**Gender and Economic Agency Initiative Application Form and Instructions**

*Full and Pilot Proposals: Round 3 (Winter 2022)*

**Instructions**

All J-PAL initiatives, including GEA, use an online portal for all application submissions, proposal reviews, invoice submission, and grantee reporting. After submitting a letter of interest, the GEA team will notify you via the portal once we have reviewed your LOI and you are clear to begin your proposal.

In the interim, to facilitate your proposal development, we have hosted reference application documents below that outline in detail all required information that applicants will be asked when submitting a full proposal to GEA via our online portal system. You are welcome to begin drafting your proposal materials using these templates. **PLEASE, HOWEVER, DO NOT COMPLETE OR SUBMIT THESE REFERENCE DOCUMENTS TO GEA FOR CONSIDERATION.**

Proposals for GEA research funding for full-scale randomized evaluations and pilots consist of (i) a proposal narrative; (ii) a budget form; and (iii) letters of support.[[1]](#footnote-1) These materials are available on the [GEA webpage](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/initiative/gender-and-economic-agency-initiative) and should be submitted by **8:59 p.m. ET on Monday, April 11, 2022.**

**Narrative**

Responses to the online portal’s application questions should not exceed five pages in total, including appendices. It should clearly describe the proposed evaluation and include:

1. A 100-150 word abstract of the study,which will be added to the [GEA webpage](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/initiative/gender-and-economic-agency-initiative) if the project receives funding.
2. A summary of the policy problem that motivates this research and how it fits with the research topics outlined in [GEA’s framing paper](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/review-paper/gender-and-economic-agency-initiative-gea-overview-research-opportunities).
3. A description of the main research question(s), treatment, evaluation design, project timeline, target population, and implementing partners.
4. Power calculations. *(Full studies only)*
5. 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. *(Full studies only)*
6. 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 a J-PAL initiative. *(Full studies only)*
7. In approximately half a page, please:
   1. Note any elements of the project that relate to COVID-19;
   2. Describe to what extent findings from your intervention may be generalizable beyond a COVID-19 context;
   3. Describe any COVID-related risks to the feasibility of the project and how you will prepare for and mitigate these risks.
8. A comment on whether and how the project involves researchers local to the project context.
9. Potential ethical risks [Optional]: Please discuss, if applicable, any ethical considerations that you feel warrant discussion but are not covered by your existing or planned IRB review. It is fine to leave this section partly or entirely blank; please detail only issues that are not or will not be covered by your IRB that you feel are potentially important enough for the review committee to be aware. For more details, see [here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/15-EdgIfCOp6b_uvA5QQMzbU5QTw01rEk/view?usp=sharing).
10. A discussion of the other evaluation criteria (listed at the end of this document), if not already addressed in the narrative.

*Off-cycle proposals:* Please also include an explanation of the time constraints the project faces and the reasons for requesting expedited review.

**Budget**

Please submit a detailed project budget using the Excel templates available online. To reduce the processing time, please keep the following in mind when developing your budget:

1. If there is co-funding for the project, you must complete both the “Total Project Budget” and the “GEA Budget” sheets in the budget template.
2. Awards are normally paid on a cost-reimbursable basis.
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](http://www.oecd.org/about/membersandpartners/list-oecd-member-countries.htm), 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. We understand that the cap on overhead or indirect costs under GEA 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.
6. 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.
7. Unallowable costs include those labeled as “incidental,” “miscellaneous,” or “contingency.” Any costs for rent should be explained in the budget notes.
8. GEA research funds are unable to fund any program implementation costs.
9. Please note that GEA does not generally cover PI salaries, unless for PIs based in a low-or middle-income country. For full projects, GEA can support up to $20,000 per year for LMIC researcher PI/co-PI time, with a limit of $8,000 per PI per year. For pilot projects, GEA can support up to $8,000 per LMIC researcher PI/co-PI, but the total budgeted amount for LMIC researcher PI time should not exceed 25% of the total budget. Deviations from these thresholds may be considered for exceptional cases.
10. It is your responsibility that your budget follows your host institution’s policies for costs. As part of your proposal, you must 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 this on the Proposal Cover Sheet (under the “Institution to receive grant funds” field). Please note that this applies to all projects, including those going through J-PAL and IPA offices. You should contact J-PAL and IPA offices in advance to make sure you are aware of their policies for proposal review.

**Letters of Support**

Please provide the following letters of support:

1. Full projects are required to provide a letter of support from implementing partners. Applicants for pilot funding are encouraged to submit letters of support if available.
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 a J-PAL affiliate or GEA invited researcher who is an adviser on their dissertation committee.[[2]](#footnote-2) The letter should either state that the advisor will be the supervising PI with the PhD students as lead researchers or that the PhD students meet their institution’s criteria for PI status. If the student is pre-thesis, the letter should state “I am actively responsible for supervising this project/research and anticipate being on the student’s thesis committee.” This letter should generally come from the same adviser who supported the student’s initial GEA travel/proposal development grant application if applicable. Graduate students who are applying for pilot or full study funding but have not previously applied for GEA travel/proposal development grants must also include documented evidence of successful pilot activities. 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 your application via J-PAL’s online portal. The deadline for submissions is **8:59 p.m. ET on Monday, April 11 2022.**

**Requirements**

If your proposal is accepted for award, the actual funds will be provided under a subaward from MIT 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 GEA. This approval should be provided in your proposal to the GEA.
2. IRB approvals from your host institution accepting review for the project, unless the project has been deemed exempt. MIT requires proof of IRB approval prior to executing the award with your institution and releasing funding. We also ask that you provide any local IRB approvals for our records.

**Process**

We aim to set up the subaward within 60 days of receiving all your forms. Assuming IRB approval is in place, we set the period of the award to start from the start date indicated on the submitted proposal.The process MIT follows for these awards is:

1. The GEA Review Board sends official award notification letter.
2. If not already submitted, J-PAL requests your institution’s approval of the proposal and your institutional IRB approval.[[3]](#footnote-3)
3. J-PAL establishes an account with award funds at MIT.
4. MIT establishes a subaward under that account with your institution.

**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 women’s economic agency? Does it address the priority questions outlined in the RFP overview? 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 study proposals, 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? |
| Involvement of local researchers | Does the project involve meaningful engagement with researchers local to the project context? Does the project include a local researcher as a co-PI? |

1. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Graduate students may apply for a maximum of two travel/proposal development grants and two grants for pilot/full study funding during their time as graduate students. Applicants who received travel/proposal development funding as graduate students but have since moved to another institution may only apply for funding to continue that same project, and may not apply for funding for unrelated projects unless they have since become a J-PAL affiliate or GEA invited researcher (following the GEA invited researcher nomination and review process). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In the case that IRB approval is not already in place when funding decisions are made, proposed start dates should reflect time needed to get IRB approval by the IRB of record, as well as time required to establish a reliance agreement and move forward in the subaward granting process. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)