King Climate Action Initiative: RFP OVERVIEW

Spring 2025 Request for Proposals (RFP)

The King Climate Action Initiative (K-CAI) calls for proposals from J-PAL affiliates (and K-CAI invited researchers[1]), Postdocs, and PhD students to conduct and scale up innovative, policy-relevant research at the nexus of climate change and poverty.

Contents

Timeline for Spring 2025 RFP

Release Date	January 9, 2025
Required Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline *All applicants will receive an *invitation to proceed* with full proposal development	February 13, 2025
Full Proposal Deadline *By invitation*	March 27, 2025
Anticipated Notification Date	Mid-June, 2025

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[1] If you have questions regarding your eligibility to participate, we welcome you to inquire by emailing us at KCAI@povertyactionlab.org.

Overview

Motivation: The Climate Change-Poverty Nexus

Climate change disproportionately affects people living in poverty and threatens to reverse decades of progress in global poverty alleviation. Many of these consequences are already being felt through worsening food security and extreme weather events that damage economies and displace populations. Not only are people living in poverty the most exposed to the damages of climate change because of where they live, they also have the fewest resources to adapt to and cope with climate shocks.

Policymakers have called for reductions in both greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that drive the climate-related harms poor people face and carbon co-pollutants contributing to public health crises in urban centers in low- and middle-income countries.

At the same time, access to reliable and affordable energy in many parts of the world is urgently needed to support economic growth that can create opportunities to lift people out of poverty and to help them better adapt to the more extreme weather that climate change will bring. It powers health centers, supply chains, and the very technologies for self-protection, like air conditioners, that enable people to cope. Innovations that improve efficiency or reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy production are needed to allow for energy-dependent adaptation that minimizes impacts on the environment.

Leaders in both the public and private sector must take significant action to confront climate change and help vulnerable communities adapt. To date, much investment has focused on technological innovations to combat climate change. Yet, policy innovation, on which there is less evidence, is equally important. While the climate sphere is rich with data and evidence about the likely impacts of climate change on our economies and societies, in many cases, there is not yet evidence on the benefits and costs of programs and policies tested by randomized evaluations in the real world.

Policymakers need more evidence on which technological and policy innovations are effective and cost-effective, where, and why to direct limited resources to solutions with demonstrated ability to address climate change and poverty alike. With generous support from King Philanthropies, J-PAL's King Climate Action Initiative (K-CAI) designs, pilots, evaluates, and scales cost-effective, high-impact policy solutions that respond to this global challenge at the nexus of climate change and poverty alleviation.

In addition to prioritizing rapid response RCTs, we aim to speed up policy impact of K-CAI funded research by influencing at-scale policy action today where we have existing evidence.

Funding Priorities

K-CAI is committed to making a meaningful impact in the fight against climate change, with an emphasis on approaches that can improve the lives of people experiencing poverty who are most exposed to climate damages. K-CAI prioritizes evaluating and scaling approaches that could substantively move the needle on these challenges—more than just small incremental improvements. With a focus on approaches that can

benefit people living in poverty, K-CAI will carefully consider projected effect size and cost-effectiveness of Research and Path-to-Scale proposals based on one or more of K-CAI's key outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** Reducing carbon emissions and/or other greenhouse gases
- **Outcome 2:** Reducing harmful carbon co-pollutants, like particulate matter air pollution
- **Outcome 3:** Increasing people living in poverty's resources and capacity to adapt to climate change
- **Outcome 4:** Increasing access to affordable, reliable energy for people in poverty

In all Research and Path-to-Scale proposals, K-CAI prioritizes projects that:
- **Build new and strengthen existing policy partnerships:** Since strong policy partnerships are key to effecting change, K-CAI's Research and Path-to-Scale projects aim to build and strengthen partnerships between J-PAL's offices and research network in order to advance K-CAI's broader goals of informing policy and programs across our four focus areas and build K-CAI's credibility and influence in climate policy. In all K-CAI proposals, please describe how your Research and/or scaling activities will help build and strengthen partnerships in the proposed country or context.

- **Have a strong local presence**: Successful high-level research and policy partnerships require strong local institutional presence, so proposals should have the local institutional support of the relevant regional J-PAL office, IPA country office, or another strong local research and/or NGO partner, and/or researchers based in the country or region. J-PAL has built a strong local institutional presence through our regional offices in Africa, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, the Middle East & North Africa, North America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, particularly in key countries like Brazil, Chile, Egypt, countries in the European Union, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico, Morocco, South Africa, and the United States. If you are developing a proposal in one of these countries or would like to, we encourage you to reach out to the relevant J-PAL office at least 3-4 weeks before submitting your proposal. These offices have developed strong connections to policymakers and decisionmakers, analyzed and mapped priority policy issues in the region, and developed strong infrastructure to support quality implementation of Research and Path-to-Scale activities. **Annex I** lists the climate point persons at each J-PAL regional office.

Additionally, for pilot research and full randomized evaluation proposals, K-CAI prioritizes funding those that take proactive measures to speed up the pathway from research to policy, employing strategies such as:

- **Measuring impact with administrative and remote sensing data to produce results more quickly:** Many climate change interventions can be evaluated in near real-time using administrative, sensor, and satellite data that regulators, utilities, and implementing agencies already collect. Alongside evaluations that measure meaningful long-term outcomes of approaches and develop sustained partnerships, K-CAI also prioritizes quick-response evaluations that provide results and recommendations to policymakers in time for key decisions.
- **Measuring impact in partnership with policymakers that can scale effective solutions:** K-CAI highly encourages—though does not require—researchers to consider the potential for scale

when designing evaluations. When possible, K-CAI also encourages research conducted in partnership with regulators, utilities, governments, implementing agencies, NGOs, and firms that have the power, commitment, and access to resources to scale up the interventions that are found effective. K-CAI also highly encourages proposals to scale effective solutions that build on K-CAI-funded research in collaboration with these policy partners.

Geographic Priorities

K-CAI invites proposals from around the world that address one or more of the Initiative's four focus areas that together comprise the global climate and energy challenge: Climate Change Mitigation; Pollution Reduction; Adaptation; and Energy Access.

K-CAI does not have any country restrictions, but does have geographic priorities within our four focus areas. In general, we encourage proposals in all four focus areas from low- and middle-income countries that will be hit hard by climate change, and particularly encourage mitigation proposals in high-emitting high-income countries.

Additional consideration will be given to proposals involving local researchers as co-authors. Please reach out to the K-CAI team (kcai@povertyactionlab.org) if you would like support connecting with local researchers.

Annex II lists some priority types of policies and interventions in each of K-CAI's four focus areas. Proposals can include interventions outside this list.

Mitigation

K-CAI prioritizes evaluating and scaling cost-effective, high-impact policy, behavioral, regulatory, and technological interventions to reduce GHG emissions. Fundamental to maximizing K-CAI's mitigation benefits is cost-effective reductions in GHG emissions, and K-CAI prioritizes funding opportunities that exist to abate or sequester carbon or reduce other GHGs at low cost per ton abated, regardless of where they occur.

Geographic Priorities: K-CAI supports opportunities to abate or sequester carbon and other greenhouse gasses around the world. While K-CAI funding is prioritized for research and scale in low- and middle-income countries, in high-emitting high-income countries, K-CAI will accept proposals for cost-effective mitigation and energy interventions that have the potential to benefit poorer countries by substantially reducing carbon emissions. This is motivated by the fact that cost-effective reductions in carbon emissions, regardless of where it comes from, will benefit people living in poverty the most since they are hit hardest by climate change.

Pollution Reduction

The same activities that generate carbon emissions—most prevalently, the combustion of fossil fuels—generate other pollutants such as particulate matter. These co-pollutants have immediate and local effects on health and productivity. Unlike GHGs, which are global pollutants, local pollutants can be tackled by national or even city and state governments. At the same time, cleaning up local pollutants can lead to climate co-benefits, as is the case, for example, when a coal-fired power plant is replaced by one that burns natural gas. K-CAI prioritizes evaluating and scaling policies that encourage industries and households to reduce carbon co-pollutants, without reducing access to energy.

Geographic Priorities: K-CAI prioritizes pollution reduction projects in urban centers or other high-exposure settings in low- and middle-income countries where extreme local pollution is already affecting public health. K-CAI will also consider pollution reduction projects in low-income communities within high-income countries.

Adaptation

Low-income communities in developing countries have limited resources to adapt to climate change, and many are located in places that will be hardest hit by climate change. For many whose livelihoods depend on natural resources and the environment—in particular, people working in agriculture—climate change will bring greater volatility and risk. K-CAI prioritizes evaluating and scaling programs and policies, such as stress-tolerant crops, income diversification, insurance, cash support or credit during droughts and lean seasons. Some regions of the world are experiencing an increase in the number and intensity of extreme weather events. K-CAI also prioritizes programs that protect the well-being of vulnerable communities in the face of extreme weather, such as disaster preparedness, social protection and cash transfers, and health services.

Geographic Priorities: K-CAI prioritizes adaptation projects in low- and middle-income countries where benefits will be immediate for communities most vulnerable to climate damages.

Energy Access

Expanding access to affordable and reliable energy is a widespread policy goal of governments around the world, as access to energy could potentially help people experiencing extreme poverty live more productive and healthy lives and better adapt to climate change. This need for energy for climate change adaptation underscores why effective climate policy must be coupled with effective energy policy and the importance of progress on clean energy. Already, demand from the growing middle classes in developing countries is expanding, and non-renewable, high-pollution fossil fuels are projected to meet much of the growth in energy demand. K-CAI prioritizes evaluating and scaling improvements to energy systems that encourage shifts towards energy sources that produce fewer or no GHG emissions and reduce the projected health and climate impacts of expanded energy demand as well as strategies to increase access to affordable, reliable energy for people experiencing poverty to help them better adapt to climate change.

Geographic Priorities: K-CAI prioritizes communities in low- and middle-income countries who currently use unreliable or poor-quality energy sources or cannot afford the level of energy needed for growth and poverty reduction.

Award Types

For the spring 2025 RFP, K-CAI invites proposals under six award types (three research and three path-to-scale award types).

Research Awards

K-CAI research awards can be used to identify, design, pilot, and evaluate innovations that have the potential to achieve one or more of K-CAI's priority outcomes in partnership with implementing partners in government, NGOs, and/or the private sector.

1. **Travel/Proposal Development Grants** (up to $10,000, suggested period of performance: six months): These grants cover exploratory work related to preliminary research ideas, such as conducting background research, developing partnerships, visiting field sites, and collecting preliminary data. These grants may also be used for activities intended to facilitate access to administrative data for designing or conducting an RCT. Examples of these activities include, but are not limited to, negotiating data use agreements, conducting exploratory data analysis and cleaning, or setting up technical access mechanisms. The expectation is that these funds will be used to support costs related to PI travel to develop a proposal for a pilot or full-scale randomized evaluation during a subsequent call for proposals. Please note these grants are provided on a cost-reimbursable basis.

2. **Pilot Studies** (up to $75,000[2], suggested period of performance: one year): These grants are meant for studies with a clear research question, but for which the design and implementation requires further testing and pilot data. However, pilot grants can also fund more foundational work that intends to inform a future full-scale randomization, including the refinement of measurement strategies, operationalizing logistics of implementing a research design, and collecting pilot data to inform the design of future research or hone research questions. Grants may also be used for activities intended to facilitate access to administrative data for designing or conducting an RCT, including but not limited to, negotiating data use agreements, conducting exploratory data analysis and cleaning, or setting up technical access mechanisms. For measurement pilots, grants may be used to tackle a range of data collection challenges, including: deploying a novel measurement technology to test feasibility, assessing the validity and/or reliability a new methodology to measure an outcome, identifying proxy indicators that allow for lower-cost data collection, developing strategies to minimize measurement error, etc. Measurement pilot proposals should lay out a clear path to using the measurement in a future randomized evaluation, and K-CAI may prioritize more general data and measurement efforts that will be applicable across studies. Logistic- or implementation-focused pilots should have a clear research question, but the design and implementation require further testing and pilot data. Again, for all pilots, the expectation is that these projects will ultimately

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[2] Please note that full evaluations requesting less than $75,000 are considered full research projects and evaluated accordingly. The criteria for pilot funding apply only to proposals requesting funds to conduct piloting, or pre-randomization, activities.

develop into or inform a full-scale randomized evaluation(s) with the potential to inform climate and environmental policy at-scale.

3. **Full-scale Randomized Evaluations** (up to $400,000[3], suggested period of performance: 24 - 30 months): These grants are for research projects at a mature level of development. Not only must the research question be clear, but applicants must also demonstrate a commitment from implementing partners, a method of randomization, well-defined instruments, and sample size estimates. Proposals can also be submitted for funding the continuation of research projects that have already started without K-CAI funding (including those for which field data collection has been completed). The expectation is that these projects will result in a paper publishable in a top economics or political science journal. K-CAI encourages a focus on partnerships and research questions that could generate policy-level impacts.

Please note that K-CAI was established to fund randomized evaluations of programs and policies being implemented in the field. As a general rule, K-CAI does not fund pure lab experiments. A proposal may be considered if there is a randomized field evaluation of an underlying program or policy which supplements a lab experiment.

Off-Cycle Research Proposals: Additionally, K-CAI will accept off-cycle proposals for 1) proposal development grants up to $10,000 and 2) pilots and RCTS for up to $75,000. Proposals should clearly articulate the timeliness of the opportunity and explain why submitting during a scheduled K-CAI RFP would undermine the research team's ability to conduct timely research or leverage a policy window. These grants are intended only for projects that face a significant time constraint and need to receive funding before the end of the process for the current RFP round to make use of an unanticipated window for policy-relevant research. Interested applicants are encouraged to first email kcai@povertyactionlab.org to determine whether their project could qualify for off-cycle support. The procedure and requirements for submitting an off-cycle application are the same as that for applications submitted during an RFP round. Based on the off-cycle proposal, the K-CAI Co-Chairs will decide whether to review it off-cycle or instead recommend including the proposal in the regular review process for the next round.

Path-to-Scale Awards
K-CAI uses the term "path-to-scale" to describe a pipeline from RCT research to expansive climate impacts through direct application or adaptation of the evaluated solution. These awards can be used to support technical assistance to and/or research with implementing partners in government, NGOs, and/or the private sector to scale **evidence-informed solutions** found effective in achieving one or more of K-CAI's key outcomes. They may range from early stage proposals to more robust solutions ripe for implementation. K-CAI approaches the path from research to at-scale implementation as an iterative process of engaging with the evidence, adapting it to local contexts, conducting further testing where appropriate, and providing technical assistance.

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[3] In rare circumstances, proposals with a compelling reason for requesting more than $400,000 may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

K-CAI will prioritize ambitious projects that have the potential to benefit large numbers of people living in poverty, have the potential to be scaled widely to reach large numbers of people, are demand driven by the policy partner, and are cost-effective solutions. Our goal is to contribute to the adoption at scale of evidence-informed solutions by public, non-profit, and private sector partners that reach millions of people by 2030.

What do we mean by evidence-informed?

Path-to-Scale projects must focus on solutions supported by existing 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. Ideally these existing RCTs would have a published paper, but if not, they must at least have a clickable working paper. For more information on requirements for scaling proposals, please see **Annex IV**.

In exceptional and rare cases, K-CAI may also consider Path-to-Scale proposals to fund RCTs at-scale of interventions for which there is not previous evidence from one or more J-PAL RCTs, as long as there is a demonstrated and explicit high level of commitment from the policy partner to take a future, well-defined scaling decision based on the evidence generated in the RCT. If the potential for large-scale policy impact is low, K-CAI may consider such proposals for RCTs at-scale for a Research Award rather than a Path-to-Scale Award.

What do we mean by solution?

Solutions can include but are not limited to:

- Improving existing programs, policies, technologies, services, delivery mechanisms
- Optimizing more cost-effective adaptations to existing solutions
- Path-to-scale and scaling interventions with original RCT implementing partner in the same context
- Increasing wider uptake of effective solutions, adapting and scaling solutions to new geographies
- Encouraging policy changes or shifts based on insights from existing evidence
- Scaling through public-NGO or public-private partnerships (i.e. NGO scaling through government infrastructure in partnership with government)

Path-to-Scale Award Types

K-CAI encourages previously-funded Travel/Proposal Development, Pilot, or RCT projects to build towards scaling projects, fueling the transition from evidence-building over the next 5-10 years of urgent climate impacts. K-CAI will consider three types of proposals that can be used to support technical assistance to policy partners at various stages in the path-to-scale process:

1. **Adapt** (up to US$100,000, suggested period of performance: up to one year): This type of support is for projects where the 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 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. Additionally, these grants can be used for path-to-scale research that builds on existing RCT evidence, such as replication trials to test previously evaluated interventions in new contexts.

2. **Policy Pilot** (up to US$250,000, suggested period of performance: up to two 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 partner in piloting and/or evaluating a scalable version of an evidence-based solution, including: preparing for the pilot (training, program manuals, etc.), conducting process evaluations to monitor implementation quality, analyzing pilot results and if successful, helping the partner make a case for broader scale-up. Grants can also be used for path-to-scale research that builds on existing RCT evidence, such as replication trials that test previously-evaluated interventions in new contexts, as well as RCTs at scale to evaluate interventions previously tested at a small scale.

3. **Scale** (up to US$400,000, suggested period performance: up to three years): The partner has already piloted a version of the evidence-informed solution in their context (either in an RCT or policy pilot) or elsewhere, with sufficient justification that the solution has been responsibly adapted and contextualized. Based on previous results, the 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, and/or setting up low-cost partner-owned monitoring systems for scaled-up programs to report periodic progress to key decision-makers. In rare cases, where there is already a strong commitment to scale from the partner, grants can also be used for path-to-scale research that builds on existing RCT evidence, such as replication trials that test previously-evaluated interventions in new contexts, or RCTs at-scale to evaluate interventions previously tested at a small scale. For these grants, K-CAI expects the implementing partner to commit to scaling the program and ultimately reach a significant number of people.

Projects can apply to receive different types of funding over their lifecycle and receive multiple grants over time. If projects are ready for Policy Pilot or Scale activities, they are not required to apply for Adapt funding in their first application. Email kcai@povertyactionlab.org if you would like advice on which type of funding is most appropriate.

Potential Path-to-Scale Activities:

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

- **Scoping research:** Proposals can include scale-up scoping activities, including research and data collection to determine whether a scale-up is feasible, relevant, and appropriate in the specific context. *(for adapt, policy pilot proposals)*
- **Supporting solution design:** Staff, NGO, or social enterprise technical support to the partner in designing and adapting the evidence-informed program, process, or delivery mechanism to pilot. *(for adapt, policy pilot proposals)*
- **Pilot implementation costs:** Proposals can include some pilot implementation costs. K-CAI does not fund program implementation costs for a scale-up beyond the pilot phase, as this funding should be secured by the partner internally or from another third-party source. *(for policy pilot proposals)*
- **Capacity building:** As long as they directly contribute to the scale-up of an effective innovation, proposals can include capacity-building activities to help the partner design monitoring and data systems to track their performance. Proposals must demonstrate why these activities are essential for achieving the end goal of reducing emissions and/or improving lives of people in poverty. *(for adapt, policy pilot, and scale proposals)*
- **Embedding staff:** Hiring or seconding part- or full-time staff members with relevant expertise to work directly with the partner during the scaling process, either embedded in the partner's office or just working closely with them *(for adapt, policy pilot, and scale proposals)*
- **Path-to-scale research:** Grants can be used for path-to-scale research that builds on existing RCT evidence from completed (and ideally published) studies, such as replication trials that test previously-evaluated interventions in new contexts, as well as RCTs at scale to evaluate interventions previously tested at a small scale. 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.
- **Monitoring and process evaluations:** Data collection for process evaluations to monitor the implementation of program pilots, analyzing pilot results and if successful, helping the partner make a case for broader scale-up. *(for policy pilot and scale proposals)*
- **Scaling support:** Providing technical support for scaling successful pilots and improving partner-owned monitoring and evaluation systems for scaled-up programs. *(for scale proposals)*

K-CAI Path-to-Scale funding cannot be used to:
- Support any political activities or lobbying. Please refer to MIT's lobbying policy here.
- Fund evidence reviews for policy partners that are not interested in a longer engagement to adapt, pilot, and scale innovations informed by evidence.

Common Requirement in Path-to-Scale Grants

A common requirement in all Path-to-Scale grants is that there should be explicit, demonstrated commitment by the partner to use the work that comes out of these grants in their scaling decision around

this evidence-informed solution. This commitment typically takes the form of previous demonstration of using evidence to inform decision making, a detailed and formal letter of commitment letter from the partner that includes discussion about what policy question / scaling decision this work will answer for them, what financial or in-person contribution they plan to make to this project, and the timeline they envisage for making the policy decision based on this work.

Applying evidence responsibly: Drawing on evidence from randomized evaluations is not enough to determine whether a program is relevant and appropriate for a particular context and feasible for an organization 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 implementing 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.

Off-cycle Path-to-Scale proposals: These grants are intended only for projects that face a significant time constraint and need to receive funding before the end of the process for the current RFP round to make use of an unanticipated policy window (e.g., a newly announced policy change that will go into effect soon creating an opportunity for a potential scale-up). Proposals must clearly justify the need to receive a decision on an expedited schedule. Interested applicants should first email kcai@povertyactionlab.org to determine whether their project could qualify for off-cycle support. The procedure and requirements for submitting an off-cycle application are the same as that for applications submitted during an RFP round. Based on the off-cycle proposal, the K-CAI Co-Chairs will decide whether to review it off-cycle or instead recommend including the proposal in the regular review process for the next round.

Eligibility

Research Awards

J-PAL affiliates and K-CAI invited researchers, as well as their PhD advisees (see below) and J-PAL postdocs, are eligible to apply for any type of K-CAI research funding.[4] All proposals may include collaborators outside of this network, and K-CAI highly encourages multi-disciplinary collaborations and collaborations between academics at institutions in high-income and middle- and low-income countries.

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[4] Please note that K-CAI invited researchers are nominated and reviewed based on a nominee's previous research with a particular emphasis on randomized evaluations related to climate change and environment.

PhD students that have a J-PAL affiliate or K-CAI invited researcher on their thesis committee at their host university are eligible to apply for travel/proposal development grants or up to $50,000 in pilot or full RCT funding.[5]

Path-to-Scale Awards

All J-PAL affiliated researchers, K-CAI invited researchers, and J-PAL and IPA offices are eligible to apply for K-CAI Path-to-Scale funding in collaboration with specific policy partners in the government, NGO, and/or private sectors. All applicants are required to have a J-PAL affiliated or K-CAI invited researcher involved in the project to apply. All proposals may include collaborators outside of this network including other researchers and implementing partners.

For all K-CAI scaling projects, the implementing partners can include governments, NGOs, or private companies who design and/or implement policies and programs related to K-CAI's four focus areas. Types of governmental partners include but are not limited to: national, state, regional, provincial, city and other governments, including individual ministries or agencies, regulatory agencies, energy departments, and energy utilities. Partners must be the main recipients of technical assistance, but governments and companies cannot be the receiving institutions of funds. Receiving institutions can include J-PAL offices, IPA offices, and other non-governmental partners working with J-PAL affiliated and K-CAI invited researchers. If you have a close partnership with a state or the national government in India or Egypt or with the city of Cape Town in South Africa, please contact the relevant AWL team for further support and to learn about ongoing funding options.

Resubmissions

Resubmissions are by invitation only. If rejected, you will receive notification in the funding decision on whether or not you are invited to redesign and submit a new proposal.

New but Revised Proposals

Occasionally, authors of rejected proposals have revised the proposal sufficiently that it can be considered an entirely new and different project. In such a case, the re-designed project proposal should include a summary of comments made by the Board in the initial decision and point out pages in the proposal that contain changes.

Requests for Extra Funding

The K-CAI Board does not accept requests for additive funding on previously funded projects ("top-ups"). Full funding must be requested in the first application. In initial funding decisions, it is assumed that the

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[5] Please note that the adviser must provide a letter of support and indicate willingness to remain involved in a supervisory role throughout the lifetime of the project with PhD students' proposal submissions. In addition, in order to apply for up to $50,000 for pilot or full-scale funding, graduate students must provide documented evidence of successful pilot activities, funded either through a K-CAI travel/proposal development grant or other sources. Please note that PhD students are not eligible to apply for off-cycle funding.

proposal contains the full budget needed; the Board will only review a proposal one time. Accounting for currency risk should be budgeted for by the applicant team and is not a justification for additive funding.

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, full RCT, or scaling proposals off-cycle since Spring 2024, they can then only submit a maximum of 1 pilot, full RCT, or scaling proposal in our Spring 2025 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. Travel and Proposal Development requests should not extend beyond one year from time of award.

Research and Scaling Fellows

K-CAI has resources to support a small cadre of fellows to work with J-PAL offices and J-PAL affiliated professors and/or K-CAI invited researchers on high-priority research and scaling projects that will help advance K-CAI's broader goals. All J-PAL offices, affiliated researchers, and K-CAI invited researchers are eligible to apply to recruit a fellow to work in collaboration with a J-PAL office and specific policy partners in the government, NGO, and/or private sectors. **Please note:** All applicants are required to have a J-PAL affiliated professor or K-CAI invited researcher involved in the advising and mentoring of the fellow, and all submissions must include a letter of support from the relevant J-PAL office.

Fellows will be strategically placed to help either 1) develop and conduct policy-relevant research projects or 2) catalyze and shepherd a pipeline of high-quality Path-to-Scale projects. They will work together with a J-PAL office and have at least one J-PAL affiliated researcher or K-CAI invited researchers as an adviser. Fellows will be based in priority countries where J-PAL has an on-the-ground presence (Brazil, Egypt, the EU, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, and the US) and/or the K-CAI Global Hub at J-PAL at MIT. In exceptional cases, fellows may be placed in additional countries highly vulnerable to climate change and/or the highest emitting countries. Support for K-CAI fellows will last one year, with the potential for extending conditional on progress.

If you are interested in exploring whether K-CAI might be able to provide resources to a fellow to support your work, we ask that you submit a brief narrative that lays out:
- The opportunity that merits hiring a K-CAI research or scaling fellow.
- High-level goals the fellow will aim to achieve.
- The ideal skill set or profile of the fellow (can be pre-doctoral fellows, PhD students, post-docs, and/or policy staff with expertise in any relevant field, including but not limited to economics, environmental science, engineering, data science, computer science, public policy).
- Approximate costs for supporting the fellow and their activities over one year.

- The scope of involvement of one or more J-PAL affiliated researchers or K-CAI invited researchers in advising the fellow's work, and any engagement with the relevant J-PAL office.

The suggested length for a submission is one half page and no more than one page; the letter of support from the J-PAL office does not count towards this limit. This supplemental information should be submitted to K-CAI staff at kcai@povertyactionlab.org by **March 27, 2025, at 11:59 am (noon) ET**, K-CAI's Spring RFP deadline. **Please note:** We welcome submissions sooner, especially if you are facing a policy window that would otherwise disappear before the deadline. Please reach out to the K-CAI team to discuss the possibility of an expedited timeline if needed. The K-CAI leadership team, including the K-CAI Co-Chairs and J-PAL's Global Executive Director, will review these narratives and if the opportunity seems well-aligned with K-CAI's goals, we will invite you to submit a scope of work and budget for final consideration.

Submission Instructions

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 Initiative RFP webpage 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 the deadline above.**

3) **If you receive an invitation to apply to the main application,** please follow the next steps outlined in the relevant proposal guidelines documents linked on the K-CAI RFP Webpage.

> **Please read both the relevant Proposal Guidelines document <u>and</u> the RFP Overview on the RFP webpage in detail *before answering the proposal questions in WizeHive.* Each of the documents includes a checklist and guidance on what to address within each narrative prompt – guiding your completion of all required submission materials based on the appropriate proposal type.**

4) Upon completing your proposal and uploading proposal attachments (budget, letters, etc.), submit the proposal by the deadline above.

Review Process and Timeline

Pilot, RCT, and Path-to-Scale Proposals
The selection of awards follows a two-stage process.

First, proposals are distributed for peer review to referees selected from a roster of researchers and policy experts on environment, energy, and climate change issues assembled by the K-CAI Co-Chairs. Each application is reviewed by at least two referees: one member of the K-CAI Review Board and one J-PAL affiliate not on the Review Board. Path-to-Scale projects are also reviewed by one policy expert in addition to the two other reviewers.

Second, application proposals are reviewed and scored by the K-CAI Review Board, consisting of the K-CAI Co-Chairs, one member of J-PAL's Executive Committee, two other J-PAL affiliates chosen by the J-PAL Directors, and one policy expert. All Board Members submitting a proposal in the current round of funding are required to recuse themselves from this review.[6]

Funding decisions are finalized on the K-CAI Review Board Decision Call. Based on the scores and the comments of the referees, the review board votes on the status of the application. The status of an application can fall into four categories: (1) approved, (2) conditional approval (with minor revisions or clarifications), (3) revise and resubmit during this or a subsequent round, and (4) not approved.

Annex III details the criteria that proposal reviewers and the K-CAI Review Board use to assess and score proposals.

Travel/Proposal Development Proposals

The K-CAI Co-Chairs review the proposals and make final funding decisions.

Off-Cycle Proposals

Proposals for off-cycle projects will be reviewed by the K-CAI Co-Chairs who may decide to award funding off-cycle, reject the proposal for funding, or include the proposal in the regular review process for the next RFP round.

If you would like to appeal a decision of the K-CAI Review Board, you may contact K-CAI staff at kcai@povertyactionlab.org within one week of the announcement detailing the reasons for the request for reconsideration (maximum two pages in length and clearly addressing ALL the reasons given by the sub-committee for turning down the proposal). This request will be communicated to the reviewers.

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[6] In addition, no spouse, partner, or immediate family member (parent, child, or 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.

Conditions to Access K-CAI Funding

RCTs, Pilots, and Path-to-Scale Awards

If your proposal is selected for funding, the terms of the award will be as follows:

1. **Peer-review proposals:** Grantees may be requested to peer-review proposals in future request for proposal rounds.

2. **Project registration** (*RCTs only*): 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 option to include more information, including power calculations and an optional pre-analysis plan.

3. **Collecting and reporting K-CAI outcome metrics:** All grantees will be asked to track and report on one or more of the Initiative's key outcome metrics for the intervention they are evaluating and/or scaling, in addition to the number of people reached and their average income level, where available. Collecting data on at least one will be required, as K-CAI reports on these metrics to our donors.
   - Tons of CO_2 abated
   - Amount of other harmful co-pollutants—like particulate matter—abated
   - Access to affordable, reliable energy
   - Damages from climate change avoided through adaptation policies and programs, as valued by impacts on income, health, and mortality

4. **Participate in K-CAI activities:** Grantees may be requested to participate in one of K-CAI's activities at a mutually agreed time and place. Activities may include evidence workshops, a matchmaking or policy conference, or presentations to K-CAI's donor (King Philanthropies) or their partners. K-CAI will cover any associated costs.

5. **Credit K-CAI:** Any presentations and publications, including academic papers, policy briefs, press releases, blogs, and organizational newsletters that emerge from this project should credit the King Climate Action Initiative (K-CAI) at J-PAL with the following text: "This research is funded by the King Climate Action Initiative (K-CAI) at J-PAL."

6. **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 in climate change and energy access. Our reporting template will include a question on this, which researchers are encouraged to fill in when applicable. If PI's feel this reporting is not applicable, for various reasons, they can provide a brief initial statement to be shared with the Gender sector team and continue monitoring for unanticipated dynamics affecting their study. K-CAI recognizes that gender and marginalization dynamics can fundamentally affect project planning, outcomes, and ethics, and we encourage teams to continuously check for gendered impacts or intervening factors. Please contact the K-CAI team for any questions or support.

7. **Progress reporting and final report:** Both Research and Path-to-Scale grantees will be requested to provide a brief start-up report three months after the start of the award period, semi-annual financial updates, annual progress reports, a final financial report within 60 days of completion of the award period, a final narrative report either 2 months (*pilots*) or 4 months (*RCTs and Path-to-Scale awards)* after the end of the award period, and (*RCTs only*) a final report with preliminary results within 12 months of completion of the award period. Any findings on contextual gender/intersectional dynamics impacting the project may be reported in the start-up, progress, and/or narrative reports.

   (*Path-to-Scale awards only*) In addition to the reports above, if the award recipient is not a J-PAL office, the Executive Director from the relevant J-PAL regional office is also required to submit 1-page annual and final progress reports or schedule 1-hour annual calls with the relevant K-CAI staff to discuss J-PAL's involvement in the project and how this grant helped build or strengthen the institutional partnership between J-PAL and specific policy partners.

8. **Collecting and reporting program cost data** (*RCTs and Path-to-Scale awards only*): 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. In order to facilitate cost collection, K-CAI awards include $1,000 to defray expenses associated with collecting cost data. K-CAI 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.

9. **Collecting and reporting implementation processes** (*Path-to-Scale awards only*): Grantees must document and share implementation and scale-up processes that demonstrate application of a

solution in a new context, an increased area of influence, or policy-makers' application of research findings for policy design or decision-making. This can involve sharing an existing program manual or other program documentation.

10. **Data publication** (*RCTs only*): Grantees may be requested to share data collection instruments and methodologies with other grantees. Researchers funded through this grant will be required to publish de-identified data in accordance with J-PAL's Data and Code Availability Policy. J-PAL's research 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.[7]

Travel/Proposal Development Grants

1. **Submit final report:** Grantees are required to submit a brief report within 30 days of completing travel. If the travel/proposal development work results in non-initiative-funded follow-on projects, grantees should inform K-CAI as part of their final report or upon receipt of additional funding.

2. **Participate in K-CAI activities:** Grantees may be requested to participate in one of K-CAI's activities at a mutually agreed time and place. Activities may include evidence workshops, a matchmaking or policy conference, or presentations to K-CAI's donor (King Philanthropies) or their partners. K-CAI will cover any associated costs.

Administrative Notes

Payments and Subawards

RCT, pilot, and path-to-scale 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.
Travel/proposal development grants are paid as travel reimbursements. Receipts are required for reimbursement.

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

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[7] See J-PAL's Guidelines for Data Publication and J-PAL's Research Transparency and Reproducibility page for more details.
J-PAL Dataverse: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/jpal

international research and satisfy J-PAL's IRB requirements; fees can be found on their respective websites. Further 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](#).

Note that if travel/proposal development grants have human subject research (HSR), then IRB approval or exemption will be required before MIT reimburses expenses. According to US federal regulations, a human subject is a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains 1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual (e.g., through an interview, focus group, or survey), or 2) identifiable private information (e.g., individual-level health or education data).

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.

Funding PI Time

In general, grants from J-PAL initiatives cannot be used to fund a PI's salary. However, K-CAI research funds may be used to cover a PI's time if the PI has completed a PhD and is based at an academic institution in a low- or middle-income country. The amount of funding which can be used to fund PI salaries for PIs based at low- or middle-income country institutions varies by award type as follows:

- Full RCT: Up to $8,000 per low- or middle-income country researcher PI/co-PI per year, but the total budgeted amount for low- or middle-income country researcher PI time in aggregate across all co-PIs should not exceed $20,000 per year.
- Pilots: Up to $8,000 per low- or middle-income country researcher PI/co-PI for the entire award period, but the total budgeted amount for low- or middle-income country researcher PI time should not exceed 25% of the total budget.
- Travel / Proposal Development: There are no individual PI limits, but the total budgeted amount for low- or middle-income country researcher PI time in aggregate across all co-PIs should not exceed $3,750 per award.

At this time, this policy only applies to research grants and does not apply to path-to-scale grants.

Guidance for J-PAL PIs and Offices Working on RCTs with a Private Sector Partner

J-PAL funding will be awarded with the presumption that money will be used only for academic/research costs (e.g., RA time, survey collection, participant incentives, etc.). If the budget includes funding to cover activities such as, but not limited to, focus groups, product design, marketing, or any other direct costs that would normally be funded by a business as part of its day-to day operations, the application should explain why the implementer/firm cannot bear these costs in the budget narrative. In general, activities that would occur anyway even absent the research should not be funded, while those that should typically be covered by the firm but would not have been implemented without research should be justified.

As in all J-PAL projects, PIs should ensure a written agreement which safeguards the PI's intellectual freedom to publish. This includes specifying who owns the data and ensuring that any third party's right of review is limited to preventing the disclosure of confidential information. A Data Use Agreement should be in place when using administrative data provided by the company. **Though it is not a requirement that the partner be named in the paper, the decision of whether to do so should be made in writing and ex ante so that it does not depend on the results.**

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 Senior Manager of Finance and Operations).

LINKS TO ALL RFP MATERIALS

Details on the overall Initiative research 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/king-climate-action-initiative-request-proposals.

OTHER FAQS

For questions on RFP priorities, application and review processes, eligibility, and general inquiries, please reach out to: KCAI@povertyactionlab.org, or visit the K-CAI website.

For questions on award set-up and administration, please reach out to KCAI_grant_admin@povertyactionlab.org.

Annex I: J-PAL K-CAI Leads by Region

J-PAL Regional Office	K-CAI Regional Point Person(s)	Contact Information
J-PAL Africa	Margaret Andersen (Policy Manager)	mandersen@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL Europe	Cillian Nolan (Executive Director)	cnolan@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL Latin America & the Caribbean	María Paz Monge (Senior Policy & Communications Manager)	mpmonge@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL Middle East & North Africa	Yomna El-Awamri (Policy Manager)	yelawamri@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL North America	Erin Graeber (Senior Policy & Communications Manager)	egraeber@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL South Asia	Shyam Sridhar (Senior Policy Manager)	ssridhar@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL Southeast Asia	Haris Zamaludin (Policy Manager)	msetiadiputra@povertyactionlab.org

Annex II: Example Policies and Programs under K-CAI's Focus Areas

Climate Change Mitigation

- **"Smart regulation"**: Improving the efficiency of monitoring and enforcement of existing regulations, as well reducing the costs of compliance with regulations

- Implementing **market-based mechanisms**, such as cap and trade schemes or carbon pricing
- **Reducing distortions** in command and control regulation
- Leveraging **remote sensing and other measurement innovations** to reduce the cost of monitoring and enforcement
- Exploring and accounting for **distributional impacts** of market-based mechanisms, designing market-based mechanisms that reduce burdens on or benefit people in poverty and other marginalized communities
- Aligning investments in **carbon offsets** with achieved reductions in emissions
- Identifying and encouraging the adoption of approaches by firms that reduce emissions, such as across industrial manufacturing, supply chains, and transportation
  - Implementing **voluntary corporate emissions reduction programs**
  - Leveraging **emissions detection technology** to mitigate leaks and reduce emissions
  - Using **alternative refrigerants** and **managing leaks and disposal of refrigerants**
- In contexts where energy is cheap, accessible, and generates GHG emissions, coupling **behavioral approaches** to reduce over-consumption with existing regulation, such as for firms, as well as energy pricing schemes to reduce over-consumption
- Incentivizing **land uses to sequester carbon or to avert the release of carbon** by, for example
  - Shifting agricultural practices, like discouraging agricultural burning or promoting sustainable intensification
  - Protecting and restoring carbon rich ecosystems, including forests, peatlands, and mangroves
  - Reducing deforestation and promoting afforestation, such as through payment for ecosystem services, titling, community management, or agroforestry
  - Improving managing of working lands and forests through land-use planning, supply changes, community management of forests, restoration and conservation, and regulation
- Incentivizing shifts to forms of **energy generation that produce fewer carbon emissions** including renewables and clean energy sources, and reducing the cost of cleaner energy sources to firms and consumers

Pollution Reduction

- **"Smart regulation"**: Improving the efficiency of monitoring and enforcement of existing regulations, as well reducing the costs of compliance with regulations
  - Implementing **market-based mechanisms,** such as cap and trade schemes
  - Reducing **distortions** in command and control regulation
  - Leveraging **remote sensing and other measurement innovations** to reduce the cost of monitoring and enforcement
  - Reforming **audit systems** to better align incentives
- Exploring and accounting for **distributional impacts of market-based mechanisms,** designing market-based mechanisms that reduce burdens on or benefit people in poverty and other marginalized communities

- Identifying and encouraging the adoption of approaches by firms that reduce emissions, such as across industrial manufacturing, supply chains, and transportation
  - Implementing **voluntary corporate emissions reduction programs**
  - Leveraging **emissions detection technology** to mitigate leaks and reduce emissions
  - Using **alternative refrigerants** and **managing leaks and disposal of refrigerants**
- Encouraging firms to adopt **technologies that control air pollution** and remove harmful carbon co-pollutants from industrial exhaust streams
- Encouraging take-up of innovations that **help individuals self-protect** from pollutants
- Incentivizing shifts to **cleaner forms of energy generation** that release fewer pollutants, including renewables and clean energy sources, and reducing the cost of cleaner energy sources to firms and consumers

Climate Change Adaptation

- Mitigating damages to communities in the face of **extreme weather events** though investments in
  - Social protection programs and financial services, such as consumer credit, insurance, savings, and cash transfers
  - Disaster preparedness and early warning systems
  - Health services and supply chains
  - Community-based adaptation
- Enabling households to access, afford, and adopt **self-protection measures** to better cope with and reduce the potential impact of climate-related damages
- Encouraging take-up of products and technologies to **protect agricultural incomes and reduce weather-based risk**, such as stress-tolerant crops, index insurance, or climate-sensitive agricultural practices
- **Diversifying income sources** for smallholder farmers to reduce risk of lost income from weather events or providing cash support or credit during lean seasons to maintain consumption
- Understanding the **tradeoffs between ex ante** (e.g. drought resistant crops) **and ex post** (e.g. weather insurance) adaptation strategies
- Using **climate forecasts and projections** to design better adaptation programming and policy
- Harnessing co-adaptive benefits of **ecosystem-based adaptation** via the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of ecosystems and biodiversity

Energy Access

- Increasing access to affordable, reliable energy for people experiencing poverty to help them better **adapt to climate change**
  - Where grid access is demonstrably welfare-enhancing, improving the financial and technological viability of **grid expansion** to support meaningful energy access and grid transitions away from fossil fuels

- ○ Helping firms and households access energy sources that provide power at the level sufficient to **support meaningful economic growth**
- ○ Programs, policies, technologies to reduce energy costs for poor households and communities
- Shifting towards **energy sources that produce fewer GHG emissions**, including renewables (grid and off-grid) and other cleaner fuels, while reducing the unintended impacts of some alternative fuels and reducing the projected health and climate impacts of expanded energy demand
- **Shifting away from blanket subsidies** for energy systems that rely on fossil fuels
- **Improving energy pricing and payments systems** by residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional customers

Annex III: Board and Peer Review Criteria

Research Proposal Review Criteria

Criterion	Scale	Help text *Excellent = 4; Above average = 3; Below average = 2; Poor = 1*
Innovation	1-4	Will the research make new contributions to the body of knowledge relevant to the proposed research question? Does it answer new and challenging questions, or introduce novel methods or measures? Is the policy / program being evaluated novel and innovative?
Technical Merit	1-4	Is the research designed effectively to answer proposed questions, and is the research question well-articulated? Are the indicators, timeline, and sample size estimates appropriate, given the outcomes to be measured? Consider the potential threats to the internal validity of the study. Does the proposal sufficiently address those threats? (For full RCTs) Do the power calculations convincingly demonstrate the ability to detect each of the proposed impacts to be measured?
Policy Relevance	1-4	Has the proposal convincingly argued the importance of the evidence gap for policy? And is it likely that the study will engage and provide valuable information to stakeholders to affect change at scale? Is there potential for the study to answer questions relevant for other policymakers and practitioners beyond the implementing partner? (E.g. will the results speak to commonly used approaches?)
	1-4	*Commitment to speed:* Does the proposal instill confidence in the researchers' commitment to timely sharing of interim outputs and final results with implementing and/or policy partners? Does the proposal identify explicit strategies to create opportunities for the partners and others to learn from results quickly? (E.g., use of high-frequency / non-survey data sources, strategies to measure impacts on intermediate outcomes?)
	1-4	*Path to use of results:* Does the proposal discuss potential programming or scale up decisions that the research could inform? Does the partner seem committed to using results? Is there potential for this evaluation to inform a scale-up proposal to K-CAI?

Alignment with K-CAI measures of success	1-4	*Potential to benefit people in poverty:* Does the proposal make a good case for why answering the proposed research question and the proposed intervention has the potential to generate benefits for people living in poverty?
	Yes / No	*Tracking impacts:* Does the proposal discuss which K-CAI metrics will be collected for the intervention they are proposing to study/evaluate? Is the methodology for calculating these impacts appropriate? K-CAI requires grantees to track one or more of the following: CO_2 emissions; co-pollutant emissions; CO_2 or co-pollutant emissions averted; welfare gains or averted damages from adaptation; affordability and reliability of energy sources.
Logistical Viability	1-4	Do the partners seem appropriate for the project and is the relationship likely to endure through the entire study? Does the proposal convincingly address technical, logistical, or political obstacles and risks that might threaten the completion of the study (for example, implementation capacity, government authorization, or other funding)? Are the risks of unintended negative consequences for program participants and staff minimal? Has the team taken proactive measures to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?
Overall Recommendation for Funding	1-4	Do you recommend this proposal for funding given your overall review, and particularly your assessment of its "value for money?" *Scoring:* Fund without hesitation = 4 Fund if nothing better (meets the bar, but is not an outstanding value for money) = 3 Would not fund (just below the bar) = 2 Strongly opposed to funding = 1

Path-to-Scale Proposal Review Criteria

Criterion	Scale	Help text *Excellent = 4; Above average = 3; Below average = 2; Poor = 1*
The Proposed Solution		
Policy Relevance	1-4	Does the project address problems or opportunities that are important to the partner, and, if addressed, could generate meaningful benefits to program participants? Did the proposal make a clear case for why the solution may be relevant or appropriate for the proposed context based on descriptive data, knowledge of local systems and institutions, and existing evidence?

Evidence-informed Solution	1-4	What is the strength of the existing evidence on the effectiveness of this type of solution in achieving one or more of K-CAI's four key outcome measures? How big or small was the impact and was it large enough to justify program expansion given its costs? (For projects with a randomization component, such as replication trials and RCTs at scale) Do the power calculations convincingly demonstrate the ability to detect each of the proposed impacts to be measured?
Potential to Benefit People in Poverty	1-4	Did the proposed solution improve the lives of people living in poverty in previous RCTs? Does the proposal make a good case for why the scalable version has the potential to meaningfully benefit people living in poverty? What are the average income levels of the target program participants, in both levels and relative to the national or local average?
Cost-effectiveness	1-4	Does the proposal include convincing analysis that the solution can be cost-effective, including existing cost-effectiveness estimates if available (such as cost per ton of emissions abated for mitigation projects)? Or, does the proposal incorporate cost collection and analysis to inform a scaling decision in its activities?
Scale-up Potential	1-4	Is there potential for the partner to widely scale up the innovation in the future? What commitment has the partner expressed to move forward with implementing the scale-up if the pilot is successful? How many people will the scaled-up program reach and over what timeframe?
Ethical Concerns	1-4	Are the risks of unintended negative consequences for program participants minimal? Has the team taken proactive measures to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?
Alignment with K-CAI Measures of Success	Yes / No	*Tracking impacts*: Does the proposal discuss which K-CAI metrics will be collected for the intervention being scaled? Is the methodology for calculating these impacts appropriate? K-CAI requires grantees to track one or more of the following: CO_2 emissions; co-pollutant emissions; CO_2 or co-pollutant emissions averted; welfare gains or averted damages from adaptation; affordability and reliability of energy sources.
	Yes / No	*Geography and context:* Will the proposed activities take place in a country that is highly vulnerable to climate change, or tackle emissions in a high emitting country? Does the local context (in terms of policy issues and expected climate damages) align with the scope of the geographic priorities listed under each focus area?
The Partnership		
Commitment to Use Evidence in Decision-making	1-4	Is there demonstrated demand from the partner to use evidence from the proposed technical assistance and/or past research to make a key decision about

		expanding the innovation? Is the partner committing its own resources, especially finances, to this project?
Viability of the Partnership	1-4	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? *Consider*: Does the partnership have support from senior officials/staff of the organization and/or a formal partnership agreement/MoU? Does the team have the necessary authorizations and/or approvals for the project activities from the partner, or are they likely to get them within a reasonable timeframe? Is this project part of an existing longer-term partnership? Has the partner designated members of their team to work on this project and/or committed in-kind or financial resources to the project? Are there any upcoming elections or changes of key officials in the next 1-2 years that could adversely affect the partnership?
Overall Recommendation for Funding	1-4	Do you recommend this proposal for funding given your overall review? *Scoring*: Fund without hesitation = 4 Fund if nothing better (meets the bar, but is not an outstanding value for money) = 3 Would not fund (just below the bar) = 2 Strongly opposed to funding = 1

Annex IV: J-PAL Requirements on Evidence Base for Considering Proposals for Path-to-Scale Projects

Path-to-Scale proposals applying to K-CAI 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.

1. Details on the one or more randomized evaluations[8] on which the project is based must be provided in writing to the K-CAI Review Board in one of the following formats, rank-ordered with most preferred format noted first:
   a. Peer-reviewed published paper

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[8] 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.

b. Working paper that was released publicly at least six months prior[9] 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[10]

d. Working paper not yet meaningfully publicly available

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. ITT regression results for at least one primary outcome, robust to different specifications, including standard errors for construction of confidence intervals

   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[11]

   h. Policy implications/recommendations

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[9] This timeframe ensures there is greater certainty that results do not change following initial public release.

[10] 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.

[11] "Context" is defined broadly here to include, e.g., geography, demographic group, capacity of implementation partner, etc.