# SOLUTIONS AND ADVANCEMENTS THROUGH RESEARCH FOR WATER AND AIR | Request for Proposal Spring 2025

## PROPOSAL GUIDELINES: TRAVEL AND PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

*This document contains the submission instructions and application materials for travel and proposal grants. For complete information on the SARWA RFP including research priorities, eligibility, review process, budget guidelines and more, please review the* [*SARWA RFP Overview document*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O7idYMJyk_ed1Ti3iVmpSMsUlLzQbgj7iIiFsktabuE/edit?tab=t.0)*.*

## OVERVIEW

**Travel and Proposal Development Grants** are intended to facilitate exploratory work and travel to develop a pilot or full project proposal with a government partner. These grants cover exploratory work related to preliminary research ideas, such as conducting background research, developing government 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.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**Applications for travel/proposal development grants consist of:**

(i) Basic contact and logistical information;

(ii) Narrative;

(iii) Proposal budget and Budget narrative

(iv) For graduate students, a letter of support from a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher who serves as an adviser on the applicant’s dissertation committee at their host university.

(v) *[optional]*Letter of support from a government partner.

* If you are interested in applying, please first reach out to the SARWA team ([SARWA@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:SARWA@povertyactionlab.org)) to discuss your proposal's potential fit to SARWA priorities.
* Please submit a complete application including all documents mentioned above as zip file with the title **[PI Last Name, First Name].zip** via email to the [SARWA team](mailto:SARWA@povertyactionlab.org) and CC [sgorti@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:sgorti@povertyactionlab.org) and [jchacko@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:jchacko@povertyactionlab.org).

| **Deadline: Travel and proposal development grant applications are accepted on the following dates: EOIs are due January 30th, 2025, and full proposals are due March 20th 2025.** |
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**Funding per Travel/Proposal development grant award**: a maximum of $10,000[[1]](#footnote-0).

## COVER SHEET AND NARRATIVE TEMPLATE

Please submit the cover sheet and narrative template as one PDF titled **[PI Last Name, First Name][Proposal Narrative].pdf.**

### SECTION A : COVER SHEET

Instructions: Please note that all fields are required; include a response in the white space below or next to each question (*12 pt font , single spaced*) to each of the following subsections.

| **PROPOSAL DETAILS** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL *(word limit: Maximum 30 words)* | |  | |
| STATE(s) OR REGION(s) OF INTEREST | |  | |
| PRIMARY ELIGIBLE RESEARCHER  Please identify one researcher who is eligible for J-PAL Initiative funding. This may be the principal PI and/or any eligible co-PI. Details for only one primary eligible researcher are required in cases where there’s more than one eligible researcher. Other PIs who are eligible can be added as co-PIs. | |  | |
| PI ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY | | * J-PAL Affiliate * J-PAL Invited Researcher * J-PAL Post-doc * PhD/ Graduate students | |
| UNIVERSITY NAME OF ELIGIBLE RESEARCHER | |  | |
| **[FOR PHD STUDENTS ONLY]** NAME OF J-PAL AFFILIATE/INVITED RESEARCHER ON THEIR THESIS COMMITTEE IN THEIR HOST UNIVERSITY | |  | |
| INSTITUTION TO RECEIVE FUNDS (J-PAL REGIONAL OFFICE)\* | |  | |
| CO-PI(s) (Institutional Affiliation) | |  | |
| REPORTING CONTACT (IF ANY) | |  | |
|  | | | |
| * By checking this box, all J-PAL affiliates and invited researchers who are co-PIs on this project certify that they will be active, engaged, and responsive PIs dedicated to guaranteeing the quality control on all aspects of this project; and that their participation in this project is not merely to provide access to J-PAL resources and funding to anyone else working on this project who is neither a J-PAL affiliate nor invited researcher. * By checking this box, all eligible researchers certify that they are up to date on reporting for all existing grants, across all J-PAL initiatives. | | | |
| GOVERNMENT PARTNER(s)  *(Insert relevant information in the space below)* | | CONTACT (NAME,EMAIL,PHONE)  *(Insert relevant information in the space below)* | |
|  | |  | |
| IMPLEMENTING PARTNER (s) (if any)  *(Insert relevant information in the space below)* | | CONTACT(NAME,EMAIL,PHONE)  *(Insert relevant information in the space below)* | |
|  | |  | |
| If you are working with any implementing partner (s), kindly specify their respective scope of work. | | | |
|  | | | |
| AMOUNT REQUESTED (IN USD) |  | AMOUNT CO-FUNDED (IN USD) |  |
| START DATE: (yyyy-mm-dd) |  | END DATE:  (yyyy-mm-dd) |  |
| INSTITUTION TO RECEIVE AWARD\* |  | CONTACT FOR CONTRACTING ISSUES |  |
| CO-FUNDER(S)  *(Insert relevant information in the space below)* | | FUNDED AWARD (PI, Project Title, Amount)  *(Insert relevant information in the space below)* | |
|  | |  | |
| PAST AND FUTURE SUBMISSIONS: Have you submitted or do you plan to submit this LOI and proposal to any other J-PAL Initiative RFP? | | ☐YES ☐NO | |
| If you answered yes above, please state which initiative(s), year/season of RFP, and the name of the LOI/proposal you submitted or plan to submit. Example: GI Spring 2019 Using Mobile Phones to Improve Service Delivery. Are the PI team, context, and research question the same as in the previously submitted proposal? Please explain whether the project received funding and what type of funding it received (Travel/Proposal Development, Pilot, RCT, Scale). Additionally, please explain how the project has progressed since it was last submitted to [blank initiative], and explain how you addressed the feedback that was provided with your last submission. [350 words max] | |  | |
| **Some projects will not be conducting research involving human subjects. However, if this project will involve research on human subjects, please fill out the two boxes below.** | | | |
| IRB OF RECORD |  | IRB CONTACT |  |
| **We are also in touch with other funders and occasionally share proposals that are relevant to their interests. If you do not want this proposal shared with them, please check this box:☐** | | | |

### SECTION B: NARRATIVE

Instructions: Please include a short response in the white space below each question (*12 pt font , single spaced*) to each of the following subsections. **Before preparing your proposal narrative,we strongly urge that you refer to the evaluation criteria mentioned in** [**Annexure**](#bookmark=id.3rprre42tc9v)**.**

| **THE TOPIC:** What is your research topic? These grants are intended to facilitate PI travel for very preliminary, exploratory research.You only need to address the general topic of interest and current ideas on how the question might be explored through a randomized evaluation. Do not describe your detailed program or evaluation design. *[Word limit: maximum 300 words]* |
| --- |
|  |
| **PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PARTNERS:** A brief description of the government partner and any other partners with which you plan to work with for both program implementation and evaluation, including the history of the partnership, and any in-kind or financial support they have committed or provided to the project. Please include how the government has displayed prior commitment or expressed demand for evidence on this particular topic and how they want to use it. [*Word limit: maximum 300 words]* |
|  |
| **IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:** If you are already working with any implementing partner (s), kindly specify their respective scope of work. [*Word limit: maximum 200 words]* |
|  |
| **FOCUS AREAS**: Which focus areas does this project fall under? Select One or More: |
| * Clean Air * Clean Water * Water Availability/Access * Climate Change Mitigation * Climate Change Adaptation * Pollution Reduction * Energy Access |
| **EXPLANATION OF FOCUS AREAS AND/OR CROSS-CUTTING THEMES**  If your proposal does not cleanly fit into any of the options listed, select “other” and describe why your proposal is a fit for the initiative. [*Word limit: maximum 250 words]* |
|  |
| **INITIATIVE ALIGNMENT**  Please briefly describe how the project aligns with the initiative’s research focus areas and/or cross-cutting themes. [*Word limit: maximum 250 words]* |
|  |
| **GENDER (OPTIONAL):** J-PAL aims to fund innovative research that also investigates how climate intersects with any number of topics including gender, inequality, etc., though gender disaggregated analysis is often not possible for travel/proposal development grants. A comment on any gender dynamics with potential to impact the travel/proposal development. [*Word limit: maximum 200 words]*] |
|  |

## BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit a detailed project budget using the **Excel template available online**. Carefully review the **Budget Guidelines in the** [**SARWA RFP Overview document**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O7idYMJyk_ed1Ti3iVmpSMsUlLzQbgj7iIiFsktabuE/edit?tab=t.0), then use the Budget Template provided at the RFP release webpage, which must be completed in its entirety and saved as **a single Excel file with the title: [PI Last Name, First Name][Budget].xls(x).**

Applications must include a **brief budget narrative document** detailing the major costs within the budget in addition to the Excel template. For the budget narrative, detail the costs within the budget, referring to the **Budget Guidelines in the** [**SARWA RFP Overview document**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O7idYMJyk_ed1Ti3iVmpSMsUlLzQbgj7iIiFsktabuE/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.dy0h74n41tl9), in a Word document with the title **[PI Last Name, First Name][Budget Narrative].doc(x)**. This document is required in addition to the Proposal Budget -- i.e. notes included in the Excel sheet do not suffice.

## LETTER(S) OF SUPPORT

Please obtain a letter of support from the following, each saved as a single PDF file with the title [PI Last Name, First Name] [Name of Organization Letter of Support].pdf:

1. **(Required)** a letter/document stating the proposed grant host institution’s approval of the proposal materials (if anything beyond PI travel is included in the scope of work).
2. **(Optional)** a letter from a government partner indicating the details of their commitment or willingness to engage in discussions to partner on the research
3. Graduate students applying as the primary PI are required to include a letter of support from a researcher adviser eligible for this call. The letter should indicate the adviser’s willingness to remain involved in a supervisory role throughout the lifetime of the project.

## ANNEXURE : EVALUATION CRITERIA

For travel and proposal development grants, the SARWA board will consider the following general criteria in making funding decisions:

| **Criterion** | **Scale** | **Help text Excellent=4; Above average=3; Below average=2; Poor=1** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **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?) |
| **Alignment with SARWA Measures of Success** | 1-4 | Does the proposal make a good case for why answering the proposed research question and the proposed intervention has the potential to generate benefits to society? |
|  | Y/N | **Tracking impacts:** Does the proposal discuss air or water-related metrics will be collected? Is the methodology for calculating these impacts appropriate? The AWL requires grantees to track one or more of the following: air quality, water quality, pollution, and/or water availability/access. If the project is focusing on another environment, energy, or climate change priority for the government outside air and water, have the applicants adequately described their outcome measurement in the proposal? |
| **Partnership** | 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 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 Funding Recommendation** | 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 |

1. **Note:** Expenses covered under any award will be paid as reimbursements for expenses. In general, the recipient will be expected to cover project costs up front and following the end of the grant period, be reimbursed by J-PAL South Asia at IFMR. In some cases, we can pay for expenses directly (e.g. if you book travel with our travel agent). If you cannot bear the costs out of pocket, we recommend that you apply for a pilot grant. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)