



3ie Policy on the Replacement of External Project Advisors (EPAs)

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3ie provides its impact evaluation grantees with EPAs for the purposes of ensuring the quality of the research funded by 3ie and continually building the capacity of researchers around the world to conduct rigorous impact evaluation. While the role of the EPA is to identify possible problems or weaknesses in the research, the responsibility of the EPA is to be constructive in his or her comments and advice. The EPA provides guidance but does not set conditions. Ultimately the accountability for the quality and results of the research lies with the grantees.

3ie expects the relationships between EPAs and grantees to be collegial and mutually beneficial.

3ie reserves the right to replace an EPA for a grant. Situations where a replacement may be made include:

- 1) The EPA indicates that he or she is no longer available or able to make the time commitment. (3ie encourages EPAs to carefully consider their availability before agreeing to the role, however.)
- 2) The EPA is not fulfilling the expectations of the role. In these cases, 3ie will first request that the EPA devote more attention to the role and will offer assistance from the internal reviewer if appropriate.
- 3) A conflict of interest arises. Examples where a conflict of interest might arise include the EPA or a researcher changing institutions or becoming employed by a stakeholder government or NGO during the course of the grant. In these cases, 3ie will request that the grantee and the EPA separately assess the potential for conflict of interest and submit a written statement of that assessment to 3ie. 3ie will make a decision whether a replacement is warranted based on that information.
- 4) The relationship between the EPA and the grantee deteriorates. This may occur if the EPA has objections to the fundamental research design approved by the selection panel and 3ie's Board or serious concerns about the research implementation. In these cases, 3ie will request that the EPA carefully consider whether he or she is able to continue giving constructive feedback or whether he or she is no longer comfortable supporting the project.

The final assessment of whether any of the above conditions apply rests with 3ie.