee Scheme of Maharashtra from the 1970s, and the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana and Employment Assurance Scheme from the late 1980s.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was passed in 2005 to promote livelihood security across India. It aims to provide “at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work”. Between 2008 and 2012, an estimated 50 million households per year were provided employment under the scheme.

There is a large literature of empirical studies on MGNREGS including design, process and implementation studies, and counterfactual impact evaluations. NREGA’s status as a law, guaranteeing rural Indians the right to work, as the flagship welfare programme of the Congress government, and as the largest public workfare programme in the world has resulted in much attention both in the Indian media as well as in domestic and international academic and research communities. A Ministry of Rural Affairs meta-evaluation study provides evidence suggesting positive impacts on rural wages, gender and social empowerment, environment, migration and participation in democratic processes (Mann and Pande, 2012). The same report also cautions that “implementation remains patchy across States and Districts” and highlights challenges to implementation including uptake of the scheme among labourers, timely payment, leakages, and lack of information on the quality and functionality of physical assets created by the programme.
**PICOS analysis**

Studies eligible for the review should be based on the following criteria.

**Populations:** Eligible populations for impact evidence are programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Eligible populations for evidence on implementation include the above plus implementing bodies, programme staff and other stakeholders.

**Interventions:** These may include MGNREGS and Indian employment guarantee schemes.

**Comparator:** Eligible comparisons include populations receiving differential access to MGNREGS, access to other Indian employment guarantee schemes, access to other types of social insurance (e.g. pension schemes), or no access.

**Outcomes:**

- **Economic outcomes** should include, but are not limited to:
  - Direct effects on participant households: MGNREGS wage income, income from income-generating activities by the household, level of consumption and consumption smoothing (and indices of chronic and transitory poverty), vulnerability to shocks.
  - Indirect effects (including economy-wide effects): agriculture and productive sector growth and employment, rural wages and bargaining power of agricultural and unskilled workers, migration, price inflation.

- **Empowerment outcomes** should include, but are not limited to:
  - Empowerment of needy groups (including women): economic empowerment (e.g. NREGA wage income for beneficiaries and market wage income for non-beneficiaries), effects on child labour, human development outcomes (e.g. health and education), dignity and stigma, equality at community and societal levels.
  - Empowerment of women: Intra-household decision making, burden on time.

- **Evidence on governance** should include, but is not limited to:
  - Democratic participation in decision making and audit.
  - Decentralisation: Local government capacity in project design, implementation and monitoring.
  - Joined-up government: Convergence with other government programmes.
  - Reduced corruption: Leakage and misappropriation.
  - Creation and maintenance of public assets.

**Study designs:** For sub-component research questions, eligible studies should be determined as appropriate (see Table 1 in the Request for Proposals document).

**Theory of change**

Evidence should be examined using a theory of change, including processes, outputs, intermediate outcomes and final outcomes (impacts). The review should develop a theory of change which specifies how, why and under what conditions rural employment guarantee schemes are supposed to work in promoting outcomes. The review should
cover relevant published and unpublished literature exhaustively, using appropriate
evidence to answer the review question.

**Application information**

3ie is producing a MGNREGS Evidence Gap Map\(^1\) (hereafter, the map). The map is based
on systematic searches for published and unpublished empirical studies on MGNREGS. It
covers upwards of 250 empirical studies. The map includes studies examining
programme design and implementation processes, as well as studies providing
counterfactual evidence of impacts on economic, empowerment and governance
outcomes.

Successful SR 7 applicants will be able to draw on all data collected for the map
(including data codes). The studies identified in the map may form the basis of studies
eligible for the systematic review, although targeted searches of additional literature may
be required, including contacting key agencies, officials and researchers plus a hand
search of websites of library shelves and agency websites. The review is expected to be
take approximately 10 months from granting the award to submission of the draft report,
and 12 months for completion. The team should allow for 4 weeks’ peer review at
protocol and draft report stages (eight weeks in total). Serious attention must be given
to this timeline when preparing timetables, milestones and deliverables.

**3ie is proud to work with these funders for systematic reviews call 7:**

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\(^1\) Evidence gap maps are a relatively new approach to rigorous evidence synthesis (Snistveit et al.,
2013). An evidence map presents to decision makers a collection of evaluations on a particular
topic, usually a group of interventions, together with the main findings. It may also contain
summary information about how reliable that evidence is likely to be.