

## J-PAL INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE (IGI)

### Request for Proposals (Spring 2025)

J-PAL's Innovation in Government Initiative (IGI) is calling for proposals to fund technical assistance to governments to adapt, pilot, and scale evidence-informed innovations that have been previously evaluated with a randomized evaluation(s) and found effective in improving the lives of people living in poverty. **IGI encourages scale-relevant proposals across multiple sectors in low- and middle-income countries<sup>1</sup>.** IGI also has earmarked funding for **livelihood and health interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

**IGI applications must meet the core eligibility requirements outlined below** (please refer to [6. Eligibility](#) for further details):

- **Who can apply:** All J-PAL affiliates, J-PAL invited researchers, post-docs and J-PAL offices are eligible to apply in collaboration with their government partners and other collaborators. J-PAL offices that are applying to IGI are required to have a J-PAL affiliate or eligible invited researcher involved in the project as a scientific advisor.
- **Government partnership requirements:** IGI will only consider projects with a specific government partner(s). The implementing partner has to be a government body or an NGO partner delivering services through government infrastructure with the government actively involved in the partnership.
- **Evidence requirements:** All IGI projects must be based on direct evidence from one or more randomized evaluations, at least one of which should have been conducted by a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher and/or funded by a J-PAL initiative and the results of which must be available in writing (preferably in the public domain). Additional information on required documentation is detailed in [Annex II](#).

Please submit a short **Letter of Interest (LOI)** by **March 13, 11:59 AM (noon) US ET.**

Applicants whose proposals are confirmed to be eligible are requested to submit **full proposals** by **April 21, 11:59 AM (noon) US ET.** The link to submit the LOI on WizeHive is here:

<https://j-pal.wizehive.app/program/igi-scaling>

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<sup>1</sup> For scale-relevant proposals related to education and environment energy and climate change, J-PAL's [Learning for All Initiative \(LAI\)](#) and [King Climate Action Initiative \(K-CAI\)](#) remain the principal funding channels for scale grants through [path-to-scale awards](#). Nonetheless, for this round, **IGI is open to proposals from applicants who missed the LAI and K-CAI deadlines or those who have already submitted more than three proposals to a single initiative.** If you have already applied to LAI or K-CAI's ongoing RFPs this year, please do not submit the same application to IGI's ongoing RFP.

**FALL 2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) TIMELINE:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>MILESTONE</b>
February 24 2025 (Monday)	Request for Proposals Opens
March 13 2025 (Thursday)	Letter of Interest (LoI) Deadline
April 21 2025 (Monday)	Proposal Submission Deadline
May 2025	Board Review of Proposals
June 2025	Funding Decisions Announced

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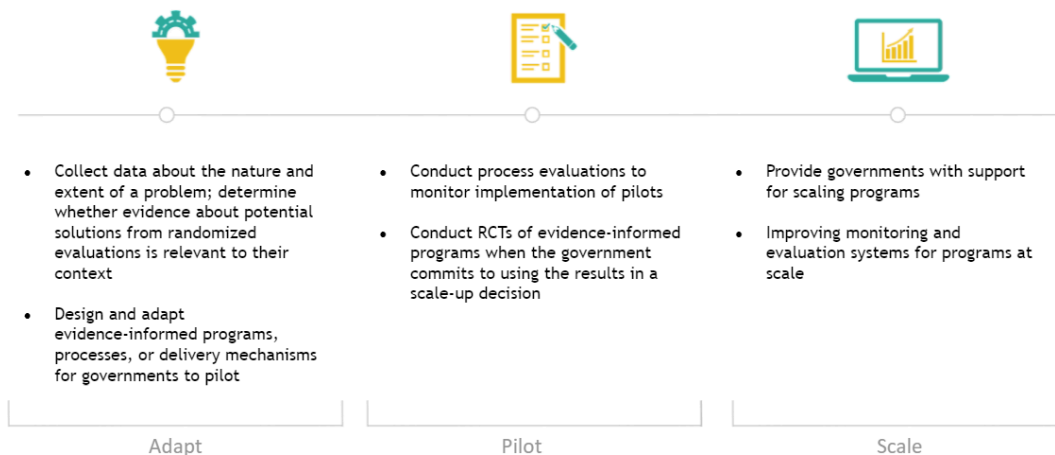
## 1. MOTIVATION

Many governments around the world are eager to use evidence to improve the effectiveness of their social programs and policies, especially when it comes to essential services like health and social assistance. Meanwhile, universities and research organizations are producing and synthesizing evidence from rigorous impact evaluations that can be used to design and improve these programs and policies. However, demand from governments and good research are not enough to change lives. Using evidence to inform change at scale also requires a deep understanding of context and systems, coupled with political will, a policy window, and implementation capacity. Identifying these opportunities and building strong partnerships to apply evidence takes time and resources.

For more than a decade, the J-PAL network and our partners have built long-term partnerships with governments around the world to [increase the use of evidence in policy](#), and adapt and scale programs and policies informed by evidence. Together we work with government partners on their policy priorities, helping to determine whether and how evidence is relevant to their context, supporting them in piloting programs and policies leveraging this evidence, and building systems for data-enabled program delivery and monitoring. We believe supporting governments during this middle phase is critical to bridge the gap between the generation of promising evidence and the effective delivery of evidence-informed policies and programs at scale. As such, IGI aims to fund technical assistance to governments to adapt, pilot, and scale evidence-informed innovations that have been previously evaluated with a randomized evaluation(s) and found to improve the lives of people living in poverty.

## 2. IGI'S FUNDING PRIORITIES

Applicants to the current RFP can request funding to support technical assistance to government partners to adapt, pilot, or scale evidence-informed innovations that have been previously evaluated with a randomized evaluation(s) and that have the potential to improve the lives of people living in poverty. Innovations can be new programs or policies, or changes to existing programs, policies, processes, or delivery systems. Proposals should clearly be demand-driven, focused on issues that the government partner has identified as priorities. IGI has a strong preference to fund partnerships in low- and middle-income countries. Funding can be used to provide support at various stages in the scaling process, including support to:



IGI accepts proposals for work across a range of contexts: In some cases, applicants are supporting a government partner to adopt an evidence-based innovation at scale in the same context after collaborating together on a randomized evaluation that had promising results. In other cases, applicants are collaborating with a government partner to apply insights from one or more randomized evaluations conducted in other contexts to the partner's local context. In either case, we look for clear demand from government partners and high potential for adoption of evidence-based policies or programs at scale, including detail on how the project will contribute to evidence being used in specific policy decisions.

### **3. PROPOSAL TYPES**

IGI will consider three types of proposals that can be used to provide technical assistance to policy partners at various stages in the scaling process:

#### **3.1. Adapt**

*Up to approximately \$75,000, suggested period of performance: one year*

This type of support is for projects where the government partner has identified the potential evidence-informed solution, but more work needs to be done before they can pilot a scalable version of it. These grants can be used to support the government partner in designing and adapting evidence-informed programs, policies, or delivery mechanisms to their context and systems so that they are ready to begin piloting it. This can include collecting data about the nature and extent of a problem to determine whether potential solutions are relevant to the context (i.e., conducting a needs assessment or scoping/feasibility study).

#### **3.2. Policy Pilot**

*Between \$100,000–200,000, suggested period of performance: two to three years*

This type of support is for projects where the partner is ready to pilot the evidence-informed solution but would like technical support in either setting up a pilot, making sure it maintains fidelity to the evidence in terms of the program features that drove positive impacts, and/or monitoring pilot implementation quality. These grants can be used to support the government partner in piloting a scalable version of an evidence-based solution, including: preparing for the pilot (training, program manuals, etc.), conducting process evaluations to monitor implementation quality, conducting path-to-scale research (including RCTs to evaluate interventions previously tested at a smaller scale or replication trials that test previously-evaluated interventions in new contexts), analyzing pilot results and if successful, helping the partner to make a case for further scale.

#### **3.3. Scale**

*Up to approximately \$300,000, suggested period of performance: three to four years*

This type of support is for projects where the partner has already piloted a version of the evidence-informed solution in their context (either in a randomized evaluation or policy pilot) or elsewhere, with sufficient justification that the solution has been responsibly adapted and contextualized. Based on previous results, the government partner would like to move forward with a scale-up and would like technical support in expanding the program

more widely. This grant can support a range of activities that can include but are not limited to: conducting analysis to help them secure key approvals for the scale-up, ensuring implementation and rollout protocols maintain fidelity to the evidence in terms of the key program features that drove positive impacts, at-scale RCTs, and/or setting up low-cost partner-owned monitoring systems for programs at scale to report periodic progress to key decision-makers.

**Applying evidence responsibly:** Drawing on evidence from randomized evaluations is not enough to determine whether a program or policy is relevant and appropriate for a particular context and feasible for a government to implement well. This also requires a deep understanding of theory, the local context and systems, and analysis of descriptive data. Such an understanding is often gained through the process of adapting the program model to local institutions and systems and then piloting one or more versions of it to see if high-quality implementation is feasible. Applications seeking to apply evidence in a new context should include a formal scoping process to work with the government partner to diagnose the problem and determine whether evidence is relevant, as well as a process for adapting and piloting the program model in the new context before scaling.

IGI expects to award multiple grants during this funding round. Projects can receive up to US\$300,000 per round, but the typical grant will be between US\$25,000 and \$200,000. The total amount awarded to a single project in its entire life cycle will not exceed US\$500,000, except in special circumstances.

#### 4. FOCUS AREAS AND GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES

IGI is inviting scale-relevant proposals across multiple sectors in low-and middle-income countries, with earmarked funding available for livelihoods and health interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa, as described below:

##### 4.1. Main Funding Pool: Call for scale-relevant proposals across multiple sectors in low-and middle-income countries

**IGI invites scale-relevant proposals across multiple sectors**, including agriculture, finance, firms, gender, health, labor markets, political economy and governance, social protection, and crime, violence, and conflict.

For scale-relevant proposals related to education and environment energy and climate change, J-PAL's [Learning for All Initiative \(LAI\)](#) and [King Climate Action Initiative \(K-CAI\)](#) remain the principal funding channels for scale grants through [path-to-scale awards](#). **Nonetheless, for this round, IGI is open to proposals from applicants who missed the LAI and K-CAI deadlines or those who have already submitted more than three proposals to a single initiative.** If you have already applied to LAI or K-CAI's ongoing RFPs this year, please do not submit the same application to IGI's ongoing RFP.

From this pot, we will prioritize proposals from **low- and middle-income countries** and anticipate **awarding between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 to support 5-8 projects** that meet IGI's core criteria.

#### **4.2. Earmarked funding: Boosting income at scale through livelihoods interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Through generous support from the Livelihood Impact Fund (LIF), IGI has a portion of funding reserved for evidence-based interventions that support **livelihoods, particularly proposals that focus on boosting income at scale.**

LIF is interested in supporting programs that focus on boosting income through training and skilling, decent formal and informal work opportunities (including remote work, gig work, youth employment schemes), agriculture development, entrepreneurship and firm support, infrastructure development for economic growth, migration, female labor market achievement, poverty graduation models, as well as insurance and risk mitigation. LIF is also interested in programs that make poverty graduation models more cost-effective. Finally, LIF is interested in programs that boost income by addressing social norms affecting worker and firm productivity, as well as information asymmetries in labor markets and firm opportunities.

We have a strong preference to fund livelihood partnerships in **Sub-Saharan Africa** (with the exception of South Africa). We expect to **award up to \$540,000 for 3-5 projects** that meet the provisions of this area and all core criteria of IGI. Note that funding above and beyond the \$540,000 for projects focused on livelihood partnerships in Sub-Saharan Africa could be covered by IGI's larger pool of sector agnostic funding, noted above.

#### **4.3. Earmarked funding: Improving the reach, quality, and take-up of health services and products in Sub-Saharan Africa**

IGI encourages scale relevant proposals focused on improving the reach, quality, and take-up of **health services and products in Sub-Saharan Africa.** We expect to **award up to \$110,000 to 1-2 projects** that meet the provisions of this area and all core criteria of IGI. Note that funding above and beyond the \$110,000 for projects focused on improving the reach, quality, and take-up of health services and products in Sub-Saharan Africa could be covered by IGI's larger pool of sector agnostic funding, noted above.

If you have questions about whether your proposal qualifies, please email [IGI@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:IGI@povertyactionlab.org).

### **5. CROSS-CUTTING THEMES**

IGI will also prioritize partnerships that explore one or more cross-cutting themes that we believe are important for effectively implementing programs or policies at scale and drawing general lessons for others working to scale evidence-informed social programs with governments. Applicants should include a short summary of how incorporating one or more of the themes below in their proposals might enhance the scalability, reach, or likelihood of success, or lower the cost of the intervention or cost to IGI.

1. **Technology- and data-enabled program delivery and monitoring:** Phones, tablets, digital transfers, artificial intelligence and other technologies have the potential to improve and reduce the costs of program delivery and monitoring.
2. **Implementation science:** Piloting and pressure-testing different implementation models before selecting one for scaling can help identify models that are both feasible to implement well and lead to sufficient take-up and use among program participants.
3. **Cost analysis:** Analyzing the costs of various program or policy options are critical inputs for policy decisions, so collecting cost data early and systematically is critical.

## 6. ELIGIBILITY

**IGI applications must meet the core eligibility requirements outlined below:**

1. **Who can apply:** All J-PAL affiliated researchers, J-PAL regional office invited researchers, researchers invited to any of J-PAL's other initiatives (hereafter jointly referred to as "eligible invited researchers"), J-PAL post-docs, and J-PAL offices are eligible to apply in collaboration with their government partners and other collaborators. J-PAL offices that are applying to IGI are required to have a J-PAL affiliate or eligible invited researcher involved in the project as a scientific advisor.<sup>2</sup> Please note that Initiative-invited researchers are nominated and reviewed on a trimester basis, with the review based on a nominee's previous research with a particular emphasis on the ability to perform randomized evaluations. All proposals may include collaborators outside of this network including other researchers and NGO partners.
2. **Government partnership requirements:** IGI will only consider projects with a specific government partner(s) and will prioritize government partners in low- and middle-income countries. For all IGI projects, the implementing partner has to be a government body or a non-governmental partner delivering services through government infrastructure (e.g. government schools, clinics, etc.) with the government actively involved in the partnership. Government partners can be national, state, regional, provincial, city, etc., including individual ministries or agencies. Governments must be the main recipients of technical assistance, but governments cannot be the receiving institutions of funds. Institutions receiving the funds can include J-PAL offices, IPA offices, and other non-governmental partners working with J-PAL affiliated and eligible invited researchers [**Note:** MIT now requires that at least one project PI be employed by the organization receiving the subaward and funds. Please see this [memo](#) for more information]
3. **Evidence requirements:** All IGI projects must be based on direct evidence from one or more randomized evaluations, at least one of which should have been conducted by a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher and/or funded by a J-PAL initiative and the results of which must be available in writing (preferably in the public domain). Applicants must

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<sup>2</sup> The Affiliate Letter of Support, a required part of the application, must detail the ways in which the affiliate(s) and/or eligible invited researcher(s) plans to be involved. A template is available on the website and application form.



provide details on the one or more randomized evaluations on which the project is based. Additional information on required documentation is detailed in [Annex II](#).

### Notes for All Award Types

- To prevent concentration of awards to any specific researchers, and to reduce the burden on initiative review boards, applicants are limited to submitting three proposals, inclusive of all proposal types, per 12-month period per initiative (either as PI or co-PI). **For example, if a researcher submitted two pilot or full-scale proposals in a Spring 2024 round, they can then only submit a maximum of 1 pilot or full-scale proposal in a Fall 2024 round.**
- In order to be considered for new initiative grants, applicants must be current on reporting for all their other grants, across all J-PAL initiatives. **Researchers whose projects are more than 2 months late on any reports to any J-PAL Initiative despite reminders from J-PAL and who have not received an approved extension will not be eligible to have new projects funded by J-PAL.** You may submit applications to the Initiative, but your application will not be considered for funding until your deliverables become current.

**If you are uncertain about whether your team or proposal is eligible, please email [IGI@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:IGI@povertyactionlab.org).**

## 7. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION MATERIALS

To respond to this RFP, please follow the directions listed below.

1. WizeHive, the new grant management system (GMS) J-PAL is using for our proposals, is more user-friendly. It will, however, require a new login. Please use the [Application Instructions](#) and follow the prompts in the links on the [RFP website](#) to create a new login. Or, if you have already successfully submitted an LOI or proposal to a J-PAL competition, simply log into WizeHive with your credentials.
2. Submit a required Letter of Intent (LOI) by **March 13, 11:59 AM (noon) US ET**. The link to submit the LOI on WizeHive is here: <https://j-pal.wizehive.app/program/igi-scaling>
3. **If you receive an invitation to apply to the main application**, please follow the next steps outlined in the proposal guidelines document. **Please read both the [Proposal Guidelines](#) document and the [FAQ](#) section on the [RFP website](#) in detail before answering the proposal questions in WizeHive.** Each of the following documents includes a checklist and guidance on what to address within each narrative prompt – guiding your completion of all required submission materials.

4. Upon completing your proposal and uploading proposal attachments (budget, letters, etc.), submit the proposal by **April 21, 11:59 AM (noon) US ET**.

## 8. ACTIVITIES FUNDED

Proposals can include a wide range of activities, including but not limited to:

- **Scoping research:** Proposals can include research and data collection to determine whether scaling the evidence-based policy or program is likely to be feasible and be relevant and appropriate in the specific context. *(for Adapt and Policy Pilot proposals)*
- **Innovation design support:** Staff and/or NGO technical support to the government in designing and adapting the evidence-informed policy, program, process, or delivery mechanism to pilot. *(for Adapt and Policy Pilot proposals)*
- **Pilot innovation costs:** Proposals can include some pilot implementation costs. IGI does not fund the implementation costs of scale beyond the pilot phase, as this funding should be secured by the government or from another third-party source. *(for Policy Pilot proposals)*
- **Capacity building:** As long as they directly contribute to the adoption at scale of an effective innovation, proposals can include capacity-building activities to help the government design monitoring and data systems to track their performance. Proposals must demonstrate why these activities are essential for achieving the end goal. *(for Adapt, Policy Pilot, and Scale proposals)*
- **Embedding staff:** Hiring or seconding a part- or full-time staff member with relevant expertise to work directly with the government partner during the scaling process, either embedded in the government body itself or just working closely with them. *(for Adapt, Policy Pilot, and Scale proposals)*
- **Monitoring and process evaluations:** Data collection for process evaluations to monitor the implementation of government pilots, analyzing pilot results and if successful, helping the partner make a case for broader adoption at scale. *(for Policy Pilot and Scale proposals)*
- **Scaling support:** Providing governments with technical support for scaling successful pilots and improving systems for monitoring and evaluation programs or policies at scale. *(for Scale proposals)*
- **Path-to-scale research:** Unlike other J-PAL funding initiatives, knowledge creation and funding randomized evaluations is not IGI's main goal. However, we recognize that in some cases rigorous evidence of effectiveness at scale and in the same context is a critical input for a government's decision about whether and how to adopt a program or policy at scale. In these cases, IGI allows proposals that include partial funding for randomized evaluations. Grants can be used for path-to-scale research that builds on existing RCT evidence from completed (and ideally published) studies, such as RCTs at scale to evaluate interventions previously tested at a small scale, or replication trials that test previously-evaluated interventions in new contexts. The partner must have a strong commitment to using the evidence from at-scale research activities, and there must be a clear path to scale the intervention post-RCT. *(for Policy pilot and Scale proposals)*

### **IGI funding cannot be used to:**

- Support any political activities or lobbying.
- Support staff working to build relationships with several government partners who have not yet agreed to collaborate with the applicant team.
- Fund evidence reviews for governments that have not demonstrated interest in a longer engagement to adapt, pilot, and scale innovations informed by evidence.

## **9. GRANT CONDITIONS**

All applicants selected for awards will be asked to:

1. **Research conduct:** Grantees will be required to have IRB approval or exemption from the IRB of Record. **The IRB approval must be held by the institution that enters into the subaward agreement with MIT** (the ITRA). Similarly, **the Principal Investigator (PI) of a subaward issued by MIT must be employed by the organization receiving the subaward and funds and must be listed as the main PI on the IRB** ([see here for further details and FAQ](#)). Specific instructions will be given in the Notice of Award.
2. **Letter of Transmission:** Grantees must provide a letter from the receiving institution of the award to show that they have reviewed your proposal and accept your budget. Please follow the MIT approved language for the Letter of Transmission as follows:
  - a. **Example language for Letter of Transmission:** (On ITRA letterhead)  
<ITRA> is pleased to support the <Name of research> proposal and will plan on carrying out the work in accordance with the submitted budget. <NAME OF PI at ITRA> will serve as <ITRA's> Principal Investigator for this work. In this role, he/she is responsible for the implementation of this project in accordance with this proposal and with appropriate research and data protection practices. Please contact him/her with any concerns which may arise related to project implementation.
3. **Peer-review proposals:** Grantees may be requested to peer-review proposals in future IGI rounds in which they are not applying for funding. Acceptance of funding signals the grantee's consent to peer-review proposals upon IGI's request.
4. **Project registration** (*for projects associated with planned or ongoing randomized evaluations only*): Grantees conducting full RCTs with partial funding from IGI are required to register their trial in the AEA RCT registry. Within three months of the start date indicated on the proposal, grantees must register their trial with the [AEA RCT Registry](#). Registration includes 18 required fields, such as your name and a small subset of your IRB requirements. There is also the opportunity to include more information, including power calculations and an optional pre-analysis plan.

5. **Reporting:** Grantees will be requested to provide a brief start-up report, annual financial updates; annual progress reports; a final financial report within 60 days of completion of the award period; and (*for projects associated with planned or ongoing randomized evaluations only*) a final substantive report with preliminary results within 12 months of completion of the award period, which will be made public on the J-PAL website. To contribute to J-PAL's learning agenda about how to work with governments most effectively, grantees will also be requested to provide a brief narrative, timeline, and any relevant government testimony or documents showing whether evidence from randomized evaluations or IGI-funded technical assistance contributed to any government decisions.
6. **Collecting and reporting program cost data** (*primarily Policy Pilot and Scale awards and projects associated with planned or ongoing randomized evaluations*): Policymakers are interested in program costs, as it is one of the key factors in their decision to support a program. Cost data also allows for [cost effectiveness analysis \(CEA\)](#), which J-PAL may conduct (with permission from the researchers), even if such analysis is not part of an academic paper. IGI-funded projects are therefore typically required to collect and report (i) policy or program cost data sufficient to conduct a cost-effectiveness analysis, and (ii) implementation and scale processes sufficient to inform how a policy or program is implemented so it could be adopted at scale in a new context. Exemptions may be sought for early-stage projects without meaningful implementation of a program or policy (such as some *Adapt* projects). In order to facilitate cost collection, IGI awards include \$1,000 to defray expenses associated with collecting cost data. IGI will provide a costing worksheet for grantees to update annually. If grantees are unable to collect detailed cost data, grantees are still required to provide estimates of total program cost, average cost per beneficiary, and marginal cost to add another beneficiary. IGI requires grantees to collect and report the cost of the program they are evaluating separately from all research costs in their final narrative report. We recommend research teams regularly track costs as they are incurred to maximize accuracy. While not required, many teams also find it easier to submit cost data reports on an annual basis.
7. **Collecting and reporting implementation processes:** Grantees must document and share implementation and scale-up processes sufficient to inform how a program is implemented so it could be scaled-up in a new context. This can involve sharing an existing program manual or other program documentation in addition to grant reports that are formal deliverables.
8. **Collecting and reporting Gender-disaggregated data:** J-PAL, through its Gender sector, is making an effort to study heterogeneity in program impacts by beneficiary/participant gender more systematically. Please note that the following request only applies to J-PAL internal reports and does not extend to the academic paper or online J-PAL summary.

Many studies funded by J-PAL initiatives already collect study participants' gender. In such cases, and when outcome data are individual-specific, we request that grantees conduct heterogeneity analyses by beneficiary gender for the study's main results for internal reporting to J-PAL (to be shared in the final grant report). A single study might be underpowered to detect heterogeneous treatment effects, or null results might not

seem interesting in one study, but these findings may be meaningful when included in an analysis across studies. J-PAL will use the reported results for (a) determining potential pooled statistical analyses to conduct across studies and (b) generating gender-related policy lessons. Our reporting template will include a question on this, which researchers are encouraged to fill in when applicable. We recognize that there will be cases where this reporting is not applicable, for various reasons. In these cases, the PIs can just provide a brief explanation to be shared with the Gender sector.

9. **Data publication:** IGI strongly recommends data publication for all projects. Projects that receive IGI funding towards any aspect of a randomized evaluation **must** publish de-identified research data in an open access, online database at the end of the research period, in accordance with J-PAL's [Data and Code Availability Policy](#). Even if the randomized evaluation is not funded by J-PAL, this requirement may also apply if the results of a planned or ongoing randomized evaluation are likely to play an important role in a government's decision to scale a program, policy, or innovation. In such cases, if your project is awarded IGI funding, then IGI will, during the grant finalization process, review the specific details of your proposal and determine on a case-by-case basis whether this requirement applies to your project. J-PAL's Research, Education, and Training team can work with you to clean, label, de-identify, document and replicate datasets collected as part of a randomized trial before publishing them in the [J-PAL Dataverse](#) or another data repository of your choice. Requests for data publication services can be made by sending an email to [data@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:data@povertyactionlab.org).
10. **Participate in IGI activities:** Grantees may be requested to participate in one of IGI's activities at a mutually agreed time and place. Activities may include evidence workshops, matchmaking conferences, or presentations to IGI's donors.
11. **Credit IGI:** Any presentations and publications, including academic papers, policy briefs, press releases, blogs, and organizational newsletters, that emerge from this project should credit IGI. The exact wording on crediting IGI and donor support will be provided in the terms of your award.
12. **J-PAL office engagement:** If the award recipient is not a J-PAL office, grantees may be asked to periodically (no more than once a year) participate in a call with IGI staff and the Executive Director or their designee(s) from the relevant J-PAL regional office to share updates on the project. This will enable the regional office to have an understanding of, and to learn from, the J-PAL-funded scale projects in their region.
13. **Summary Evaluations:** J-PAL will write a brief summary of this ongoing funded research to post on the J-PAL website and share across J-PAL's social media platforms. If you would like to opt out of having your project disseminated on social media, please share this preference with the initiative manager.

## 10. REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed and scored by a sub-committee of at least two members of the IGI Review Board. Efforts will be made to ensure that each review sub-committee will consist of at least one of the two IGI co-chairs and one board member representing either the region nominating the project or with sector/domain knowledge on the proposal. Details of the current IGI co-chairs and Review Board members are [here](#).

All board members submitting a proposal in the current round of funding are required to recuse themselves from this review. No spouse, partner, or immediate family member (parent, child, sibling) of any individual named on a proposal application may serve as a peer or Board referee in the round in which the applicant's proposal is being reviewed.

The review sub-committee will score proposals using the review criteria described in [Annex I: Review Criteria](#). The sub-committee will then vote on the status of the application based on their scores and comments. The status of an application can fall into four categories: (1) approved (unconditionally), (2) conditional approval (i.e. subject to project agreeing to make minor revisions or clarifications requested by the sub-committee), (3) revise and resubmit on this or a subsequent round, or (4) not approved. Only applicants who receive a “revise and resubmit” are welcome to resubmit their proposal in a future round.

If you would like to appeal a decision of the IGI Review Board, you may contact IGI staff at [IGI@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:IGI@povertyactionlab.org) within one week of receiving the funding decision detailing the reasons for the request for reconsideration (maximum two pages in length and clearly addressing all reasons given by the review sub-committee for rejecting the proposal). IGI staff will then communicate the reconsideration request to the sub-committee, upon whose review the decision will be final.

## 11. ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

### PAYMENTS AND SUBAWARDS

RCT, pilot, and scaling grants are provided under an award from MIT to the grantee's host institution. PLEASE NOTE: MIT now requires that at least one project PI be employed by the organization receiving the subaward and funds. Please see this [memo](#) for more information.

Please be mindful that MIT requires that the IRB determination must be held by the institution that enters into the subaward agreement with MIT. The PI at the ITRA must be listed as the main PI on the IRB. If the institution does not have its own IRB, the institution must engage the services of a commercial IRB to review and provide oversight for the research activities. [Heartland](#) and [Solutions](#) provide review of international research and satisfy J-PAL's IRB requirements; fees can be found on their respective websites. Furthermore, MIT requires that the PI named on the IRB must be employed by the institute receiving the award. Information about this MIT policy can be found [here](#) and [here](#). Please consult with J-PAL regarding including the cost of this commercial entity in the project budget. J-PAL also requires that the reviewing IRB have IRB Organization (IORG) status with the US Office of Human Protections. [You can look up the IORG status of an IRB here.](#)

**Subaward Setup:** For grants with human subject research, once all materials including IRB approvals/exemptions have been received, MIT typically takes 90 days to establish the subaward. Please provide conservative rather than optimistic estimates for start and end dates to reduce the likelihood of needing to submit no-cost extension requests.

For more information on budget, requirements, and process, please see instructions in the relevant application forms, for which reference documents exist on the [RFP page](#).

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Since J-PAL is part of MIT, everyone who is associated with J-PAL, including all researchers worldwide affiliated with J-PAL (affiliates and invited researchers), as well as all co-authors on J-PAL funded or implemented studies are considered part of the broader MIT community. It is therefore our hope and expectation that they will adhere to the [MIT code of conduct](#), as well as the [J-PAL code of conduct](#). MIT's section titled "Relations and Responsibilities Within the MIT Community" contains specific provisions regarding personal conduct, harassment, discrimination and retaliation, violence against community members, and substance use. Please take some time to review these.

Because almost all researchers we work with are also part of other university communities, they may also be subject to their host universities' policies and procedures. Many of these policies may be very similar to the MIT policies above. Finally, many researchers are separately affiliated with other academic associations and organizations, including the American Economic Association, and they should continue to abide by the codes of conduct established by the associations and organizations to which they belong. The AEA's code of conduct is available [here](#).

We continue to encourage all staff and researchers to have a direct and open dialogue with each other if they have concerns about interactions between researchers, staff, or partners on any of the above issues, or about any aspect of a research project (e.g., adherence to minimum must dos, IRB protocols, or finance/operation rules). But if staff do not feel comfortable holding such discussions, or if the concern cannot be resolved at this level, they can reach out to the individuals and offices identified in the relevant policies linked above.

Violations of MIT community guidelines or of J-PAL research/operations rules can also be directly reported to any of the J-PAL contacts for further action: (i) Global Executive Director; (ii) any of the regional Executive Directors; (iii) [Cindy Smith](#) (Global Director of Finance and Operations); or (iv) [Anna Omura](#) (Global Associate Director of Finance and Operations).

## 12. LINKS TO ALL RFP MATERIALS AND FAQs

Details on the overall Initiative agenda, as well as all submission templates and reference documents that make up the overall RFP package, are all available at:

<https://www.povertyactionlab.org/initiative/innovation-government-initiative-request-proposals>

For questions on RFP priorities, application and review processes, eligibility, and general inquiries, please reach out to: [IGI@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:IGI@povertyactionlab.org), or visit the [IGI website](#).

For questions on award set-up and administration, please reach out to [IGI\\_grant\\_admin@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:IGI_grant_admin@povertyactionlab.org)



## ANNEX I: REVIEW CRITERIA

Criterion	Scale	Guiding questions
	Outstanding = 4 Good = 3 Pass = 2 Fail = 1	
<b>The Innovation</b>		
Policy Relevance	1-4	Does the project address problems or opportunities that are important to the government partner, and, if addressed, could generate meaningful benefits to beneficiaries of the program, policy, process change, or innovation?
Locally Grounded Innovation	1-4	Did the proposal make a clear case for why the innovation may be relevant or appropriate for the proposed context based on descriptive data, knowledge of local systems and institutions, and existing evidence?
Scaling Potential	1-4	<p>Is there potential for the partner to widely scale up the innovation in the future and does it have the potential to meaningfully improve the lives of people living in poverty?</p> <p>Has the government expressed strong commitment to move forward with implementing the policy or program at scale if the pilot is successful?</p> <p>How many people will the innovation reach at scale and over what timeframe?</p>
Potential to Benefit People in Poverty	1-4	Did the proposed solution improve to an economically meaningful level the lives of people living in poverty in previous randomized evaluations? (Note that this criterion refers specifically to segments of the population living in poverty regardless of the project country's status as an LMIC)

		<p>Does the proposal make a good case for why the scalable version has the potential to meaningfully benefit segments of the population living in poverty?</p> <p>What is the average income level of the target population and will the innovation contribute to meaningful improvements in their well-being?</p>
Strength of Evidence	1-4	What is the strength of the existing evidence on the effectiveness of this type of innovation?
Cost Effectiveness	1-4	<p>Does the proposal include convincing analysis that the innovation can be cost-effective at the proposed scale and at the intended future policy scale, drawing from any available cost-effectiveness estimates?</p> <p>Alternatively, does the proposal incorporate cost collection and analysis to inform a scaling decision in its activities?</p>
Cross-Cutting Themes	1-4	<p>Will the project address and generate useful insights about one or more of IGI's cross-cutting themes - technology- and data-enabled program delivery, implementation science, and cost analysis?</p> <p>What steps will the project take to gather program costs, document implementation and scale-up processes, and disseminate them so others may also benefit?</p>
Ethical Concerns	1-4	<p>Are the risks of unintended negative consequences for program participants minimal?</p> <p>Are there risks to non-participants? Are these risks minimal?</p> <p>Has the team taken proactive measures to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?</p>
<b>The Partnership</b>		
Commitment to Use Evidence in Decision-making	1-4	Is there demonstrated demand from the government partner to use evidence from the proposed technical assistance and/or past research to make a key decision about expanding the innovation?

		<p>Is the government committing its own resources, especially finances, to this project?</p> <p>Does this government partner have a known track record of acting on evidence?</p>
<p>Viability of the Partnership</p>	<p>1-4</p>	<p>Is there a strong likelihood that the partnership will result in government adoption of the innovation at scale?</p> <p>Is the relationship with the partner(s) strong and likely to endure through the entire life of the project? Are there any logistical or political obstacles that might threaten the completion of the proposed activities, for example, government authorization or potential transfer of key decision-makers?</p> <p>Consider the following:</p> <p>Does the partnership have support from senior government officials and/or a formal partnership agreement/MoU?</p> <p>Does the team have the necessary authorizations and/or approvals for the project activities from the government, or are they likely to get them within a reasonable timeframe? Is the work in this proposal part of a multifaceted partnership involving other forms of and/or longer-term collaboration?</p> <p>Are there strong relationships at multiple levels (e.g., affiliate, staff of the applying organization, multiple levels of government, etc)?</p> <p>Has the government partner designated members of their team to work on this project and/or committed in-kind or financial resources to the project?</p> <p>Are there any upcoming elections or changes of key officials in the next 1-2 years that could adversely affect the partnership?</p>

Locally Grounded Institutional Support	1-4	<p>What institutional support is available (e.g. J-PAL regional office, IPA country office, other NGO and/or research partner, researchers based in the country/region)?</p> <p>If the project is taking place in a country with a J-PAL office or presence, including Brazil, Chile, Egypt, countries in the European Union, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico, Morocco, South Africa, and the United States, is the applicant team collaborating or coordinating with the relevant J-PAL office?</p>
Level of Affiliate Involvement	1-4	<p>What is the level of involvement of a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher, in terms of providing high-level leadership, guidance, and advice to project staff and policy partners?</p> <p>Does this level of involvement seem adequate to ensure careful application of evidence, especially where evidence is being adapted to a new context?</p>
<b>Overall Recommendation for Funding</b>	<p><b>Scoring:</b></p> <p>Strongly Recommended =4</p> <p>Recommended =3</p> <p>Weakly Recommended =2</p> <p>Do not fund =1</p>	Do you recommend this proposal for funding given your overall review?

For *randomized evaluation applications*, besides the above general criteria, the Review Board will consider the following additional criteria:

Need for additional research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the proposal have a clear and convincing justification for why they need to do more research on this question and why the research that has already been done is insufficient to inform a scale-up decision?</li> </ul>
Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the study make a significant contribution toward advancing knowledge in the field?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it answer new questions or introduce novel methods, measures, or interventions?</li> <li>• How does the study compare with the existing body of research?</li> </ul>
Value of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the cost of the study commensurate with the value of expected lessons learned?</li> </ul>
Technical design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the research design appropriately answer the questions outlined in the proposal?</li> <li>• Are there threats that could compromise the validity of results?</li> <li>• If so, does the proposal sufficiently address those threats?</li> </ul>
Publishing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the data collected during the evaluation be made publicly available and when?</li> </ul>
Gender and marginalized populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given the importance of examining the gender implications of policies, as well as the differences related to socioeconomic status and other types of social marginalization, does the proposal expand on whether and how the project will address questions of gender and marginalization?</li> </ul>

## ANNEX II: J-PAL REQUIREMENTS ON EVIDENCE BASE FOR CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR SCALING PROJECTS

Scaling proposals applying to IGI must be based on direct evidence from one or more randomized evaluations,<sup>3</sup> at least one of which should have been conducted by a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher and/or funded by a J-PAL initiative.

1. Details on the one or more randomized evaluations on which the project is based must be provided in writing to the IGI Review Board in one of the following formats, rank-ordered with most preferred format noted first:
  - a. Peer-reviewed published paper
  - b. Working paper that was released publicly at least six months prior<sup>4</sup> to the date on which a project proposal is submitted to a J-PAL initiative for funding and/or the date on which a J-PAL office initiates a request to relevant decision-makers for approval to provide substantive scale support.
  - c. Working paper that is meaningfully publicly available<sup>5</sup>
  - d. Working paper not yet meaningfully publicly available
  - e. other document in any format<sup>6</sup>
2. Regardless of format, the written document should provide sufficient detail on the design and results of the one or more randomized evaluations on which the project is based to enable the relevant decision-makers to understand and assess the quality and strength of the evidence base underpinning the proposed scale project, including both internal and external validity. Contents that would be useful for the relevant decision makers to make their decisions include
  - a. Description of context, intervention, RCT design, and data sources
  - b. Balance tables
  - c. First stage regression results (if design requires strong first stage)
  - d. Intention to treat (ITT) regression results for at least one primary outcome, robust to different specifications, including standard errors for construction of confidence intervals

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<sup>3</sup> Many scale projects are based on an evidence base that is broader than one randomized evaluation. See, for example, the [Evidence to Policy case studies](#) on J-PAL's website.

<sup>4</sup> This timeframe ensures there is greater certainty that results do not change following initial public release.

<sup>5</sup> Meaning the working paper can be found via a relatively straightforward online search, is on the researcher's website and/or online CV, and is not in an obscure or otherwise difficult-to-find, but literally public, site.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., a policy memo, a detailed PowerPoint presentation, a donor report with a convincing explanation as to why a working paper has not yet been written, and a clear and reasonably short timeline for when it will be produced.

- e. Checks for and responses to any threats to randomization: differential attrition, spillovers, etc.
- f. Interpretation of results
- g. An assessment of and considerations relevant to the generalizability of the evidence to the context in which the proposed project is to take place<sup>7</sup>
- h. Policy implications/recommendations

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<sup>7</sup> “Context” is defined broadly here to include, e.g., geography, demographic group, capacity of implementation partner, etc.