

# Application Instructions

## Europe and MENA

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## I. Overview

IPA and J-PAL's Displaced Livelihoods Initiative, supported by the IKEA Foundation, has launched its inaugural Call for Proposals. Expressions of interest are due Friday, June 2nd, and proposals are due Friday, July 21st at 11:59pm PT. Those interested in applying are asked to first read the Initiative's [Call for Proposals](#) (CFP) document.

Please reach out to [dli@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:dli@povertyactionlab.org) with any questions

## II. Eligibility

Interested applicants are invited to carefully read through the following eligibility criteria. When in doubt, please reach out to [dli@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:dli@povertyactionlab.org).

### Geographical Eligibility

This fund is managed jointly by IPA and J-PAL, with IPA accepting proposals for work in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and J-PAL accepting proposals for work in Europe and in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Applicants should refer to this [country-by-country](#) list to ensure that they are following the right process.

### Researcher Eligibility

Eligible researchers are J-PAL affiliates, DLI invited researchers, J-PAL Europe office invited researchers, and their graduate students. Research teams that do not fit this eligibility criteria are encouraged to reach out to [dli@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:dli@povertyactionlab.org) in order to discuss possible options, including the possibility of being connected to eligible researchers. Proposals from research teams that do not fit this eligibility criteria will still be asked to fill in J-PAL's EOI. Their submission will be shared with IPA for consideration by IPA, if recommended after the EOI stage.

### Methodological Eligibility

In line with J-PAL's mission, J-PAL will exclusively fund [randomized evaluations](#) under the Full Study grant window and expect strong links to existing, ongoing, or future experimental research for all other grant types. Promising EOIs for projects in MENA and Europe, but which do not meet J-PAL's methodological eligibility criteria may be invited to complete the subsequent stages of the application process with IPA if recommended after the review of their EOI. Please continue the process outlined in this document as long as your project meets the [geographical eligibility criteria](#).

### Implementing Organizations

Implementers should partner with academics with track records implementing similar research studies in order to apply for funding. J-PAL is available to support matchmaking with researchers. Please reach out to [dli@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:dli@povertyactionlab.org) to learn more.

### III. Expression of Interest Instructions

All applicants must first submit the required Expression of Interest on our [application portal](#) by **June 2nd, 2023, at 11:59pm PT**. Successful applicants will receive an invitation to proceed with their full proposal materials within two weeks.

### IV. Full Study Submission Instructions

After submitting the EOI and receiving an invitation to submit the Full Study, complete the online application and submit the materials found in the Full Study Application checklist below by **July 21st, 2023, at 11:59pm PT** through our online portal.

See information below to prepare for a Full Study submission: [Full Study Overview](#), [Application Checklist](#), [Narrative Proposal Guidelines](#), [Full Study Budget Guidelines](#) for randomized evaluations or randomized controlled trials (RCTs).

### V. Full Study Overview

**Strong RCT proposal applicants will demonstrate:**

- A. A clear research question that is clearly discussed in relation to the scope of the Displaced Livelihoods Initiative (DLI) and the themes outlined in the [CFP document](#).
- B. A robust research design, well-defined research instruments, and sample size estimates justified by pilot data presented in the proposal and how specific available data informs detailed power calculations for any impacts you plan to measure. Where studies are designed to detect differential impacts for men and women, or other sub-groups, there should be available evidence that large differences in outcomes are anticipated, informing statistical power calculations and justifying related increased data collection costs to allow for gender-disaggregated comparison of impacts.
- C. A feasible implementation plan.
- D. A strong partnership commitment from implementing organizations expressed in a letter of support, including indications of the potential for scale-up of research findings by partners or scaling organizations, if relevant, indicating the details of their commitment to partner on the research, their willingness to share progress on results and use of evidence, and their willingness to share relevant program cost information and indications of the potential for scale-up of research findings by partners or scaling organizations. These letters of support should not be templates provided by the research team, but the implementing partners perspective and real understanding of the partnership.

Please refer to the section on funding criteria in the [CFP document](#) for a full overview of the proposal evaluation criteria and additional considerations.

**Funding per full RCT study:** The award limit is currently set at \$500,000. We expect awards to range from \$80,000 to \$300,000 for studies that can randomize at the household or village level. In recognition that research in some locations or with some populations may be more costly, budgets over the US\$500,000 cap can be considered with appropriate justification. We expect projects of various sizes, and will carefully check whether the budget size accurately reflects the scope of work proposed. Note the guidelines on allowable and unallowable costs in the Budget Guidelines section.

**Timeline:** Funding requests should not extend beyond May 31st, 2027.

**Project Costing Exercise:** DLI RCT grantees are requested to collect and share detailed program cost data following the [J-PAL Costing Guidelines](#). See additional resources on conducting [cost-effectiveness analysis](#).

*Motivation:* The goal of this exercise in each RCT proposal is to ensure that the research team has plans from the outset to collect cost data for all “ingredients” needed to implement a program or intervention, excluding the costs of evaluating the impact of that program. Policymakers often ask how much a program or intervention costs, and collecting detailed cost data allows for cost-effectiveness analysis. This can assist policymakers when they are choosing how to allocate resources between different programs, or deciding to replicate or scale up a program that is demonstrated to be effective.

*Principles and expectations:* While a rigorous cost-effectiveness analysis requires very granular data, J-PAL will provide grantees a basic cost collection template, alongside basic reporting templates, which helps researchers gather the figures for the various cost categories. When planning your cost data collection and approach to cost-effectiveness analysis, you should consider not only the costs of any inputs offered to participants (e.g. cash, training, etc.), but also the costs of implementation staff, transport, and any other costs required to conduct the program.

## VI. Full Study Application Checklist

Please complete all sections in the online portal by the full proposal deadline, July 21st at 11:59pm PT. You must upload several documents to complete your full proposal. All templates for these documents are provided at the [CFP webpage](#) and listed below.

1. Proposal Narrative: Guidance pertaining to the narrative prompts is included in the Narrative section below. Please note that this section requires detailed power calculations.

2. Proposal Budget: Carefully review the Budget Guidelines in this document, then use the Budget Template, 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) for upload to the portal.
3. Budget Narrative: Detail the major costs within the budget, referring to the Budget Guidelines, in a Word document with the title [PI Last Name, First Name][Budget Narrative].doc(x) for upload to the portal. This document is required in addition to the Proposal Budget -- i.e. notes included in the Excel sheet do not suffice.
4. Timeline: Please upload a simple table, chart, or bulleted list with a timeline that outlines in detail 1) key project milestones (8-15 milestones), and 2) key policy and practice milestones (4-7 milestones).
5. 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 for upload to the portal:
  - A. A letter from each implementing partner, indicating the details of their commitment to partner on the research, their willingness to share progress on results and use of evidence, and (for RCTs,) their willingness to share relevant program cost information. These letters of support should not be templates provided by the research team, but the implementing partners perspective and real understanding of the partnership.
  - B. A budget letter of support or document stating the proposed grant host institution, the Institute to Receive Award (ITRA), approves the proposal materials.

**Note:** In the case that this proposal is awarded initiative funding, we will further ask that you submit information on IRB approval(s) or exemption(s). For all rounds of J-PAL funding starting October 1, 2022, and for all projects where data collection is supposed to start after January 1, 2023, it is mandatory for grantees to ensure that the project they implement has been reviewed by an IRB with status as an IRB Organization (IORG). An IRB's status can be found by consulting the [database of IORGs](#). If you do not have access to an IRB or ethics review committee at your institution(s) that has IORG status, requests can be sent to PSE's IRB after projects are chosen for funding. Funding is contingent on approval or exemption from an IRB with IORG status.

## VII. Full Study Narrative Proposal Guidelines

The online portal will require you to address the below prompts. The text provided below each bolded subsection helps provide guidance on what the DLI Board is looking for to effectively evaluate your proposal.

### **Abstract**

In 3-5 sentences, describe your research question and the context of your evaluation. The abstract should include (i) a basic problem statement, (ii) the intervention or approach being evaluated, and (iii) what questions the research will answer.

### **Problem Statement & Motivation**

To motivate the research, clearly state the development challenge, including available evidence of the problem in this particular context. This should be policy-oriented and distinct from the project's contribution to the academic literature.

- Describe the magnitude(s) and type(s) of inefficiencies and/or welfare problems this research seeks to address. Provide rationale and any available evidence.
- Discuss how the problem is important in relation to understanding the overall effectiveness of programs promoting sustainable livelihoods and economic inclusion for displacement-affected populations in relation to the policy and research priorities laid out in the DLI [CFP document](#).
- Discuss how this research will lead to generalizable insights, and why this project goes beyond a specific place based policy or program evaluation.

Suggested word count: Up to 200 words

### **Potential Policy Impact**

To motivate the research policy relevance, provide a comment on whether the research project has the potential to inform policy or program design, expansion, or implementation decisions, or whether the evaluated intervention has scale-up potential.

Suggested word count: Up to 200 words

### **Unique Contribution to the Literature**

What knowledge gap are you addressing, and how will it advance the field?

Succinctly list and bold the specific research question(s) you seek to address. Explain the project's potential to provide a unique scientific contribution. Provide a brief literature review. Note that a full reference list can be attached in a later section not subject to word counts.

Suggested word count: Up to 200 words

### **Intervention Details and Evaluation Design**

Please describe the intervention or treatment to be evaluated. Describe the theory of change that motivates your investigation. Clearly establish a plausible and promising link between the proposed approach or intervention to be tested and the hypothesized channel for impact on livelihoods related outcomes. Discuss whether you expect impacts to vary across geographic region, gender, age, population, type of displacement, host community status or context. Impact metrics may include employment, household income, productivity/welfare outcomes.

Include preliminary, pilot, or other available descriptive data in support of your hypotheses, models, and/or theories of change. Indicate the reliability of this existing data from this research context. You may also attach more detailed pilot data and results as an appendix (that does not count as part of the character/page limits for this proposal narrative), but please highlight in this section of your narrative the key details to ensure reviewers take them into account.

Suggested word count: up to 750 words

### **Target Population**

Please describe the target population(s) to be reached. For more information on DLI's target group, please refer to the section on the initiative's scope in the [CFP document](#).

Suggested word count: up to 200 words

### **DLI Focus Areas**

Please indicate which DLI focus areas your proposal relates to; these are described in detail in the DLI [CFP document](#) under Research & Learning Priorities.

Suggested word count: up to 100 words

### **Gender Dynamics**

How will this project address social, financial, or other barriers faced specifically by women and girls? In what specific ways does this project investigate related outcomes for women and girls? How will you further evidence base on this dimension? Discuss whether your research design involves an intervention that is sensitive to women's barriers to sustainable livelihoods in the context of displacement and/or whether the design will allow you to report on gender differentiated impacts. If you assert this is outside the scope of your research, please provide a compelling justification.

Suggested word count: up to 200 words

### **Outcomes and Measurement**

- What are the units of randomization and analysis (e.g. individual, household, village, etc.)?
- What is the method of randomization (e.g. lottery, phase-in, encouragement, etc.)?
- Please list out the set up for treatment and control groups, and the sample size for each.
- What are the intermediate and final outcome indicators? How will these be measured?
- When will you take measurements, and how frequently?
- What are the foreseeable threats to the internal validity of this study (compliance, attrition, spillovers, etc.)? If this is part of a larger or ongoing evaluation, please describe the marginal contributions of the proposed DLI budget

Suggested word count: up to 750 words

### **Power Calculations**

Describe your power of the research design in detail including minimum detectable effect size and why it is appropriate, take/up compliance, variance, clusters, observations per cluster, rho, etc.

Clearly state what data and assumptions you use for these estimates. Always discuss take-up, and do not assume take-up will be 100% for the purposes of power calculations. This should be based on some form of past fieldwork (whether admin data of ongoing operations, a previous pilot, etc.) You may also attach tables or figures as an appendix, but please highlight their inclusion in your narrative so reviewers take them into account.

Suggested word count: up to 500 words

### **Potential Risks and Mitigation Strategies**

Are there any technical, logistical, or political obstacles and risks that might threaten the completion of the study (for example, implementation capacity, government authorization, or other funding) and how does your team plan to address/overcome them?

Suggested word count: 150 words

### **Potential Ethical Risks**

All J-PAL initiatives rely on IRB approvals secured by the PIs for many of the ethical issues surrounding conduct of primary data collection and experimentation. For this reason, PIs on successful applications are required to secure an IRB approval before an award agreement can be signed with J-PAL.

The domain of an IRB review, however, does not include all ethical considerations. For this reason, we are providing an opportunity for the PIs to discuss any issues that they feel warrant discussion but that are not covered in their existing or planned IRB review. Specifically, please describe any ethical and/or safety-related risks, and detail how you will manage these risk, if your study could be considered more than minimal-risk (e.g. research participants are a vulnerable population, surveys will include questions on sensitive topics, the partner operates in a risky environment, etc.).

- Discuss any relevant ethical considerations around the intervention, taking into account the benefits to society of doing this research vs. the risks to subjects.
- Discuss whether there are potential harms to research participants and staff in the process of data collection and/or research procedures (for example, discomfort to being asked certain questions or breach of confidentiality) or potential harms to research staff from conducting the data collection (for example, exposure to political violence, unusual levels of a communicable disease, emotional wellbeing from surveying about difficult matters) that are not part of an existing or planned IRB approval. If so, what are they, and what proactive measures will be taken to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?

Suggested word count: 300 words

### **Marginalized Groups**

Please comment on whether the research proposal addresses the concerns and needs of marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, indigenous communities, diverse SOGIESC communities, and children. Please note that funded projects targeting these groups will be required

to report on data disaggregation by disability status, minority status, and child status. (SOGIESC stands for sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics)

Suggested word count: 100 words

### **Partnership Details**

Please describe the implementing partner (or partners), the history of the partnership, the partner's involvement in project activities, and any in-kind or financial support they have committed or provided to the project. Please include any potential risks to the partnership.

Suggested word count: up to 250 words

### **Project Costing Exercise**

The DLI Board would like to see the research team's plan for how they will gather, interpret and share program implementation cost data. Please comment on the approach that you will take to collect and report costing data for the intervention you are evaluating.

We acknowledge that it can be a challenge to distinguish implementation costs from evaluation costs, and see the value in making a plan during the proposal phase to identify and address the challenges and potential opportunities for effectively determining the full costs of the program/intervention in question. Please use this section to outline the rationale of your approach to cost-effectiveness analysis in light of this reporting requirement. Please see more guidance [here](#) on conducting cost-effectiveness analysis.

- Discuss your rough assessment of what the intervention, in its scalable form without associated research costs, is anticipated to cost per beneficiary reached or per benefit achieved.
- Which elements will be considered costs of implementation, and which elements will be considered evaluation costs? What types of cost data do you anticipate collecting?
- When in the data collection process would you collect each of these types of data, and how?
- How will you partner with those organizations and staff responsible for implementing the intervention to understand and report the associated costs in these identified categories?
- Report any challenges you anticipate facing in collecting or reporting this data. How would you plan to address these challenges to make the cost-effectiveness analysis exercise most valuable in the context of your research, given the goals of the exercise outlined above?

Suggested word count: 300 words

### **Data and Working Paper Publication**

Discuss how the data and findings from the evaluation will be made available outlining a plan to register in the AEA registry or similar, produce a pre-analysis plan, and publish data in an open-access, online database at the end of the evaluation. Registration and data publication are required for all supported projects, and pre-analysis plans are highly encouraged.

Suggested word count: up to 200 words

### **Timeline**

Please upload a table, chart, or bulleted list with a timeline that outlines: 1) key project activities and milestones, and 2) policy & practice influence milestones.

#### **1. Project Milestones**

Please list each key milestone for the project (e.g. baseline survey design, baseline survey implementation, baseline data analysis, etc.). We generally expect projects to list 8-15 milestones, and include descriptions. Please base all milestones on a start date of [X].

**2. Policy & Practice Influence Milestones:** Please list 4-7 policy and practice influence milestones you expect to achieve during this project with a view to improving policy and practice relevant to the project. Activities could include:

- Sharing baseline data, intermediate and/or final results with the implementing partners of the study
- Sharing intermediate and/or final results with the broader community of policymakers and practitioners
- Providing the implementing partner with monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning assistance Presenting results in the country where the research is taking place (highly encouraged)
- Supporting implementing partners to answer operational questions with the collected data, or to map theories of change Providing technical support for evidence application or scaling

### **Additional Information**

Please review the DLI [CFP document](#)'s section VII Funding Criteria and provide additional information as relevant to the other evaluation criteria if not already addressed in the fields above.

## **VIII. Full Study Budget Guidelines**

It is your responsibility that your budget follows your host institution's policies for costs, and you must submit a letter from the institution to receive the award that states that they have reviewed your proposal and accept your budget.

## Guidelines for completing an RCT proposal budget

Please submit a detailed project budget using the Budget Template provided at the RFP release page and a budget narrative. To reduce processing time, please keep the following in mind:

- ITRA Requirements: The Paris School of Economics (PSE), which in the instance of this fund is the institute to process the awards, requires that there is a subawardee PI at the ITRA who will be responsible for overseeing the work on the ground.
- Only projects with co-funding should complete both Excel sheets in the template, i.e. both “Total Project Budget” AND “Initiative Budget” (i.e. what you’re requesting from DLI) in the budget template. If the project has other funders, the proposal should clearly explain the marginal contribution of the requested funds from DLI.
- Applications must include a brief budget narrative document detailing the major costs within the budget. In addition:
  - We strongly encourage applicants to include budget notes in the column provided in the budget template, specifying input costs for line items within the budget.
  - Travel costs should include a breakdown of how many trips are planned, the estimated cost per trip, number of people on a given trip, etc. 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.
  - The Paris School of Economics sets a maximum of \$250 euros for daily accommodation and meals. Budgets should be made depending on prices in the research location.
- Awards are normally paid on a cost-reimbursable basis. However, PSE can advance payments to ITRAs if requested by the research team. Depending on the award amount, 30 to 50 percent can be provided in advance for full RCTs with subsequent tranche’s provided based on agreements between the research team and PSE, or the rest being on a cost-reimbursable basis. Please note that preparing an advance payment model requires additional time and additional coordination between PSE and the ITRA.

## Allowable Direct and Indirect Costs

- Please note that DLI does not cover PI salaries with the exception of researchers based in a mid- or low- income country (LMIC). Full RCTs may cover up to \$20,000 per year for LMIC researcher/PI/co-PI time, with a limit of \$8,000 per PI per year.
- Project Implementation Costs: For full research projects, implementation costs are expected to be borne by the project partners. However, under some circumstances, DLI can fund implementation costs where it is a marginal addition to an existing program to offset costs from an experiment (e.g. adding an additional treatment arm or the costs of an

encouragement design). These types of costs might include travel, small participant incentives, and/or SMS fees.

- Proposals requesting funds for implementation are required to explain why the implementer cannot bear the costs in the budget narrative and must also justify the input costs.
- Universities in high-income countries, generally defined as OECD member countries, can charge up to 10% in indirect costs, applied to total direct costs. Non-university 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.
- We understand that the cap on overhead or indirect costs under this initiative 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 narrative.
- Unallowable costs include those labeled as “incidental,” “miscellaneous,” or “contingency.” Any costs for rent should be explained in the budget narrative.

**Note:** A letter or document stating approval of the proposal materials and budget from each ITRA. Please allow for an adequate amount of time to acquire this letter. Given the funds will be provided by the Paris School of Economics, this letter should indicate an understanding that the agreement is governed by French law and French will be the official language of the contract. Translation costs should be accounted for in the budget, if necessary. If it is not possible to receive the letter, please justify this in the budget narrative.

# IX. Terms and Conditions

## General terms and conditions

1. This Call for Proposals is not and shall not be construed to be a contract, offer, or request for an offer. Those responding to this call receive no rights whatsoever as a result of their submissions. J-PAL will not have any express or implied obligations or responsibilities to those who respond and will not otherwise be bound by any terms or conditions, except to the extent set forth in a definitive, final, written grant agreement duly executed by the recipient(s) and J-PAL. There is no commitment by J-PAL that such a final grant agreement will be executed, even if J-PAL enters into negotiations with the applicants, proposed recipient(s), or his or her institution.
2. J-PAL in its sole and exclusive discretion may reject any or all proposals with or without notice or reasons, withdraw this call at any time before or after delivery of proposals, or if no proposal is accepted, abandon the call.
3. J-PAL further reserves the right in its sole and exclusive discretion to waive irregularities or defects in any proposal, but in no event will J-PAL have any obligation to do so. Moreover, J-PAL will not be responsible for errors or omissions by anyone submitting a proposal, and J-PAL shall be the sole judge of the responsiveness, appropriateness and completeness of any and all proposals.
4. J-PAL reserves the sole and exclusive right in its discretion to modify the timeline for decision-making or otherwise modify or amend this call as it deems appropriate.
5. All responses to this call become the property of J-PAL. Regardless of any markings identifying the proposal or its content as proprietary or confidential, J-PAL reserves the right to disclose or use any information contained in the proposals and other presentations responsive to this call. The review board making funding decisions includes external academics and policymakers, who will receive a copy of the proposals.
6. J-PAL is not responsible for and will not reimburse any costs incurred in submitting materials or information pursuant to this call or in otherwise responding to this call, including but not limited to evaluating, responding, providing follow-up, negotiating, and otherwise complying with it.
7. Applicants agree to be bound by the terms of their proposal for at least sixty days from the date such proposals are due, and otherwise agree to negotiate in good faith any other terms for a definitive arrangement if selected by J-PAL to do so.
8. Applicants certify that the work product they propose to create or use if they are a grant recipient will not infringe on or violate the intellectual property rights (including but not limited to trademarks, copyrights, patents, trade secrets, moral rights) or privacy rights of any person or entity. Applicants submitting proposals, materials, or information further certify that they have or will have such ownership or use rights in such work product sufficient to allow IPA to achieve its purposes as generally provided for in this call.
9. Grant recipients agree that, if requested by J-PAL, they will provide additional information about any subcontractors, graduate students, research assistants, and other third parties engaged by the grant recipient to provide services. J-PAL reserves the right in good faith to approve any such persons in order to ensure consistency with IPA's expectations of quality and character.
10. Applicants are required to disclose to J-PAL all funders of their project. Depending on the co-funders, an applicant may be ineligible for funding from J-PAL under this call. Further information may be requested from the DLI staff at J-PAL.

## Grant Terms and Conditions

If an applicant is awarded funding by J-PAL, the grant agreement may include clauses similar to the following:

1. The Grant Recipient shall at all times comply with, and ensure that its employees, officers, contractors, subcontractors and other persons or entities involved with Partner or with the Project at all times comply with all requirements and obligations that apply pursuant to national and international laws and regulations. This shall specifically include, but not be limited to: (i) applicable data privacy law(s); (ii) any anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws and regulations that may apply; (iii) any applicable laws and regulations that prevent fraud, money laundering and financing of terrorism; and (iv) any Trade Sanctions imposed by the UN, EU or US, or any similar sanctions or restrictions.
2. Specific stipulations related to the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) in the United States:
  - a. The Grant Recipient shall comply with, and ensure that its implementing partners involved in the Project (if any) comply with, FCRA and its relevant requirements.
  - b. The Grant Recipient shall keep IPA informed of the validity, as well as any changes in the status, of its FCRA registration and that of any key implementing partners. No payments shall be made by the Grant Recipient to any India-based entity that is subject to the FCRA, in relation to any period in which the entity's FCRA registration is not valid or not active.
  - c. The Grant Recipient shall be fully responsible for (non-)compliance with FCRA and other applicable laws, and is liable for any damages, losses, expenses and claims arising out of non-compliance by Partner or its implementing partner(s).
3. The Grant Recipient shall respect human rights and shall abide by applicable local laws, environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, as well as internationally agreed core labor standards.