

IITA Internal Review of Research Proposals

– Frequently Asked Questions

What is an internal review of research proposals?

“Do no harm” is a key principle of research ethics. An internal review of research proposals ensures that IITA scientists have taken “do no harm” and other ethical principles into account. This is particularly important when human subjects are involved in the studies. The review also ensures that there is informed consent and voluntary research participation. Respondents should be treated with dignity and respect and their rights to privacy and confidentiality must be fully protected.

Why are research proposals subjected to an internal review?

Research proposals for studies involving human subjects have to be approved by the Internal Review Board (IRB). The review process ensures the protection of research participants from physical, psychological, social, or economic risks. The internal review also safeguards the integrity of IITA and its researchers (e.g., against lawsuit). Moreover, an increasing number of scientific journals demand proof of IRB approval before publishing research results.

Who needs to submit their proposal?

IITA researchers who intend to conduct research involving human subjects must submit their review application to the IRB. The research might include baseline surveys, on-farm trials, demonstrations, randomized control trials, field days, surveys, semi-structured interviews, or focus group discussions. The research also needs internal review if respondents’ personal documents (in identifiable form) will be accessed as part of an existing published or unpublished source or database. Further, projects will be subject to internal review if biological materials such as blood, urine, etc. will be collected as, for example, in nutritional research. All research on vertebrate animals also requires IRB approval.

How are proposals screened?

Proposals are screened on the basis of ethical standards and protocols. Researchers must complete a review application form and submit it to the IRB together with a copy of their research proposal, a consent form, and an outline of how they intend to select the research participants and maintain the confidentiality of participants’ records. After a thorough examination of the

submitted application form and associated documents, the IRB determines whether there will be no risk or only minimal risk to the participants that can be justified by the benefits of the project. The IRB may suggest changes and request for resubmission of the application if the necessary ethical considerations are not made during the first submission.

When do researchers have to submit their proposals?

Researchers have to submit their applications for internal review after the project is funded and well before commencing their research activities. In a case where donors require ethical approval as part of the proposal submission, it is permissible to submit the application for internal review before the project is funded.

Who can I turn to in case of further questions?

Should you need further clarification or information on whether your proposal requires ethical review, please contact Mary Badejo, (M.Badejo@cgiar.org).

IITA IRB Policy - June 2016 - <https://bit.ly/2Xg2Arl>

IITA IRB_Application Form_Blank

- <https://bit.ly/2XNlqD8>



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