**Governance Initiative Application Form and Instructions**

*Full and Pilot Proposals: Round 20 - Fall 2022*

**Instructions**

Proposals for full study or pilot funding consist of (i) an application form, which includes a cover sheet (found at the bottom of this document) and narrative; (ii) a budget form; and (iii) letters of support.[[1]](#footnote-1) [[2]](#footnote-2) These materials should be submitted to [GI@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:GI@povertyactionlab.org) by **11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, September 23, 2022.**

**Narrative**

The narrative should not exceed five pages in length, including appendices, and use 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 GI’s web page if the project receives funding.
2. A summary of the policy problem that motivates this research and how it relates to the research priorities identified in the [Governance Initiative Review Paper](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/review-paper/governance-initiative-review-paper) (executive summary [here](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/review-paper/governance-initiative-review-paper-executive-summary)). As long as proposals fall within at least one of these or other closely related themes, GI does not prioritize proposals from one of these research areas over another. GI also welcomes proposals from multidisciplinary research teams.
3. A description of the treatment, evaluation design, target population, and implementing partners.
4. Power calculations. *(Full studies only)*
5. A comment on whether the research proposal addresses gender issues in any way, including analysis disaggregated by gender. Please note that funded projects will be required to collect and report on gender-disaggregated data, as outlined in [GI’s RFP Overview document](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/initiative/governance-initiative-request-proposals) under the “Grant Conditions” section.
6. 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)*
7. 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)*
8. A comment on whether you anticipate any risks, Covid-related and otherwise, during the course of the research, and how will you mitigate them. 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?  Are there any risks of unintended negative consequences for program participants and/or staff and if so, what are they? Has the team taken proactive measures to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?
9. 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 template [available online](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/initiative/governance-initiative-request-proposals). 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 “GI 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 GI 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. Please note that GI generally does not cover PI salaries. **New exception:** GI allows for budgets requesting funding to cover the time of PIs on proposals, as long as:
   1. The PI is based in an academic institution in a low-or middle-income country;
   2. *For Full RCT proposals*: The request does not exceed $8,000 per year for each PI in the proposal, and does not exceed $20,000 per year for all PIs in the proposal in total.
   3. *For Pilot proposals*: The request does not exceed $8,000 per year for each PI in the proposal, and does not exceed an amount equivalent to 25% of the total budget per year for all PIs in the proposal in total.
   4. *For Travel/Proposal Development Grants*: No PI time allowed in budgets.
   5. GI may consider a deviation from these caps in exceptional circumstances, as long as the PI is still based in an academic institution in a low-or middle-income country.
9. 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. Please see detailed instructions under Letters of Support below. 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 GI invited researcher who is an adviser on their dissertation committee at their host university. [[3]](#footnote-3) The letter should indicate the adviser’s willingness to remain involved over the project’s lifetime and should generally come from the same adviser who supported the student’s initial GI travel/proposal development grant application if applicable. Graduate students who are applying for pilot or full study funding but have not previously applied for GI 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 an email with the following attachments to [GI@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:GI@povertyactionlab.org):

1. A coversheet and five-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 encouraged for pilot proposals and required for full studies.

The deadline for submissions is **11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, September 23, 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. A formal letter of transmission from the Institute to Receive Award agreeing to the proposal and budget. This should be on the Institute to Receive award letterhead, and should follow or be similar to MIT's preferred language for Letter of Transmission, as follows:

***Option 1: Example language for Letter of Transmission when there is a PI at the ITRA****:* *(On ITRA letterhead)*

The [ITRA] is pleased to support the [Name of research] proposal and will plan on carrying out the work in accordance with the submitted budget. [Name of PI at ITRA] will serve as [ITRA's] Principal Investigator for this work. In this role, they are responsible for the implementation of this project in accordance with this proposal and with appropriate research and data protection practices. Please contact them with any concerns which may arise related to project implementation.

***Option 2: Example language for Letter of Transmission when there is no PI at the ITRA:***  *(On ITRA letterhead)*

[ITRA] is pleased to support the [Name of research] proposal and submitted budget. [ITRA] takes full responsibility for the appropriate and responsible conduct of the proposed research activities related to the scope of work for this project under the academic direction of the co-PIs: [Names of co-PIs plus their affiliation - eg: Jane Doe from Duke University]. Please contact me [*this will be the person who signs the letter*] with any concerns which may arise related to project implementation.

1. IRB approval, or exempt or non-human subjects determination letter from your IRB. It is the PI’s responsibility to obtain the IRB approval or exemption. MIT requires proof of IRB approval prior to executing the award with your institution and releasing funding. We also ask that you provide any additional IRB approvals along with copies of the IRB protocol and all approved consents and survey instruments.

**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 GI 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.[[4]](#footnote-4)
3. MIT establishes a subaward to the institution to receive award.
4. Institute to receive award invoices MIT for expenses incurred for the project on a cost reimbursable basis.

**GI Coversheet**

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*Please note that all fields are required*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| J-PAL AFfiliate or GI InvITEE and Institutional affiliation | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| CO-Investigator(s) and institutional affiliation | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| I agree | *By checking this box, all J-PAL affiliates and initiative special invitees 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 J-PAL resources and funding to anyone else working on this project who is neither a J-PAL affiliate nor an initiative special invitee.* | | | | | | | |
| 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 in any previous GI round of funding?** | | | | | | | | |
| Yes  No | | | | If yes, when and what was the proposal name? | | | | |
| **Have you submitted this or a related proposal to any other J-PAL research initiative?** | | | | | | | | |
| Yes  No | | | | If yes, which initiative and when? | | | | |
| GI 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 to purchase any item with a value of 500 GBP or more?***  ☐ *Yes* ☐ No | | | | | | | | |
| ***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 | | | | | | | | |

\* Please indicate the institution that will receive the grant funds

**Evaluation Criteria**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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 governance in developing countries? Does it address the priority questions outlined in the Governance Review Paper? 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? |

1. Please note that the total amount awarded to a single project, including any GI funding for full or pilot studies, will not exceed $400,000. Please note that, in general, full research project proposals with budgets exceeding $250,000 are rarely funded given the high quality and volume of all proposals received and GI’s limited resources. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 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. Please note that applicants who received travel/proposal development funding as graduate students but have since moved to another institution may not apply for funding unless they have since become a J-PAL affiliate or GI invited researcher (following the GI invited researcher nomination and review process), or unless the proposal includes a J-PAL affiliate or GI invited researcher as a co-author. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 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-4)