STRATEGIC IMPACT EVALUATION FUND (SIEF)
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund (SIEF) is a trust fund established within the World Bank to carry out and support research evaluating the impact of programs on alleviating poverty and improving people's lives. The knowledge generated provides evidence for designing more effective policies and programs. The multi-donor fund was created with the support of the British government's Department for International Development with a commitment of nearly $40 million. The program, managed by the World Bank's Human Development Network, was launched in 2012 and will run for five years.

SIEF aims to improve the effectiveness of development policies by expanding the evidence base on the impact of scalable programs affecting human development outcomes. The trust fund supports activities aiming to (i) generate a solid evidence base on the development effectiveness of programs affecting health, nutrition, and education; (ii) build capacity for understanding and using monitoring and evaluation, particularly impact evaluation techniques, through regional training workshops and toolkits; and (iii) improve access to impact evaluation results to support evidence-based policymaking. The Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund builds on the knowledge and research generated by the Spanish Trust Fund for Impact Evaluation. Like the first SIEF call for proposals in 2012, this second call for proposals will focus on thematic research clusters chosen for their strategic policy relevance: **(i) early childhood nutrition, health, and development; (ii) water supply, sanitation, and hygiene linked to human development outcomes; (iii) basic education service delivery; and (iv) health systems and service delivery**. Within these research areas a range of program types are welcome, including cash transfer programs and programs supporting multiple interventions. Through these thematic clusters, the program will generate cross-country evidence on how programs work in different contexts.

Over the course of the five-year program, SIEF expects to finance over 50 impact evaluations and allocate nearly $25,000,000, close to half of which was allocated in the evaluations selected in the first call for proposals last year. We are pleased to launch the second call for proposals and invite proposals within the thematic research clusters outlined in the cluster notes available at the following link: http://go.worldbank.org/7P4UP3KYI0.

II. ELEGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to be eligible for funding from SIEF, all proposals must fulfill the following criteria:

- **Technical Requirements**: Priority will be given to prospective evaluations that use experimental or rigorous quasi-experimental methods. Evaluations may also include complements to quantitative impact evaluation work including process evaluations and mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) approaches. ***All proposals should include the collection of cost data and a cost analysis of the intervention***.
- **Cluster Relevance** – Evaluations should be aligned with the thematic priorities outlined in the Cluster Notes[1] by addressing the specified research questions and knowledge gaps. Proposals that include a gender dimension, when relevant, are especially encouraged.
- **Country Eligibility** - Countries classified as low, lower-middle, and upper-middle income are eligible. Evaluations in middle-income countries must demonstrate the relevance of the results and include plans for the engagement of policymakers and dissemination of lessons learned in low income countries. There is a particular interest in proposals from fragile and conflict-affected states. Multi-country proposals are eligible.
- **Scalability of Programs** – Priority will be given to programs that have the potential for scalability in low-income countries. Efficacy trials are also eligible as long as they can demonstrate that they are scalable.
- **Timeline Restrictions** - Evaluations must deliver final results by July 2017. New and ongoing evaluations are eligible as long as they are prospective in nature.
- **Principal Investigator (PI)** – All proposals must designate one or more PIs to oversee the design and implementation of the impact evaluation. There is a particular interest in proposals involving local researchers as PIs or co-PIs.
- **World Bank Task Team Leader (TTL)** - ***All development programs are eligible for SIEF funding as long as they have a World Bank staff managing the evaluation project.*** Proposals from government programs, NGOs, and bilateral aid agencies are welcome, but need the support of a World Bank staff members. The World Bank staff TTL will be responsible for the management of the evaluation, engaging both the research and program teams to ensure that the evaluation informs policy priorities and benefits from necessary program information. The TTL will also assume the fiduciary management of the evaluation in accordance with World Bank standards. Finally, the TTL will serve as the team's liaison with the World Bank, keeping World Bank sectoral and regional units informed of the progress and results of the evaluation, providing needed updates to SIEF management, and engaging as part of the thematic cluster team in the development of evidence and dialogue on policy. The World Bank TTL may also serve as a PI or co-PI.

[1] Available at http://go.worldbank.org/7P4UP3KYI0

III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive funding from SIEF, all evaluations must agree to the following requirements:

1. Ethics Principles

SIEF evaluations must adhere to the highest standards of research ethics and are thereby expected to uphold the Ethics Principals for Research and Evaluation established by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and adopted by SIEF. Evaluations teams must commit to uphold the ten principles outlined in Annex I and demonstrate these principles throughout the implementation of the evaluation.

2. Protection of Human Subjects

SIEF evaluations must fulfill the following requirements on human subjects:

- Evaluations must include a description of the human subjects protocol and a plan for securing ethical clearance in the technical proposal.
- Principal investigators and research coordinators must provide evidence of human subjects training within the last 2 years. The National Institute of Health (NIH) online course includes a test and will produce a certificate number which can be used for this purpose (http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php).
- Principal investigators are responsible for securing in-country ethical clearance or providing an official memo from client counterparts stating the absence of a local ethical review board. In case the country of study does not have a review board, the evaluation team will be required to contract an external review board.

3. Data Storage and Access

In accordance to the World Bank's Open Data and Open Knowledge Initiative, all datasets must be fully documented. Datasets should be in compliance with international good practices and with the Data Documentation Initiative (www.ddialliance.org).

SIEF evaluation teams commit to submit the dataset and documentation to the World Bank Data Catalog using the Data Deposit portal (http://microdatalib.worldbank.org/index.php/data-deposit) within six months of the completion of each round of data collection. These micro-data and data documentation will be made publicly accessible six months following the submission of the final SIEF evaluation report or at the conclusion of the SIEF grant period, whichever comes first.

4. Cost Data and Analysis

SIEF evaluations must include the collection of cost data of the intervention including, to the extent possible, volunteer and beneficiary time and effort. In addition, the final results coming from the evaluations should include an analysis of both the impacts and the costs. Resources to assist in the development of a cost analysis plan can be found here: http://go.worldbank.org/7P4UP3KYI0.

5. Engagement and Dissemination

SIEF evaluations must outline a dissemination and engagement strategy to ensure the relevance of the impact evaluation, including preparation of a technical report, policy note, and final dissemination event. Research supported SIEF is expected to be disseminated through the World

Bank and other channels. The costs for engagement and dissemination should be included in the proposal.

IV. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process has two stages. The **first stage** requires completing the online SIEF Proposal Form and submitting a completed Budget Proposal Template by email by November 1, 2013. Proposals will be reviewed and scored by the Evaluation Review Committee according to the explicit criteria outlined in section VI. Selected proposals will have the opportunity to receive ***seed funding up to US$25,000 to develop a full technical proposal for the impact evaluation.*** Selection in this round is not a guarantee of funding beyond the seed funding; in this stage, evaluation teams will be invited to submit full technical proposals with detailed budgets from which several will be selected to receive funding in the next stage.

In the **second stage**, the evaluation team will submit a full technical proposal with detailed budget that outlines the various aspects of the evaluation. SIEF management will work with teams selected in the first stage to ensure that the full technical proposals submitted are consistent with the focus of the thematic cluster notes, given the other evaluations in the cluster portfolio. Teams are welcome to submit a full technical proposal for consideration at any point after receiving notification of selection in the first stage and before the deadline in May 2014. Technical proposals will be subject to an internal and external peer review. These reviews will serve as inputs to the final selection of proposals to receive funding. Teams will have access to the first tranche of funding in the budget upon fulfillment of a World Bank internal Regional Concept Note Review and final approval by the SIEF management team. Additional funds will be transferred based on achievement of subsequent milestones.

Proposals must be submitted by the World Bank TTL via the online form

(including a completed budget template submitted by email) at

http://wbgsurvey.worldbank.org/Community/se.ashx?s=7DE331F80585E405

by 5:00 p.m. (EST) on November 1, 2013.

Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

V. FORMAT

Applicants must submit their proposal through the online application. Budgets must be submitted via email to siefproposals1@worldbank.org using the budget template document available at http://go.worldbank.org/7P4UP3KYI0.

VI. PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Evaluation Review Committee will review and rate the proposals based on the following criteria:

- Policy/Cluster Relevance: Weight: 30%
- Technical Quality: Weight: 40%
- Capacity for Delivery: Weight: 20%
- Engagement and Dissemination: Weight: 5%
- Realism of Budget: Weight: 5%

See Annex II for more detail on the assessment criteria.

VII. FUNDING

Funding for evaluations will be transferred based on the achievement of explicit and pre-established milestones. The following schedule of tranches will apply for all new evaluations. Ongoing evaluations will have a distinct and customized schedule of tranches.

- Seed funding (up to US$25,000).
- Evaluation funding:
  - 40% after regional concept note review and SIEF approval of the IE technical proposal
  - 5% after uploading baseline data and documentation to the Microdata Management Toolkit (MMT)
  - 45% upon submission and SIEF approval of the baseline report and report validating the evaluation design
  - 10% after uploading the endline data/documentation to the MMT and submitting the final evaluation report

VIII. TIMETABLE

- Announcement of call for proposals July 2013
- Closing date for both online applications and emailed budgets November 1, 2013
- Announcement of teams invited to submit full technical proposals January 2014
- Window for submission of full technical proposals January - May 30, 2014

Final selections for funding will take place on a rolling basis following a Regional Concept Note Review of the full technical proposal.

IX. QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION

Please see the frequently asked questions available on the SIEF website at http://go.worldbank.org/7P4UP3KYI0. For other questions regarding the application form and the selection process, please email siefproposals1@worldbank.org.

Annex I: DFID ETHICS PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

PRINCIPLES

1. Researchers and evaluators are responsible for identifying the need for and securing any necessary ethics approval for the study they are undertaking. This may be from national or local ethics committees in countries in which the study will be undertaken, or other stakeholder institutions with formal ethics approval systems.

2. Research and evaluation must be relevant and high quality with clear developmental and practical value. It must be undertaken to a sufficiently high standard that the findings can be reliably used for their intended purpose. Research should only be undertaken where there is a clear gap in knowledge. Evaluations might also be undertaken to learn lessons to improve future impact, or in order to meet DFID's requirements for accountability.

3. Researchers and evaluators should avoid harm to participants in studies. They should ensure that the basic human rights of individuals and groups with whom they interact are protected. This is particularly important with regard to vulnerable people. The wellbeing of researchers/ evaluators working in the field should also be considered and harm minimized.

4. Participation in research and evaluation should be voluntary and free from external pressure. Information should not be withheld from prospective participants that might affect their willingness to participate. All participants should have a right to withdraw from research/ evaluation and withdraw any data concerning them at any point without fear of penalty.

5. Researchers and evaluators should ensure confidentiality of information, privacy and anonymity of study participants. They should communicate clearly to prospective participants any limits to confidentiality. In cases where unexpected evidence of serious wrong-doing is uncovered (e.g. corruption or abuse) there may be a need to consider whether the normal commitment to confidentiality might be outweighed by the ethical need to prevent harm to vulnerable people. DFID's fraud policy will apply if relevant.

6. Researchers and evaluators should operate in accordance with international human rights conventions and covenants to which the United Kingdom is a signatory, regardless of local country standards. They should also take account of local and national laws.

7. DFID funded research and evaluation should respect cultural sensitivities. This means researchers need to take account of differences in culture, local behavior and norms, religious beliefs and practices, sexual orientation, gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity and other social differences such as class when planning studies and communicating findings. DFID should avoid imposing a burden of over-researching particular groups.

8. DFID is committed to publication and communication of all evaluations and research studies. Full methodological details and information on who has undertaken a study should be given and messages transmitted should fully and fairly reflect the findings. Where possible, and respecting confidentiality requirements, primary data should be made public to allow secondary analyses.

9. Research and evaluation should usually be independent of those implementing an intervention or program under study. Independence is very important for research and evaluation; in fact evaluations in DFID can only be classified as such where they are led independently. Involvement of stakeholders may be desirable so long as the objectivity of a study is not compromised and DFID is transparent about the roles played. Any potential conflicts of interest that might jeopardize the integrity of the methodology or the outputs of research/ evaluation should be disclosed. If researchers/ evaluators or other stakeholders feel that undue pressure is being put on them by DFID officials, such that their independence has been breached, this should be reported to the Head of Profession for Evaluation who will take appropriate action

10. All DFID funded research/ evaluation should have particular emphasis on ensuring participation from women and socially excluded groups. Consideration should be given to how barriers to participation can be removed.

Annex II: Evaluation Criteria

All scores will range from 0 to 5.

1. **Policy/Cluster Relevance: Weight: 30%**
   - How strong is the fit between proposed evaluation questions and the research questions and outcomes of interest identified in the cluster note?
   - How well do proposed evaluation questions address existing research and knowledge gaps?
   - How important are the results for future development policies in this thematic area?
   - What is the value added from the knowledge generated from this evaluation for informing policy decisions?

2. **Technical Quality: Weight: 40%**
   - How rigorously does the proposed methodology establish a counterfactual using internationally recognized impact evaluation methods?
   - Are appropriate evaluation methods (including quantitative and qualitative methods) used to answer the research questions?
   - How rigorous are the identification strategies given the constraints of the interventions?
   - Does the evaluation have sufficient statistical power?
   - Are there sufficient data quality control measures in place?

3. **Capacity to Deliver: Weight: 20%**
   - Is the intervention fully developed?
   - What is the technical and management capacity of the evaluation teams, based on their track record and evidence provided as part of the proposal, to deliver quality outputs on time?
   - Are country teams/local researchers engaged leading to capacity development?

4. **Engagement and Dissemination: Weight: 5%**
   - How strong is the proposed communication and dissemination strategy for the evaluation?
   - Will the results be available within the timeframe of SIEF?

5. **Realism of Budget: Weight: 5%**
   - How realistic is the budget?
   - What is the value for money?
   - Is the SIEF funding substituting for other sources that would otherwise fund the evaluation?