

AidData & USAID Geospatial Impact Evaluation Opportunities

Geospatial Impact Evaluation Background

AidData has worked with the Global Development Lab (the Lab) to pioneer an innovative new methodology known as Geospatial Impact Evaluation (GIE) to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions by USAID and other development partners. This method is made possible through more and better sources of granular, spatially-diverse data, remote sensing technologies, geo-referenced surveys, access to affordable large-scale computing power, and new econometric techniques. GIEs are more rigorous than performance evaluations, but can be significantly cheaper and faster than RCTs if existing data sources are used. Moreover, it is an evaluation tool that has significant external validity benefits and can be applied to a variety of sectors, including health, environment, conflict, governance, and economic development.

Opportunities for USAID Missions and Operating Units

As this new methodology is applicable to a variety of Missions and Operating Units, AidData is opening a call for GIE proposals from USAID. AidData is uniquely suited to match interested Missions and Operating Units with leading academic researchers who are skilled in the application of Geospatial Impact Evaluation methods in the relevant sector. The AidData Research Consortium includes over a hundred researchers from many disciplines who can help Missions and Operating Units design and implement these evaluations. Through AidData's cooperative agreement with the Lab's Higher Education Solutions Network, a limited amount of co-funding is available to cover some of the design costs and costs associated with engaging researchers. This agreement also provides a mechanism, if needed, for Missions and Operating Units to buy into the award to further collaboration and support large-scale evaluations or additional data collection. During project execution, AidData will provide technical oversight and support to ensure the completion of high quality evaluations. Since AidData is currently conducting several of these types of evaluations (see examples below), Missions will be able to leverage investments that AidData has already made in collecting and processing near-global spatial data sets to support new evaluation projects.

Geospatial Impact Evaluation (GIE) Benefits for USAID Missions and Operating Units

There are several benefits of partnering with AidData and utilizing the GIE methodology to evaluate USAID interventions:

1. **No procurement action necessary** – Missions and Operating Units can buy in to the existing HESN agreement
2. Access to **academic/technical expertise** during evaluation design and implementation
3. **Cheaper** and **faster** than RCTs if existing data is available
4. Potential to measure **long-term outcomes**
5. Potential to measure **remote** or otherwise **hard-to-access locations**

Interested USAID Mission and Operating Units

Missions and Operating Units interested in undertaking GIEs should submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) form (access [here](#)) describing the project by **January 29, 2015**. AidData will then review submitted EOIs and assess the feasibility of conducting a GIE based on available data and spatial and temporal coverage and variation. Feedback will be provided to Missions/Operating Units in **January 2016** after the assessment component is complete. Where GIEs appear feasible, AidData will identify academic researchers and begin developing full evaluations in collaboration with USAID Missions and Operating Units. If more GIEs appear feasible than funding allows, preference may be given to EOIs in which Missions or Operating Units are able to provide co-funding toward the evaluations.

Growing use of GIE

AidData is currently working with a variety of Missions on Geospatial Impact Evaluations, including:

- **Colombia:** Evaluation of USAID/Colombia's Regional Governance Activity (RGA) which aims to improve subnational governance in 40 conflict-affected municipalities of Colombia over the period 2015-2019.
- **Georgia:** Evaluation and learning on how to best increase uptake of the Georgian e-democracy platform, iChange. This activity is part of the Global Development Lab's Signature Effort with USAID/Georgia and is being implemented in collaboration with the Government of Georgia.

AidData is also working with other agencies on GIEs in other sectors, including on:

- **Brazil:** Evaluation of the Indigenous Lands Project (PPTAL), funded by **KfW** and the **World Bank**. The evaluation compares the deforestation rates between treatment and matched control areas.
- **Tropical Andes:** GIE funded by the **MacArthur Foundation** to evaluate the impact of China's development finance on biodiversity conservation outcomes within ecological hotspots.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** Evaluation of the relationship between where **World Bank** anti-malaria interventions are placed and under 5 mortality rates.

HESN and AidData Background Information

The Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) is a partnership between USAID and seven universities to create a constellation of Development Labs. This network harnesses the ingenuity and passion of university students, researchers, faculty, and their innovative partners to incubate, catalyze and scale science and tech-based solutions to the world's most challenging development problems. Through support to the university-led Development Labs, HESN taps into a global pool of expertise to accelerate innovation through the discovery, creation, testing and scaling of efficient, cost-effective, accessible and sustainable solutions to global development challenges.

As one of the HESN Development Labs, AidData (at the College of William & Mary) provides geospatial data, analysis, tools, and evaluations so that development practitioners can maximize the impact of aid investments. USAID Operating Units can leverage the Global Development Lab and AidData to map project activities, build GIS capacity, capture citizen feedback, conduct research and impact evaluations on aid effectiveness and design decision support tools that make it easier to target investments and incorporate data into program planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

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