

Pre-bid queries and their responses

14 July 2016

The EPPI-Centre has received a number of queries about the call for systematic reviews (issued on 24th June, 2016). They are listed below along with their corresponding responses.

	Query	Response
1.	Could you elaborate what is business administrative services? Are you referring to business activities related to Women Entrepreneurship/ Women owned enterprises?	<p>Business administrative services are services that support business operations, such as Human Resources services, Information Technology services, personal assistant and secretarial services. This can include services that are outsourced and/or rely on call centres.</p> <p>There is also an interest in women entrepreneurs when the outcomes address 'Changing employment from traditional to untraditional sectors for women's employment' (see page 4 of the research brief).</p>
2.	With regard to policy sectors, do we need to cover women empowerment interventions across all the policy sectors mentioned in the Research brief word document on page 3. Or we can choose sectors which interest us.	<p>At present DFID's interest is in all policy sectors mentioned in the Research Brief (commercial agriculture, energy and higher productivity sectors). Proposals may argue for focusing on a subset although the commissioned team must be prepared to address all these sectors if DFID prefers to retain the brief at its current breadth. The call for systematic reviews specifies a two stage process where stage one involves an initial scoping of the literature followed by a discussion and decision about the most productive focus for subsequent review activity to complete the contract (page 19 of the call). This discussion will provide an opportunity to discuss both the precise focus of the review, including policy sectors of interest that will lead to the most useful evidence product for DFID given the relevant literature identified during this initial stage.</p>

	Query	Response
3.	<p>Regarding the policy sectors mentioned for Question 1: What are the main barriers to, and facilitators of, women’s participation in labour market sectors where participation is low? I would like to clarify if we have to address main barriers and facilitators of women participation in any one sector or all of the mentioned higher productivity sectors: trade, transportation, accommodation and food, and business administration.</p>	<p>The answer to this response is the same as to query (2).</p>
4.	<p>On the focus on women’s participation in labour markets - Are you interested solely in women’s <u>employment</u>, or women’s <u>livelihoods</u>? - which would include employment, self-employment and part-time work, including in the informal sector - so this would be the wider interpretation of women’s engagement in labour markets. Or would it be wider still and include self-provisioning and informal micro, small and survival enterprises, household agricultural and agro-processing, etc.?</p>	<p>Micro and small businesses are to be considered, but self-employment where there are no other employees, is not (page 3 of research brief).</p> <p>There is interest in women moving from survival enterprises to more economically productive enterprises, which includes moving from smallholdings or subsistence farming to commercial agriculture that is linked to larger business supply chains and larger markets (page 3 of the research brief).</p> <p>There is interest in women moving away from under employment (page 3 of the research brief) whether this is to part time or full time employment. For instance, this would include programmes and policies designed to encourage women to participate in labour market through interventions to help balance work and family responsibilities, such as availability of more flexible working-time arrangements, maternity and parental leave and the provision of affordable childcare facilities.</p>

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5.	Can we cost meta-analysis software such as Revman or CMA or we must use EPPI reviewer for meta-analysis? Likewise, for text mining in qualitative synthesis, could we use other software's such as R software?	Applicants can include software costs that will support their work. If they choose to use EPPI-Reviewer they can do so at no cost when using the software for either of the reviews commissioned here. We can provide technical support for EPPI-Reviewer free of charge but we cannot offer technical support for other software packages. EPPI-Reviewer should support all the analyses possible in RevMan and CMA (and far more besides) as it uses R packages to run the analyses.
6.	Are you interested in higher growth sub-sectors, within sectors that are otherwise quite sluggish – e.g. some agricultural and agro-processing sectors?	The interest is in women moving from less productive employment to more productive employment, whether this is through changing employment within a sector or moving from one sector to another. For instance, there is interest in women moving from survival enterprises to more economically productive enterprises, which includes moving from smallholdings or subsistence farming to commercial agriculture where productivity is higher and agriculture is linked to larger business supply chains and larger markets (page 3 of the research brief).

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7.	Is EPPI-Centre looking for an overview of the international literature or would you like a balance between this and some country case studies?	DFID is interested in an overview of the literature addressing low and middle income countries. It may be appropriate to include existing case studies where these are seen as making useful contributions to answering the review question. New primary research is not part of the brief. The call for systematic reviews specifies a two stage process where stage one involves an initial scoping of the literature followed by a discussion and decision about the most productive focus for subsequent review activity to complete the contract (page 19 of the call). This discussion will provide an opportunity to discuss both the precise focus of the review and the appropriate study designs that will lead to the most useful evidence product for DFID given the relevant literature identified during this initial stage.
8.	What stipulations from EPPI-Centre / DIFD will there be around the evidence quality appraisal and what evidence can be identified as 'quality' within the review? Will there be scope for the grantee to work with EPPI-Centre / DFID to define the quality benchmarking, or are there non-negotiable parameters or other guidelines already in place about what should / should not be included?	The choice of criteria for 'quality' will relate to both the review question and the confidence that can be placed in the review findings. The call for systematic reviews specifies a two stage process where stage one involves an initial scoping of the literature followed by a discussion and decision about the most productive focus for subsequent review activity to complete the contract (page 19 of the call). This discussion will provide an opportunity to discuss both the precise focus of the review and the appropriate quality benchmarking that will lead to the most useful evidence product for DFID given the relevant literature identified during this initial stage.

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9.	<p>Regarding the Financial Proposal format (Appendix 2) presented in the Call for Review word document. The financial proposal covers Personnel/staff cost (Table F1) and the workshop expenses (F2.a) which covers travel and accommodation expenses to disseminate the workshop on both pages. What about project related cost, such as, communication cost, documentation cost, for example, purchasing studies not available on UCL library and/or non-published reports, foreign study translation cost.</p>	<p>Please include all project related costs. They can be listed under 'Any other project expenses (specify below)' in 'Table-F2: Project Expenses (Consolidated)'.</p> <p>Please note, the EPPI-Centre cannot provide access for review teams to UCL library.</p>