

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Call for Capacity Statements for USAID/EI Salvador and Central America-Mexico Regional Mission and OCE Impact Evaluation Design for the Integrated Responses on Migration in Central America (IRM) Program in Costa Rica, Panama and El Salvador

1. We note where LMIC participation is encouraged, but does local partnership enter into the review criteria given the USAID localization initiative impact scoring?
A: We are looking for teams that demonstrate meaningful engagement of researchers with primary institutional affiliations in LMICs, i.e. that those researchers have leadership roles in research design and analysis. Teams that plan to engage LMIC researchers, but that have not yet identified a particular researcher to join the team, are encouraged to describe their plan in their capacity statement. We anticipate that research teams will work with local partners (e.g., data collection firms, academic institutions, etc.) in Phase 2, if implemented, but that is not part of the review criteria.
2. Section VI. lists the capacity statement review criteria.
 - a. What are the weights assigned to the different criteria?
 - b. What are the weights assigned to different responses? (E.g. are there different weights for different subject-matter expertise such as economics, political science, sociology, etc.?)**A:** We do not give weights to the different criteria in our assessments. We score each criteria on its own and then consider the tradeoffs and complementaries in a holistic adjudication. We do not weight different subject-matter expertise (e.g. economics, political science, etc) differently.
3. The Integrated Responses for Migration in Central America is planned to end in 2026. Are there any new initiatives being planned for the 2025/2026 period, or might the activity extend past 2026? RCTs work better when planned from the beginning of an intervention, so sites and/or individuals can be randomly assigned to a treatment or control group. Will this be possible?
A: USAID and IRM plan each year's interventions in the previous year, and aim to learn about the impact of interventions that are currently in planning stages and/or are expanding their reach and/or scope in 2025-26. Some of these may be ongoing interventions that reach new participants and may present an opportunity for randomization as they expand; others will present opportunities for randomization from the start. We expect that in Phase 1, the research team will identify aspects of the programming about which the research team, USAID, and IRM share research questions and in which randomization is possible.
4. The call lists three countries, is there a ranking of which countries are of greatest interest?
A: No. There are unique research opportunities in each country, as well as some possibility of multi-country research of similar interventions. The final decision about the evaluation(s) will be based on the design options presented by the research team, taking into account feasibility and USAID and IRM interest.
5. The call lists several potential areas for research, is there a ranking of which areas are of greatest interest?
A: No. The team is open to focusing on any of the potential areas, depending on the research team's expertise, alignment on research questions, and determination of feasibility.
6. Can we include travel to/from the region in the budget for in-person visits to the field and team meetings?
A: Yes. We expect that Phase 1 will include an in-person visit to one or more of the countries of interest to meet with the USAID/EI Salvador-CAM team, IOM implementing team, and other stakeholders as appropriate. Please budget accordingly.