



CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Open call for accountability and learning impact studies

Please submit proposals to SPIA (spia@cgiar.org) by March 7, 2025.

Overview

The CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA) is calling for Expressions of Interest (EoIs) for rigorous impact assessments of CGIAR innovations. SPIA invites researchers to submit EoIs for projects that carefully measure causal impacts of a variety of CGIAR-related technological, institutional or other innovations that have been disseminated or about to be disseminated in priority countries where CGIAR operates.

Completed EoI templates should be emailed to: spia@cgiar.org no later than March 7, 2025. The subject line of the email should read "EoI for accountability and learning impact studies"

Any questions about this call can be directed to Ricardo Labarta (r.labarta@cgiar.org).

Background and scope of the call

As part of the approved new workplan, SPIA aims to support new causal impact studies that can inform the implementation of the emerging Science Programs and Accelerators but also to bring insights about returns to CGIAR investments and future research directions.

Accountability-oriented studies assess whether a past research investment contributed to the anticipated impacts. Impact assessments of this type target innovations that have already been implemented and technologies that have been diffused. Accountability studies focus on innovations for which sufficient time has passed to allow for the consequences of adoption and use on development outcomes to be measurable, through both direct and indirect pathways. SPIA welcomes studies that employ different types of empirical methods but what is important is that the proposed approach is appropriate for the specific evaluation question, and that it rigorously and transparently addresses challenges associated with causal inference.

Learning studies help address last-mile delivery problems that may otherwise limit the potential to have impacts at scale. These studies are forward looking and are designed to inform current decision-making and CGIAR workplans moving forward. This evidence can feed back into research program design, as well as to the design of cost-effective dissemination and scaling programs. SPIA is especially interested in projects that can measure impacts on a broader set of outcomes beyond just technology adoption.

Requirements

Studies will only be considered if they have a compelling method for causally identifying the impacts of interest. While RCTs will often be feasible, quasi-experimental designs that credibly identify impacts are also encouraged. Most importantly, SPIA will not consider funding for studies that lack a causal identification strategy, nor those relying on a causal inference method but without substantive evidence supporting the assumptions relevant to the particular study of interest. Studies that rely solely on propensity score matching will not be considered.

Accountability studies should document the link of the innovation to be assessed, to CGIAR research and the existing evidence base regarding its potential impacts (including lab, pilot, or efficacy trial evidence). Likewise,

documentation on existing diffusion of the innovation, including reference to available data or evidence on when, where and why the innovation has been rolled out. Accountability studies will not be funded without existing data or a plan to assemble data on adoption. Learning studies should carefully document the impact pathways from uptake of the innovation to final outcomes. The expected outcomes must be clearly documented. Proposed learning studies are expected to clearly demonstrate how the impact evaluation will inform the Science Programs and Accelerators' research agenda.

Proposals that include a qualitative component to understand underlying mechanisms of impact will be given favorable consideration.

Each research team will need to have demonstrated experience in conducting the types of evaluations that are being proposed. SPIA welcomes collaborations between researchers inside and outside of the CGIAR. SPIA is willing to help find external collaborators for researchers from CGIAR Centers. These requests should be directed to Ricardo Labarta (r.labarta@cgiar.org), who will then work with SPIA Panel members to help identify potential collaborations with external researchers.

EoIs should be prepared using the attached template and sent to spia@cgiar.org . The deadline for submissions is March 7, 2025.

In addition to the Eoi narrative, the CV's of all principal investigators should be included in the application.

Selection Procedure

SPIA will review all of the EoIs submitted and invite the most promising projects for submission of a full proposal. In some cases, SPIA may suggest modifications to the project to increase its chances of receiving funding, including collaborations with impact assessment specialists. Notifications of decisions will be sent out by March 19. Receiving an invitation to submit a full proposal does not guarantee funding. Full proposals will be evaluated through a rigorous peer review process.

EoIs will be scored according to the following set of criteria:

- Technical merit and innovativeness of the proposed impact assessment (20%)
- Feasibility (including availability of existing datasets and previous analyses) (20%)
- Quality of the link between the impact assessment and emerging Science programs and Accelerators (20%)
- Relevance and quality of the research team, capacity and reputation of proposed grantee (20%)
- Value for Money (20%)