



**International  
Initiative for  
Impact Evaluation**

## **The 3ie Peer Review Process: Open Window 3 (OW3)**

### **Introduction and overview**

This document provides an outline of the 3ie Peer Review process for Open Window 3 (OW3).

The review process comprises of two stages:

1. Expression of interest (EOI)
2. Full application, to be completed only if the EOI is approved.

Both EOI and the full application must be submitted using 3ie's online Grant Management System.

### **Expression of interest**

Review of the expression of interest comprises the following stages:

- **Pre-Screening.** Pre-screening has two stages:
  1. The 3ie Program Office checks that the proposal is complete (all sections of the form are completed). A message is sent to applicants whose proposal is incomplete, informing them that the application cannot be accepted as it is incomplete. The applicant may then resubmit, but there is no extension of the RFP deadline for this purpose.
  2. The 3ie Technical Office ensures that the proposals both fall with 3ie's mandate: that is proposals evaluate social and economic development interventions in low and middle income countries. As this is an Open Window, there are no preferred regions or countries in which the intervention is being implemented, so no proposals are rejected on those grounds. The evaluation team may be from any region or country, noting that review of full applications does award points for the substantive involvement of team members from developing countries. Recommendations for rejection are passed to 3ie's Executive Director for approval. Those rejected at this stage are informed at this time.

- **Review of evaluation design:** OW3 is for studies which propose rigorous experimental or quasi-experimental designs. The EOI form provides space to indicate the design and a description of that design. An internal review is made of these sections of the form. Where the proposed design does not appear suitable for 3ie financing the EOI is referred to an external reviewer. If the external reviewer confirms that the EOI does not qualify for 3ie financing, the application is rejected. This process will operate on a 'benefit of the doubt' principle; i.e. if the reviewers are unsure whether the application is suitable or not then it will be allowed to proceed to the full application stage.

Based on our experience of the first two rounds of the Open Window, we expect 1-2% of proposals to be rejected as incomplete or ineligible, and 10-15% to be rejected as not appropriate for 3ie financing. That is, over 80% of proposals are expected to proceed to the full application stage.

## Full applications

The review process for full applications comprises of the following stages:

- **Technical review:** All proposals are sent for external peer review. Three external reviewers and one internal reviewer from 3ie's Technical Office review each proposal. Reviewers grade and score the proposals using 3ie's proposal assessment criteria (see the RFP for details of these criteria), and provide a written assessment. The average scores and grades are used to rank the proposals, and the highest scoring proposals are allocated automatically to the shortlist, and the lowest scoring ones to the non-selected list. The 3ie technical team will make a final technical review of those proposals that were allocated to the intermediate list, in order to identify good proposals that may have been adversely affected by deviant scoring/grading by one reviewer, and may allocate such proposals to the shortlist.
- **Policy Review Panel:** Each of the shortlisted proposals is sent to two members of 3ie's policy review panel who score the proposal on the basis of policy relevance and potential policy impact. These scores are averaged together with the policy relevance and potential policy impact ratings of the technical panel (with 50% weight to the policy panel scores, and 50% to the technical panel scores). The top 50% of the proposals are then considered by the Policy Review Panel when it meets in person. The Policy Review Panel ranks these proposals.
- **3ie Management.** 3ie management makes a recommendation for funding to the 3ie Board. This recommendation is based on the recommendation of the Policy Review Panel, as well as the available funding.
- **3ie Board** The 3ie Board will make the final award allocation for OW3 based on the recommendations of 3ie management.

## **Announcement and issuing of awards**

3ie will notify all successful and unsuccessful applicants via email, and post a list of awards on the 3ie website. The website will also list the names of the members of the Review Panel.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive copies of the referee reports and their average scores within one month of the notification date.

Successful applicants receive the review reports and a list of points raised in these reports which need be responded to as a condition of first tranche disbursement.

Studies should be scheduled to begin in December 2010 or January 2011.

**Note: A standard, non-negotiable, contract which contains options for some clauses will be used. It will be made available on the Grant Management Website, and the Open Window page of the 3ie website, by the time of the awards notification. 3ie will issue contracts using the default clauses within two weeks of the award notification date if we have not heard to the contrary.**

## **Grant Peer Monitors**

External advisors with impact evaluation expertise, preferably in the relevant sector, are appointed to provide external oversight as peer monitors for selected proposals. Peer monitors provide independent assessment of grantee submitted reports as well as serve as technical/policy advisers for grant management to 3ie program staff.

## **Annex: RFP time line: OW3**

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Activity	
Launch RFP	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2010
Deadline for EOI	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2010
Deadline for full proposals	<b>Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2010</b>
Board meeting (awards approved)	21 <sup>st</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2010
Awards announced	Week of 25 <sup>th</sup> October 2010
Contracts issued	By mid November 2010
Studies start	During December 2010 and January 2010

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