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Strengthening capacity for evidence-informed decision-making in the Philippines

To ensure major government programs are effective, the Philippine government has been investing in impact evaluations and prioritizing evidence-informed decision-making. In 2015, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the premier socioeconomic planning body of the Philippines, and the Department of Budget and Management launched a national evaluation policy framework that emphasized evidence-informed decisions in government and accountability for results. 3ie's Philippines Evidence Program is supporting NEDA and the Philippine government in meeting this agenda.

Since 2014, the program, supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and

steered by NEDA, has built interest and capacity for evidence-informed decision-making in key sectors. While 3ie has provided technical oversight for mixed-method evaluations, government departments have driven the evaluations, assessing major governmental reforms and service delivery programs.

Encouraged by strong government engagement and the promising evaluations initiated in Phase I, DFAT provided USD 2 million of additional funding in 2020 to continue the program until 2023. The funding will be critical in building on the work carried out in Phase I to promote sustained demand for evidence and enabling in-country capacity to undertake independent, high-quality evaluations.

An overview

	Phase I	Phase II
Grants	5 impact evaluations	3 impact evaluations
Timeline	2014–2020	2020–2023
3ie grant amount	USD 2.5 million	USD 2 million



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Phase I (2014–2020)

The first phase of the evidence program supported impact evaluations of two flagship programs focused on livelihoods and three major judicial reforms.

Thematic area	Intervention	Implementing agency/department	Description
Livelihoods	Special Program for the Employment of Students (SPES)	Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)	SPES was launched to increase high school graduation rates and facilitate employment in the Philippines by providing work opportunities to young people during their school breaks. The evaluation assessed the impact of SPES on young people's academic outcomes, work readiness, employment and income.
	Sustainable Livelihoods Program (SLP)	Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)	SLP provides financial and capacity-building assistance to households by linking them to income-generating opportunities. The evaluation assesses the impact of SLP's Micro-enterprise Development assistance on the welfare of participating households.
Judicial reforms	Adoption of eCourts	Supreme Court	The reform uses digital technology to store court records, prioritize cases based on automated aging and highlight pending matters to presiding judges. The evaluation assesses whether adopting technology improves court efficiency and functioning.
	Small Claims Procedure (SCP)	Supreme Court	This reform provides a simple, fast and inexpensive means of dispute settlement for civil cases involving claims up to a defined threshold (USD 8,200 or PHP 400,000 in Metro Manila). It makes the existing procedure more efficient by providing simple forms, clear timelines and eliminating lawyers' interventions. The evaluation assesses if SCP helps reduce case duration and court congestion.
	Guidelines for Continuous Trial of Criminal Cases	Supreme Court	The guidelines introduced reforms for criminal cases, to expedite trials and resolutions by imposing strict timelines on existing stages of court action and introducing best practices for speedy disposition. The evaluation measures the guidelines' impact on court congestion and the duration of trials.

Program highlights

2014: NEDA and 3ie catalyze demand for evidence

NEDA and 3ie engage with government departments and agencies on the role of evidence in improving decision-making.

2014–2020: Building capacity

Program participants convene regularly to build capacity and ensure high-level buy-in for evidence-informed decision-making.

2015–2020: Departments drive evaluations

DOLE, DSWD, the Supreme Court commission Innovations for Poverty Action, and the Philippine Institute for Development Studies to conduct evaluations of their priority programs and reforms.

2020: Phase II begins

DFAT extends the program to a second phase; 3ie works with partners to pivot the program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid evidence needs.

We in the Philippines are happy that the 3ie program has included our country in the selection of countries all over the world for inclusion in their exercises to undertake impact evaluation of programs...and the initial results already show that the outcomes of the studies are potentially going to be very useful in the decision of the government on policies and programs – which ones to continue as they are and which ones need tweaking and modifications to make sure they deliver the results that are desired.

Ernesto M Pernia

Former Socioeconomic planning secretary
National Economic and Development Authority,
Republic of the Philippines





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Vision for Phase II

Over the next few years, NEDA, DFAT and 3ie will work jointly to:

- Commission impact evaluations.
- Organize training to build the capacity of government agencies and local research organizations on topics including commissioning and planning evaluations, knowledge translation, and using evidence for decision-making.
- Synthesize and map evidence and knowledge gaps on key policy issues.
- Design and implement effective measures to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and build capacity to meet rapid evidence needs of government departments.

The Policy Window Philippines partnership between DFAT, 3ie and research experts puts evidence gathering, analysis and actionable policy recommendations front and centre. By increasing the demand for and uptake of evidence in policy-making, we are helping the Philippine Government to respond better to the needs of Filipinos, and achieve long term development objectives.

Sophie McPhate

Third secretary, Economic
Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) promotes evidence-informed, equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. We support the generation and effective use of high-quality evidence to inform decision-making and improve the lives of people living in poverty in low- and middle-income countries. We provide guidance and support to produce, synthesise and quality assure evidence of what works, for whom, how, why and at what cost.

For more information on 3ie's Programme brief, contact info@3ieimpact.org or visit our website.

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