

Request for Proposals: Modeling a New Social and Economic Investment Case for Family Planning

Background

Between 2022 and 2025, the Family Planning Impact Consortium (FP-Impact) will conduct a research, modeling and dissemination project centered on how support for women's family planning intentions provides a path to women's empowerment and economic development. The core research and modeling team is made up of the Guttmacher Institute, the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), Harvard University, the Institute for Disease Modeling (IDM) and Avenir Health.

This RFP will result in an invitation to 2-3 additional modeling groups to join the FP-Impact Consortium.

The research and modeling consortium, FP-Impact, aims to generate and disseminate robust, stakeholder-informed estimates of how family planning (FP, defined as contraception and abortion), policies and behaviors affect people's well-being across the life course (including adolescents) and a range of social and economic domains. FP-Impact will adopt a model-based approach to generate evidence which will be used to advocate for mobilization of i) donor government development/foreign aid contributions and ii) national government allocations for FP.

The evidence generated will center on supporting women's family planning intentions as a path to women's empowerment and economic development. These new model-based estimates will help expand the framing of the value of investing in family planning from primarily a health rationale (e.g., reducing maternal morbidity and mortality) to a rationale that includes women's economic empowerment and economic development. In short, the models are expected to examine the additional value of investing in family planning not only for surviving but also for thriving over the life course, from adolescence through adulthood.

Evidence that illustrates cross-sectoral benefits of FP is expected to be relevant to international and national stakeholders outside of the health sector (e.g., Ministry of Finance and other key decision-makers) and could help to make the case for consistent and stable donor and national government annual resource allocations to FP activities.

RFP Objectives

Up to three modeling groups will be selected to join the modeling team of the FP-Impact Consortium.

The modeling groups will estimate the impact of FP (contraception and abortion) on women's empowerment (which broadly includes agency, gender equality, human capital and economic activity).

The Consortium's approach is to support a coordinated set of model-based estimates addressing different thematic domains, mechanisms and outcomes within its conceptual framework, that will be in part shaped by the invited modeling groups in response to this RFP. These new model-based estimates will help address existing gaps and current limits of research evidence on the longer-term impact of family planning on women's empowerment and economic outcomes. Moreover, a micro-level approach allows for consideration of FP over the life course and inequities across different population subgroups than model-based estimates of the average impact across an entire population.

Suggested Methodology of RFP Modeling Groups

Multiple models will be developed in parallel (or complementary), though can differ in methodology, assumptions, inputs (contraception, method mix, abortion), outcomes (the array of empowerment outcomes, human capital measures, economic activity including informal employment), geography (different sub-nation regions, different countries, different regions), or age-groups (adolescents, women aged 20+, women aged 35+). Models need not claim global generalizability and can be context specific, thus allowing nuanced modelling by geography and age. Models may focus on particular selected aspects of those parameters listed above. Models may use any of a variety of structures, such as statistical modeling, compartmental models, or individual-based models.

Modeling groups can be broad in their aim of modeling the impact of family planning on women's empowerment, or they may be narrow in scope (such as focusing on a specific age range, or contraceptive type, or abortion), or narrow in context (such as a specific geographic region). Modeling groups that complement other groups, for example those focused on measurement of indicators, are welcome. Adaptation or addition to existing or previous modeling work is welcomed. Models may use any software or programming language, but open-source options (e.g. Python, R) will be viewed favorably.

Focus countries

FP-Impact's focus is on LMICs with a particular, though not exclusive, focus on Sub-Saharan Africa.

Expected Outputs of Modeling Groups

1. Each modeling group will submit a methodology paper to Gates Open Research, aimed at technical audiences.
2. Each modeling group will submit a model-specific paper with their results for publication in an open-source journal, aimed at implementation and decision-making audiences. Prior to submission, preliminary estimates will be shared at the second expert thematic consultation workshop, and model-specific papers revised accordingly based on feedback from that group.
3. Each of the modeling groups will publish their data and code in an open-source platform (through the journal publication portal, for example).
4. Building off the different model-based estimates, Avenir Health will develop a web-based tool that incorporates high level estimates from the models to create a simplified, illustrative summary tool that can be used at the country level to estimate the impact of investing in FP. Each modeling group will be expected to assist in the adaptation of their model to this tool.

Submission Guidelines for this RFP

Please submit your application addressing each of the sections below within five pages, letter sized, normal margins, 11-point font (Calibri or Arial), single spaced with normal spacing between line. Appendices and external links will not be reviewed, only the contents of the five pages will be reviewed. Links to existing data and models can be provided, but information on those websites cannot be assumed to be read to inform your application.

Executive Summary: Write a 300-word summary of your proposed modeling project. Include details of the aim of your project, clearly state the input and output variables you will focus on, any geographic focus you will take, and any age-range focus. Please summarize your peer review paper publication plan, and your commitment to teamwork.

Aims: State your modeling team’s aims, including a clear statement of your groups focus within the topic of the impact of FP on women’s wellbeing.

Model: Briefly state any ongoing modeling initiatives you will leverage.

Modeling team members: List the names of team members, their institutional affiliations, their job titles, their role on the project, and their time commitment to the project.

Data Sources: Please state your data sources, if you already have the data in hand to use, and agreements to immediately proceed with using the data. Please state your right to share the data in the FP-Impact open-source tools, either to post as open-source data or provide instructions for open-source access.

Code: Provide details of your coding software, the level of development or adaptation of existing models, software you will use, and your ability (and commitment) to sharing code on an open-source platform.

Modeling: Please provide details of your modeling approach, the framework and methodology you will apply, and key assumptions. Details of input and output variables, geography, age, or other parameters of the model can be included here.

Please provide details of who will lead the modeling, including relevant, current, models that may be adapted for this project. If models will be adapted, please state you have the copyright to use this adapted model. Please state your preparedness to complete the model within the project timeline.

Peer Review Paper Submission: Please provide details of your experience in preparing methodological and results papers for peer review publication. Also provide details of who will lead the writing of the papers.

Commitment to team work and open source: Please state your team’s commitment to collaboration within the FP-Impact Consortium. This includes the tangible commitment to data, code and publication to open-source platforms, and also includes intangible elements of working collaboratively with other modeling teams and researchers within the FP-Impact Consortium.

Budget: The budget maximum is \$200,000. Please provide an itemized budget.

The budget maximum is inclusive of indirect costs. Indirect costs are capped at 10%.

Direct costs are the expenses required to execute a grant that are directly attributable and can be reasonably allocated to the project. Project staff salaries, travel expenses, materials directly and solely used for the project, and consultants required to execute the grant are examples.

Indirect costs cover institutional support staff, depreciation on equipment, facilities and utilities.

Timeline: As modeling groups will be working within a team environment, the timeline will be defined by the Consortium. Please indicate how you will complete the methodological paper, results generation, results paper, data and code sharing, and modeling tool collaboration within a 24-month timeframe.

Conflict of Interest: Proposals should clarify if the modeling team members have any affiliation with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Guttmacher Institute, Avenir Health, AFIDEP, or the Institute for Disease Modeling. COIs must be declared, but do not necessarily disqualify a modeling group.

Submit

Please email a single MS word or PDF document to fpimpactconsortium@guttmacher.org by January 15th 2023, 12am Eastern Standard Time.

Review

Proposals will be reviewed according to the following weights: 20% understanding of purpose, 50% strength of technical approach, 20% experience of proposed team, 10% budget.

Key dates and deadlines

December 1 st , 2022	Application period opens
January 15 th , 2023	Application period closes, deadline to submit
February 15 th , 2023	Proposal review completed; successful applicants informed
March 1 st , 2023	Estimated project start date
February 28 th , 2025	Estimated project end date