**Morocco Employment Lab (MEL) research fund: Application Form and Instructions**

*Full, small and pilot Proposals: Round 1*

**Instructions**

Research funding proposals consist of (i) an application form, which includes a cover sheet and narrative; (ii) a budget form; (iii) letters of support; and (iv) team resumes.These materials should be submitted to MoroccoEmploymentLab@povertyactionlab.org by **11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, December 11, 2020. The MEL will remain open to receiving off-cycle proposals after the deadline.**

**Narrative**

The narrative should not exceed five pages in length, including appendices, and using 12 point font. It should clearly describe the proposed evaluation and include:

1. A 100-150 word abstract of the study,which will be added to MEL’s web page if the project receives funding.
2. A summary of the policy problem that motivates this research and how it responds to critical labor markets policy priorities and challenges in Morocco.
3. A description of the treatment, evaluation design, target population, and implementing partners for experimental evaluations.
4. Power calculations. *(Full studies only)*
5. A description of how research will directly inform existing policies or programs, and steps the research team will take to maintain a close partnership with the policy partner and policy relevance of the research conducted.
6. A comment on whether the research proposal addresses gender issues in any way, including analysis disaggregated by gender. Please note that funded experimental research projects will be required to collect and report on gender-disaggregated data.
7. A comment on whether the project has scale-up potential and whether the program costs and impacts may be suitable for a cost effectiveness analysis.
8. A comment on whether you plan to publish data collected in an open-access, online database at the end of the evaluation. Note that data publication is required for any project funded by the MEL. *(Full studies only)*
9. A discussion of the other evaluation criteria (listed at the end of this document), if not already addressed in the narrative.
10. A research implementation timeline that specifies when initials results could be shared with the MEL.

**Budget**

Please submit a detailed project budget using the Excel template [available online](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/page/morocco-employment-lab). To reduce the processing time, please keep the following in mind when developing your budget:

1. Differentiate at the line-item level whether spending is expected to be incurred in Morocco or outside of Morocco. We encourage proposals to ensure that expenditures are incurred in Morocco to the extent possible.
2. Funds will be disbursed based on an agreed upon research progress update schedule.
3. Applications must include budget notes in the column provided in the budget template, detailing the major costs within the budget. For example, “Travel Costs” should include a breakdown of how many trips are planned, the estimated cost per trip, etc. “Field Costs” should include a breakdown of the number of respondents, cost per respondent, etc.
4. Universities in high-income countries, generally defined as OECD member countries, can charge up to 10% in indirect costs, applied to total direct costs. Independent non-profits from any location and universities from mid- or low-income countries may charge up to 15% in indirect costs, applied to total direct costs.
5. For proposers who envision funds going to a US university with a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) in place, we recommend contacting MEL staff to discuss allowable limits and possible budget implications. Established US Federal Government overhead rates vary among US Universities and should be taken into consideration when building out project costs.
6. We understand that the cap on overhead or indirect costs under MEL is low and that grantees may have reasonable project support costs included in budgets as direct costs. Such costs should be reasonable and explained in the budget notes.
7. Any computer/equipment purchases should include a breakdown of what is being purchased, (e.g. how many laptops), as well as the project staff that will be assigned to the equipment.
8. Unallowable costs include those labeled as “incidental,” “miscellaneous,” or “contingency.” Any costs for rent should be explained in the budget notes.
9. It is your responsibility that your budget follows your host institution’s policies for costs. As part of your proposal, if applicable, you are strongly encouraged to submit a letter from the institution to receive the award that states that they have reviewed your proposal and accept your budget. If the organization allows you to submit your proposal without such a letter (due to time constraints or some other reason), please note that such a letter will be required prior to making any award.

**Letters of Support**

Please provide the following letters of support:

1. All research proposals are required to provide a letter of support from implementing partners.
2. If available, applicants should also include letters of support from potential scale-up partners.
3. PhD students are required to include a letter of support from an eligible researcher who is an adviser on their dissertation committee at their host university.The letter should indicate the adviser’s willingness to remain involved over the project’s lifetime. Please note that in some cases, due to restrictions at the institution that will receive the funding awarded, the adviser may be asked to add his or her name to the subaward and IRB documents.

**Submission Instructions**

Please submit an email with the following attachments to MoroccoEmploymentLab@povertyactionlab.org:

1. A coversheet and 5-page narrative (12pt font) saved as a single Word or PDF file, titled *[PI Name]\_[Topic Name].docx (.pdf)*
2. A completed budget form saved separately as a single Excel file and a budget narrative, titled*[PI Name]\_Budget.xlsx*
3. Letter(s) of support from implementing partners saved as PDF files. Letters of support are required for any research proposal.
4. Resumes of each member of the research team.

The deadline for submissions is **11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, December 11, 2020. The MEL will remain open to receiving off-cycle proposals after the deadline, but research teams are encouraged to apply early due to funding and time constraints.**

**Requirements**

If your proposal is accepted, the funds will be provided either under a spending authorization from PCNS in Morocco and/or under an award from the President and Fellows of Harvard College to the “Institute to Receive Award” indicated on your coversheet. This will require, in addition to your proposal:

1. Formal submission approval of the proposal from your institution to the MEL Research Fund if you are requesting an award to your university. This approval should be provided in your research proposal.
2. IRB approvals from your host institution accepting review for the project (the reviewing IRB must have a Federalwide Assurance Number and be willing to establish a reliance agreement), unless the project has been deemed exempt. The MEL requires proof of IRB approval prior to executing the award with your institution and releasing funding. You may also be requested to submit Moroccan IRB approvals.

**MEL Coversheet**

Round 1- *Please note that all fields are required*

|  |
| --- |
| ELIGIBLE RESEARCHER AND INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION |
|       |
| CO-INVESTIGATOR(S) AND INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION |
|       |
| ☐ I agree | *By checking this box, all eligible 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 research; and that their participation in this project is not merely to provide access to MEL resources and funding to anyone else working on this project who is not an eligible researcher.* |
| TITLE OF PROPOSAL | COUNTRY |
|       |       |
| PARTNER(S)  | CONTACT (Name, Email, Phone) |
|       |       |
| CO-FUNDER(S)  | FUNDED AWARD (PI, Project Title, Amount) |
|       |       |
| **Have you submitted this or a related proposal to any other J-PAL or EPoD research funding?** |
| ☐ Yes☐ No | If yes, which initiative and when?       |
| MEL FUNDING REQUEST *(Check box if application is for pilot or off-cycle funding only)* ***Pilot study*** ☐***Off-cycle*** ☐  |
| REQUESTED | **$**      | TOTALCO-FUNDED | **$**      |
| **GRANT PERIOD** |
| START DATE:(yyyy-mm-dd) |       | END DATE:(yyyy-mm-dd) |       |
| INSTITUTION TO RECEIVE AWARD\* |       | CONTACT FOR CONTRACTING ISSUES |       |
| IRB OF RECORD  |       | IRB CONTACT |       |
| ***Do you expect that you will need to set up any sub-awards for this project? (For example: a partner organization, or an organization doing field work)*** ☐ *Yes* ☐ No  |

\* If applicable

**Evaluation Criteria**

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| --- | --- |
| Academic Contribution | Does the study make a significant contribution toward advancing knowledge in the field? Does it answer new questions or introduce novel methods, measures, or interventions? Is there academic relevance? How does the study compare with the existing body of research? Does the research strategy provide a bridge between a practical experiment and underlying economic theories?  |
| Policy Relevance | Does the study address questions crucial to understanding pressing issues on labor markets in Morocco? Does it address priority questions for Morocco? Will results from the intervention have broader implications? How, if at all, will the “lessons learned” have relevance beyond this test case? Is there demand from policy makers for more/better information to influence their decisions in this area? Is there potential for the implementing partner to scale up this intervention? |
| Technical Design | Does the research design appropriately answer the questions outlined in the proposal? Are there threats that could compromise the validity of results? If so, does the proposal sufficiently address those threats? What changes could the researchers make to improve the design? For full research projects, are there sufficiently detailed power calculations?  |
| Project Viability | Is the relationship with the implementing partner strong and likely to endure through the entire study? What is the credibility and policy influence of the implementing partner? Are there any other logistical or political obstacles that might threaten the completion of the study, for example, government authorization or Human Subjects review? For pilots, do researchers describe how piloting activities would inform a full-scale randomized evaluation?  |
| Value of Research | Is the cost of the study commensurate with the value of expected lessons learned? Does the study leverage funding from other sources?  |