



## Call for proposals - Swashakt: Empowering women through collectives and group-based approaches

### Questions and answers document

Questions received before the 10 March 2020 deadline have been edited to anonymise the information shared with 3ie. Responses to similar questions have been combined under these themes:

- [Eligible intervention types](#)
- [Eligible applicants](#)
- [Proposal submission requirements](#)
- [Proposal submission process](#)
- [FCRA related queries](#)
- [Timeline](#)
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### ***Eligible intervention types***

#### **1. What type of activities carried out by women's collectives classify as eligible or non-eligible under the proposal?**

Off-farm and non-farm activities carried out by women's collectives are eligible. 3ie will fund interventions that enhance viability, scalability and returns of non-farm activities as well as off-farm activities involving processing or value addition of farm, forest or livestock-based products. Activities such as aggregating and sourcing of agricultural and livestock outputs (such as from fishing, goat rearing and backyard poultry) for sale or marketing would not be eligible unless processing is involved.

For example, an intervention that aims to work with and provide market linkages to a women's collective, that processes maize to produce value-added products, will classify as an intervention serving an off-farm enterprise and therefore, will be eligible. However, an intervention that aims to link maize farmers to sell to large sellers will not classify as eligible, as this will be considered a farm enterprise.

Eligible activities and interventions may be government programmes or privately funded. Indicative examples of interventions that 3ie will consider for implementation and evaluation support include— but are not limited to— training, mentoring and/or facilitation for improving productivity, bargaining power, scale and connecting to value chain actors and markets. Interventions in partnership with State Rural Livelihoods Missions (SRLMs) are particularly encouraged.

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**2. What will qualify as “implementation at scale”? Does 3ie have any preference for the phasing of the proposal (full-scale evaluation vs pilot and then scale up)?**

We will consider a project as being at-scale when it has been running for some time, even in five to six districts of a state, with clear plans of expansion. 3ie believes that formative stage evaluation is important before interventions are scaled up. However, proposals related to both currently at-scale projects and pilot interventions will be considered on their merits.

**3. As a part of the implementation proposal, can technical equipment to augment production and income of the women collectives be budgeted?**

No, please refer to section 3.1 in the [RFP document](#) for the type of interventions funded under this call.

***Eligible applicants***

**4. Who can apply?**

Legally registered organisations and consortia engaged in implementing or evaluating innovative interventions (pilot or at-scale) that promote and accelerate viability, scalability and returns of women’s collective enterprises in India. Interventions implemented by or in partnership with State Rural Livelihoods Missions (SRLMs) are particularly encouraged.

**5. Does the RFP have any focus state or country (geography)?**

No, there is no particular focus state for the RFP. However, proposals responding to this call must be from India-based implementing agencies working with women’s collective enterprises in India. The evaluation teams too must also include local India-based researcher(s) in a substantive role as laid out in the RFP.

**6. Is it possible for the implementing agency of an intervention to apply as an evaluation agency for the same intervention?**

No. Evaluation of a project or intervention by a team that is involved in the design and implementation will constitute a conflict of interest. The evaluation agency should ideally be independent of the implementation agency. If not, necessary declarations of conflict of interest must be made upfront at the time of application and strong measures to ensure the independence of the evaluation team must be proposed.

**7. We implement innovative interventions to augment women’s economic empowerment and want to apply for implementation funding, but we have not partnered with any evaluation team. Can we still apply for funding?**

Yes, 3ie will match eligible implementers who apply without an evaluation partner with evaluators. However, teams piloting or implementing eligible projects and interventions are encouraged to partner with evaluation teams and submit joint proposals. 3ie expects that the period between the 25 February call launch and the opening of the online proposal submissions portal on 23 March 2020 will allow for such collaboration.

**8. We are an evaluation team interested in women's economic empowerment in India and have team members who have the relevant experience, but we have not yet partnered with any organisations implementing innovative projects or interventions. What should we do?**

3ie will match evaluators who submit qualifications to eligible implementers who apply without an evaluation partner. Please submit qualifications through the online [proposal submissions portal](#) and note that the deadline for submitting qualifications is 30 April 2020.

**9. Are consultancy bids accepted?**

No, bids for consultancy are not eligible under this call for proposals and are not accepted.

**10. Do both the implementation and evaluation organisation have to have a similar legal structure? For example, if the implementation organisation is a for-profit entity, then does the evaluation organisation also need to be a for-profit entity?**

No. However, please note that for-profit entities attract 18 per cent GST.

**11. Can a primary grantee team up with government structures including nationalised banks for implementation purposes? Do we have to submit contract documents in such type of collaborations?**

Yes, a primary grantee can team with government structures including nationalised banks for implementation. We recommend that all necessary contracts, agreements and approvals must be in place at the time of submitting the proposal. These documents will be requested at the time of grant signing.

#### ***Proposal submission requirements***

**12. Does 3ie require implementing agencies to sign MoUs with state government agencies? Do we have to submit a contract document between the implementation and evaluation organisation?**

While these are not required at the proposal stage, 3ie would require MoUs or letters of support from critical stakeholders, including government stakeholders, following the inception stage. Similarly, while the contract between the implementation and evaluation agencies are not a requirement for the proposal, they will be sought once grants are awarded.

**13. If the initial six to eight-month formative phase implementation and evaluation is funded, how likely is it that the next phase will be funded? Should the proposal include the planning for the next phase? What is the process of going from the formative phase to the impact evaluation phase?**

If you seek to pilot an intervention idea, the proposal would include only the plan for a six to eight-month formative period. If the formative stage findings appear promising, 3ie will ask for a budget and implementation plan as part of the inception of the second phase under the evidence programme. However, if the formative evaluation shows that the intervention is not feasible, relevant or contextually acceptable, chances of impact evaluation funding will be diminished.

**14. If an organisation bids solely for evaluation and there is no corresponding implementation organisation, what are the scoring criteria? Will the evaluation agency's proposal become null and void if there are no organisations bidding only for implementation?**

Organizations can bid solely for evaluation and 3ie would help in matching with an implementation organization. Please refer to the [indicative RFQ included in the package](#) of key documents to know more about the qualification criteria for evaluation teams who have no implementation partners. However, 3ie does not guarantee that all evaluation applicants will be matched to implementation partners.

**15. Can an implementation organisation become the primary grantee and the evaluation organisation become a sub grantee, where the proposal is for both the implementation and evaluation?**

Yes.

**16. Do teams have to produce documentary evidence to confirm that ethical approval is not required?**

Yes. This evidence is not required at the proposal submission stage, but will be required before grant signing.

**17. Will the registration document of the evaluation organisation be required?**

Yes, but not at the proposal submission stage.

#### ***Proposal submission process***

**18. Is it possible to submit proposals and/or relevant documents through email?**

No, the proposals and all relevant attachments need to be submitted through the online [proposal submissions portal](#) only. View this [flowchart](#) to see how implementers and evaluators can submit proposals online.

**19. For organisations applying for both implementation and evaluation funding, do we have to submit separate proposals and budgets for both implementation and evaluation?**

3ie encourages the implementing agency and evaluation agency to submit the proposal together. In the case where implementing and evaluation agencies are applying together, the online application form includes both implementation-related and evaluation-related sections. For example, you would need to be submitting two budgets, one for evaluation and one for implementation in the joint proposal form. Agencies can share user credentials and save their sections of the application to complete all of the sections in their joint proposal.

**20. Do organisations or teams responding to the RFQ for evaluation funding need to fill in the budget template?**

No. Budget templates have to be filled only for implementation or joint implementation and evaluation proposals. Those applying only for the evaluation grant (with no implementation partners) are not required to fill in the budget template while applying through the online portal. They only need to submit qualifications through the online [proposal submissions portal](#). Budget information will only be asked at a later stage.

**21. Are teams allowed to apply for more than one of the following options laid out in the RFP – “(i) the implementation and evaluation of an intervention; (ii) the evaluation of an intervention that has secured implementation funding; (iii) implementation only, with evaluation teams to be matched to implementing teams by 3ie; and (iv) evaluation only, with evaluation teams to be matched to implementing teams by 3ie (see page 8)”**

Yes, teams can apply for more than one of the above listed options.

**22. Is it possible for an evaluation team to submit more than one proposal (with different implementers)?**

Yes, evaluation teams are allowed to submit more than one proposal. Grantees under the RFP are allowed to undertake multiple evaluations – including short-term and long-term evaluation assignments – with more than one implementing partner.

**23. What does it mean when the indicative templates mention that: “3ie will not fund any part of the intervention itself”?**

In the evaluation proposal sections, this line implies that 3ie will not support implementation undertaken by the evaluation team. Evaluation and implementation teams are required to fill separate budget templates while submitting the proposal (even in a joint proposal). Hence, there would be no need for a sub-grantee line item and evaluation budgets would not include implementation costs. This line was inadvertently included in the implementation proposal template and the error is regretted.

#### ***FCRA-related***

**24. If the implementing agency does not have an FCRA registration, can they still apply as a sub-grantee with an evaluation partner who can receive foreign currency grants?**

Under FCRA, sub grantees also need to have FCRA registration for accessing the grant. So without an FCRA registration, it will not be possible for the implementation team (or an evaluation team) to submit a proposal even if it is done together with an FCRA-registered partner organisation.

**25. If an organisation has an FCRA registration that is due to expire in 2022, would they still be eligible?**

Yes, organisations with valid FCRA registration as of 2020 can submit proposals under this call.

**26. Can a for-profit company with no FCRA account apply if it abides by all the norms laid down by the funding organisation?**

For-profit companies with no FCRA account can apply. However, they will attract 18% GST.

#### ***Timelines***

**27. What is the latest start date for a project that 3ie would consider?**

All projects funded under the programme should start by July 2020.

**28. Are there restrictions around using the funding in less than 3 years? Specifically, could an implementing organization use US\$ 600,000 for an 18-month project or is the funding prorated?**

No, there are no such restrictions. The funding period will depend on what activities are planned and if these activities can realistically meet the specified goals of the programme in the time proposed.

***Other queries***

**29. For the following option mentioned in the RFP – “*evaluation only, with evaluation teams to be matched to implementing teams by 3ie*”, will the implementing agency have to bear any evaluation costs? Will 3ie be the external evaluator?**

3ie will match a qualified external evaluation team with the selected implementing agencies and directly fund them. Qualified evaluation teams will work in close coordination with 3ie in the evaluation of the project or interventions.

**30. The RFP says – ‘Please describe your plans for collecting costs and approach(es) for cost related indicators of the intervention/programme/policy that will be examined during the course of the implementation (including as relevant, approaches for cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis).’ Could you explain how this can be done?**

A recent 3ie blog highlights the importance of collecting cost-related data, planning for cost-effectiveness analysis and provides links to useful online resources. Read the blog [here](#). The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab website also has [a useful primer](#).

**31. Where does non-3ie funding get accounted for?**

3ie requires this information only where the applicants have received non-3ie funding. The online proposal template asks for this information.