



## Terms of reference Team of consultants Impact evaluation of National Rural Livelihoods Project in India

### 1. Background

[The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation \(3ie\)](#) is an international grant-making NGO promoting evidence-informed development policies and programmes. We are the global leader in funding and producing high-quality evidence of what works, for whom, how, why and at what cost. We believe that better policy-relevant evidence will help make development more effective and improve people's lives. 3ie is registered as a non-governmental organisation in the United States of America. It has offices in New Delhi, London and Washington, DC.

3ie is partnering with the World Bank and the Indian Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), to commission an impact evaluation of the [National Rural Livelihoods Project \(NRLP\)](#), which operates under the ambit of the [National Rural Livelihoods Mission \(NRLM\)](#). NRLP's objective is to create a 'proof of concept', build capacities of the national, state and union territory governments, and create an enabling environment to facilitate transition of all state and union territory- administration of [Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana](#) to NRLM.

3ie is inviting applications from highly qualified organisations, consortia or team of individuals to conduct an impact evaluation of the NRLP. The aim is to generate high quality evidence on the socio-economic and human development impacts of interventions implemented under NRLP.

### 2. Introduction to the programme

India is committed to promoting inclusive growth, as demonstrated in various government policies and programmes aimed at reducing poverty in rural and urban areas. In line with this vision, the MoRD launched the NRLM in 2011. The key thrust of NRLM is rural poverty reduction through the creation and strengthening of institutional platforms for the rural poor. NRLM provides a combination of financial resources and technical assistance to states to help them adopt a comprehensive livelihoods-based approach. This approach includes mobilising rural poor into effective self-help groups (SHGs), SHG federations and other organisations. It also enhances their access to financial, technical and marketing services and builds their capacities and skills for gainful and sustainable livelihoods.

NRLP, for which this evaluation is proposed, is a component of NRLM that is supported partly

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by the World Bank. Findings from the evaluation of NRLP can potentially inform design and expansion of NRLM. NRLP is currently implemented in 13 states, Assam, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. These states together account for 85 percent of the rural poor in the country.

The MoRD has requested 3ie's assistance in conducting the evaluation. The goal of the evaluation is two-fold. First, to assess the impact of NRLP interventions on the socio-economic outcomes and investigate the causal links using a counterfactual. Second, to use findings from the evaluation to inform the design and expansion of the programme.

### **3. Status of the proposed evaluation**

The MoRD and the World Bank are committed to assessing the impact of NRLP. Directives were given to all states to identify treatment and control areas and conduct baseline surveys prior to or within a few months of programme roll-out. The state missions (or agencies commissioned by them) designed and collected baseline survey data.

Close to 100,000 households were surveyed for the baseline across 13 states. It is important to note that not all states conducted the baseline survey in the same year. Seven states, namely Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan completed the baseline before 2015 and initiated the programme in the treatment areas. These states would have had the programme ongoing for at least three years when the endline will be conducted in 2018.

Three years, it is anticipated, is the minimum time for SHGs to be operationalised and for impacts to be measurable. Additionally, given the time and resource constraints, it has been decided that the endline survey would be conducted only in these seven states and use a smaller sample of around 25,000 households. This presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges for designing an impact evaluation.

#### *Challenges:*

1. The sampling strategy followed by the states at the baseline is not comparable.
2. The questionnaires administered as part of the baseline were not identical. This means that identifying variables common across all surveys will be a challenge. While variables, such as assets, debt, savings, migration and expenditure, were measured by all states, these modules may not be comparable across states in terms of unit and period of reporting.
3. Preliminary assessment of the data quality suggests that further review and cleaning of baseline data is required.
4. Absence of process evaluation for most states means that no assessment of the quality of programme implementation is readily available.

#### *Opportunities:*

1. Availability of baseline data on basic household and SHG characteristics would allow using quasi-experimental techniques to rigorously assess the impact of NRLP on socio-economic outcomes.

2. Presence of counterfactuals in each of the seven states and the availability of an identification strategy will enable us to further refine the choice of treatment and control groups. This, notwithstanding that some states used randomisation while other used matching to identify treatment and control groups.
3. Possibility of constructing a household level panel using household level identifiers at baseline which will lend themselves well to control for time-invariant unobservable characteristics that may influence programme outcomes.

Please refer to [www.aajeevika.gov.in](http://www.aajeevika.gov.in) for more details on sampling strategy and data availability from the state-level baseline surveys.

#### **4. Scope of work and key responsibilities**

The objective of this consultancy is to conduct an impact evaluation of NRLP in partnership with 3ie. The main deliverable would be an impact evaluation report to the MoRD and the World Bank. The report would inform the following broad areas but not necessarily be limited to them:

1. Programme theory of change: The theory of change presents the hypothesised causal pathway linking the inputs and activities of the programme to its intended and unintended outputs and outcomes. It also explicitly states the assumptions that inform each link in the pathway. The team will draw on existing literature, qualitative field work, project documents and discussions with beneficiaries and implementers to develop a theory of change.
2. Programme impact on key socio-economic indicators and possible impact pathways: Key inputs, outputs and outcomes will be identified based on the theory of change. The main outcomes of interest that this evaluation will inform and which are of interest to policy makers are savings, interest rates on loans, household assets, consumption expenditure and household income. Using mixed-methods, the report will estimate the impacts and possible effect pathways of NRLP.
3. Subgroup analysis: The study will estimate the differential impact of NRLP among various populations and subpopulations by collecting disaggregated data (the minimum would be sex, ethnicity, caste, income, location) and conducting appropriate analyses, including gender analysis to identify differential impacts and gendered inequities of marginalisation.
4. Policy and programme implications: Drawing on the findings, the report will highlight key lessons for policymakers and suggest changes in programme design, implementation and expansion to achieve maximal impact drawing on the findings from the evaluation.

The team of consultants will be expected to undertake the following activities:

- i. Produce an approach paper specifying the sampling strategy and a pre-analysis plan detailing a mixed-method impact evaluation design.
- ii. Create an engagement and communication plan for key stakeholders, keep it updated and report on it as required.
- iii. Draw a list of villages and households for the endline survey using appropriate sampling strategy and the available baseline as the sample frame.
- iv. Review and clean the existing baseline data to determine comparability of selected

- indicators across states as well as determine the validity of these indicators.
- v. Develop and pilot endline questionnaire (quantitative and qualitative)<sup>1</sup>.
  - vi. Collaborate with the survey agency for classroom and field training of enumerators and develop field protocol and manuals for the survey team<sup>2</sup>.
  - vii. Conduct field visits to monitor the survey team and develop checks for assessing the quality of the endline data.
  - viii. Undertake a qualitative assessment of programme implementation for a selected sub-sample of beneficiaries and stakeholders.
  - ix. Clean the endline data to prepare it for data analysis.
  - x. Conduct data analysis and prepare the impact evaluation report.
  - xi. Engage with 3ie in knowledge management during the study and organising workshops for communicating study findings and promoting understanding and use.

## 5. Timeline

Details on timelines and deliverables are in Table 1 below

**Table 1: Timeline and deliverables**

Activities	Due date
Hiring of consultant team	1 April 2017
Draft IE design and pre-analysis plan	21 April 2017
Final IE design, pre-analysis plan, and stakeholder engagement and communication plan	13 May 2017
Data cleaning of baseline data	By end of June 2017
Testing and finalising of paper questionnaires	June 2017
Development of field manual	July 2017
Training of survey team	October 2017
Endline survey data collection	November 2017-March 2018
Data cleaning of endline	April 2018
Data analysis and tables	May 2018
Impact evaluation report - first draft	June 2018
Impact evaluation final report	August 2018

## 6. Team composition and expertise

In order to undertake this assignment, 3ie recommends a team of at least six, including a lead principal investigator, a principal investigator, two research associates and two research assistants. The team of consultants will report to the executive director (or head of evaluation) of 3ie, with day-to-day management by an evaluation specialist. Key members of the team must demonstrate the qualifications, skills and experience as specified below.

<sup>1</sup> The CAPI questionnaires based on these will be developed by the survey team

<sup>2</sup> The survey team will be identified and procured by MoRD.

*Lead Principal Investigator:*

Qualification

- PhD with at least seven years of experience in a field that employs rigorous statistical methods and impact evaluation methods such as empirical economics, public policy, health and nutrition.
- An Mphil/Masters' degree in a similar field with at least 10-12 years of experience may also be considered.

Skills and experience

- Demonstrated understanding and knowledge of impact evaluation design including sampling strategy, power calculations and quasi-experimental methods.
- Knowledge of advanced econometric methods and mixed-methods approaches to evaluation.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting impact evaluations in developing country settings, especially rural livelihoods.
- Strong problem solving skills in management and technical work and ability to work under tight deadlines.
- Demonstrated record of on-time production of deliverables.
- Experience working directly with implementing agencies and policymakers.

The lead PI is expected to devote a maximum of 25 percent of their time for this consultancy.

*Principal Investigator:*

Qualification

- Master's degree with at least eight years of post-master's relevant work experience. A doctoral degree with one or two years of experience is preferred.
- His or her academic training should be in economics, development studies, agriculture, environment, nutrition, or other fields relevant to rural livelihood.

Skills and experience

- Knowledge of econometric methods and mixed-methods approaches to evaluation.
- Demonstrated research experience in impact evaluation of rural livelihoods programmes.
- Experience in designing and managing primary surveys to ensure quality data collection including drafting questionnaires, survey tools and training materials.
- Experience in staff management, including supervision, equitable work division and overall management of team related tasks is desirable.
- Excellent writing skills in English is required. Working knowledge of a local Indian language is desirable.
- Willingness to travel across India including to the remote rural field sites of the country is required.

The PI is expected to devote at least 40 percent of their time for this consultancy.

*Research Associate:*

#### Qualification

- A Master's degree preferably in Economics, Social Sciences/Development Studies or related fields and minimum of 2-3 years of professional experience in the development sector.

#### Skills and experience

- Experience in managing large-scale surveys in developing country contexts, especially in the field of community driven development programmes and rural livelihoods.
- Knowledge of statistics and/or econometric methodologies.
- Strong data analysis skills using statistical software such as STATA and SPSS and ability to work with large data sets.
- Experience conducting qualitative research is desirable.
- Excellent writing skills in English is required. Working knowledge of a local Indian language is desirable.
- Willingness to travel across India including to the remote rural parts of the country.
- Previous experience in organising workshops and conferences is desirable.

The Research Associate is expected to devote 100 percent of their time for this consultancy.

#### *Research Assistant:*

#### Qualification

- A Bachelor's degree and minimum of one years of experience in the development sector.

#### Skills and experience

- Understanding of statistical software for data analysis is required.
- Willingness to travel across India including to the remote rural parts of the country is required.
- Excellent writing skills in English is required. Working knowledge of a local Indian language is desirable.
- Previous experience of organising workshops and conferences is desirable.
- Experience in the field of community driven development programmes and rural livelihoods, particularly in India, is desirable.

The Research Assistant is expected to devote **100%** of their time for this consultancy.

## **7. Budget**

3ie's budget for the consulting contract is a maximum of US\$430,000. 3ie will do a financial due diligence and a value-for-money assessment of the proposed budget. 3ie reserves the right to ask the team to revise the budget. The proposed budget must follow [3ie's direct cost](#) and [indirect cost policies](#).

## 8. Selection criteria

Applications will be reviewed and scored by at least two reviewers.

**Table 2: Criteria and associated weightage**

Criteria	Weightage
Mixed-method, theory-based impact evaluation experience <i>Assessed from the cover letter, CVs and sample publications</i>	35%
Research experience of rural livelihoods or community-driven development programmes <i>Assessed from the cover letter, CVs and sample publications</i>	25%
Experience in conducting and managing large-scale longitudinal surveys in developing countries <i>Assessed from the cover letter, CVs and sample publications</i>	20%
Cost-effectiveness <i>Assessed from the budget form</i>	10%
Team composition and management, including presence of a local PI <i>Assessed from the CVs and team member role and time allocation document</i>	10%

Only selected teams will be contacted for an interview with 3ie. It is mandatory that the lead or co-PI be available for this interview. The final decision on the award of consultancy will depend on how the team scores on the above mentioned criteria and the interview.

3ie reserves the right to not award the consultancy in case no applicant meets the requirements.

## 9. Eligibility

Teams may consist of individuals from different organisations. However, there must be one legally registered organisation that will hold the contract with 3ie for this consultancy. The grant-holding organisation and the lead principal investigator (PI) may be located anywhere in the world. However, the research team will be required to include at least one researcher who is an Indian national resident in India as a lead or co-PI. Teams should be available to start work by **1 April 2017**.

## 10. How to apply

Completed applications must include the following documents and information:

1. Completed [organisation information form](#).
2. A cover letter (2-3 pages maximum) that highlights your experience in:
  - a. Conducting large-scale impact evaluations of programmes in developing country context, highlighting work which uses quasi-experimental methods. Please provide at least one paper for each PI.
  - b. Evaluating livelihood and community-driven development programmes, especially in India. Please provide at least one paper for one of the PIs.

- c. Piloting and managing field based surveys. Please mention the context and sample size of such surveys.
- d. Working with government partners.
3. Curriculum vitae (CV, not to exceed three pages) of all team members.
4. For each team member, clear definition of their roles and the total number of days they would spend on key activities.
5. Proposed budget in [3ie budget template](#) for cost heads relevant to this consultancy.

Please submit the completed applications (not to exceed 10MB) via email to [jobs@3ieimpact.org](mailto:jobs@3ieimpact.org) with a copy to Ritwik Sarkar at [rsarkar@3ieimpact.org](mailto:rsarkar@3ieimpact.org) mentioning 'NRLP consultant' in the subject line by **23:59 GMT, 22 March 2017**.

All queries with regard to this call for consultancy should be submitted to Ritwik Sarkar at [rsarkar@3ieimpact.org](mailto:rsarkar@3ieimpact.org) with 'NRLP query' in the subject line by **23:59 GMT, 15 March 2017**. Response to the queries will be provided on 17 March 2017 in a Q&A document.

Incomplete applications, including applications without a cover letter, will not be considered. Only shortlisted organisations will be contacted.