

ATAI Request for Proposals (RFP):

Gender and Agricultural Transformation

2021 - Rolling

RELEASED: February 18, 2021

ATAI calls for proposals from J-PAL and CEGA affiliates (and ATAI invited researchers¹) to conduct randomized controlled trials (RCTs) that illuminate the mechanisms underlying “agricultural transformation” for rural poverty alleviation in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. **This rolling RFP specifically calls for proposals that will help us understand how to accelerate the agricultural transformation process in ways that specifically reach, benefit, or empower women.**

ATAI is accepting the following categories of proposals. See an overview of each type, as well as proposal and budget guidelines, in each of the associated [Proposal Guidelines](#) documents (at the RFP release page, [here](#)):

- **Travel/Proposal development grants** (typically travel and related reimbursements, up to \$10,000)
- **Pilot studies** (up to \$75,000)
- **RCTs** (flexible, specific to the scope of work, typically from \$80,000 to \$500,000*)

**Projects requesting large grants (>\$500,000) should demonstrate that the study is powered to move market-level outcomes. Smaller studies will not be expected to influence market-level outcomes but should still document carefully how their results could help improve women’s participation in (and outcomes from) agricultural transformation.*

Rolling proposal submissions consist of two stages:

1. **Fill out the required [pre-proposal form](#).** We will respond within 3 weeks of form submission to let you know if you are invited to submit a proposal.
2. **Upon receiving an invitation to apply, please email the required proposal materials to atai@povertyactionlab.org following the instructions in the associated Proposal Guidelines document.** We aim to respond to your proposal within 6-8 weeks after this submission.

Grantmaking during Covid-19:

ATAI expects that researchers wait to submit an application until the Covid-19 restrictions and norms in their chosen country will permit the research to safely start on the ground within six months of submitting an application to ATAI. We will ask all research teams for details on their capacity to move research forward as part of the required proposal materials.

Please note that **ATAI will not obligate funds to projects that have not fully cleared all Covid-19 requirements outlined in the [Covid-19 Research Startup Questionnaire](#).**

¹Select non-affiliate faculty who have been nominated, approved, and notified of their eligibility to submit proposals. Note: This request for proposals has been sent directly to researchers eligible to apply for ATAI research grants. **Please do not circulate externally, given this restriction.** For graduate student applicants whose advisers are affiliated faculty, see the [Additional Guidance for Graduate Student Applicants](#) available on the [RFP release page](#). If you have questions regarding your eligibility to participate, we welcome you to inquire by emailing us at atai@povertyactionlab.org. **Among those eligible to apply, note that all applicants are limited to being named (as PI or Co-PI) on a maximum of three proposals to ATAI per 12-month period.**

Geographic Focus

ATAI's primary geographic focus is sub-Saharan Africa. ATAI network researchers are encouraged to submit proposals for research conducted in the focus region, in partnership with local implementing organizations. At its discretion, the ATAI Board **will consider projects in the South Asia region. For any project outside of Africa, it is critical that the authors provide a convincing argument of the project's viability in, and practical transferability to, a sub-Saharan African context and implementing partner.** Specifically, the proposal must address the institutional, financial, and administrative implications of the project's adaptation to sub-Saharan Africa, though the sufficient quality of a proposal is the foremost concern.

Gender-specific Thematic Areas

ATAI calls for applications in contexts where distinctions between men and women suggest alternative interventions along agricultural value chains are needed in order to specifically engage and benefit women in processes of agricultural transformation. **This should contribute more than simply conducting heterogeneity analysis by gender. Your proposal must also address one or more priorities in [ATAI's Framing Paper "Evidence for Transformation: Framing a Research Agenda in Agriculture for Development,"](#) which discusses entry points for policy-relevant randomized evaluations related to agricultural transformation.**

Potential topics include, but are certainly not limited to, the following general areas raised during a recent convening of ATAI and [J-PAL's GEA](#) initiative researchers:

- **Interventions tackling gender differentiation, misalignment and misallocation** (i.e. who does what work on which crops, whose preferences are reflected in investment decisions, and who controls sales, the spending of earnings, etc.). This may relate to labor productivity across crops or sectors, labor force participation, out-migration, unpaid household labor including childcare, technology adoption decisions including mechanization, or norms around women's participation and decisionmaking (e.g. in producer organizations, extension services, financial services, or the processing and selling of outputs).
- **Land markets and the consolidation of property rights** that drive market participation and benefit or empower women. Understanding gender and tenure insecurity (whether or not through titling programs), sole versus joint ownership arrangements, and women's entitlements to other assets.
- Gender differences in the **bundling of services (extension, seeds, fertilizers, credit, etc.) that might be needed to relax women's compounded productivity constraints simultaneously.** Also, gender differences in **shock-coping behavior and risk protective interventions.** These may relate to gender differences in crops grown, social networks, credit and savings needs, labor investments, expenditure choices, etc.
- What interventions successfully **engage women in agricultural households in more lucrative, appealing (e.g. less physically burdensome, more flexible) or empowering work?** Note that some research related to women's work may also be of interest for [J-PAL's Gender and Economic Agency RFP](#).
- **What role do marketing opportunities play in inducing household changes in crops/varieties, production practices, and consumption and selling decisions? What are the impacts of these decisions on women's welfare and empowerment?** Particularly women's access to, benefits from, and potential (dis)empowerment from access to deeper and less volatile output markets, prioritizing evaluations of contractual forms and terms over information-sharing on the margins. This includes:

- Contract farming arrangements (and their terms) that guarantee farmers' purchases and may enable smallholder households to take advantage of agroindustry infrastructure (services like price-fixing, debt coverage, quality certifications, etc.)
 - Producer organization innovations, with a particular interest in coops that are women-specific or mixed gender, and women's access to (and roles within) coop governance and service provision.
 - Women's access to, participation in, benefits from, or (dis)empowerment from commodity exchanges.
- **Household diversification strategies within and beyond agriculture, using a gender lens to understand the participation, benefits, and potential (dis)empowerment of women.** This includes:
 - The use of revenues from agricultural activity to finance off-farm investments, the diversification of income away from agriculture, and increased use of labor outside of farm work.
 - Tradeoffs between agricultural diversification and commercialization versus non-agricultural income diversification strategies, particularly where there could be an inequitable distribution of benefits by gender.

Links to all RFP Materials

Details on the overall ATAI research agenda, as well as all submission templates and reference documents that make up the overall RFP package, are all available at:

<https://www.povertyactionlab.org/initiative-subpage/atai-request-proposals>.

Proposal Guidelines and Submission Instructions

Prior to submitting a proposal, all applicants must **submit the required [Pre-Proposal Form](#)** and then **be invited to submit a proposal** before proceeding with the development of their proposal materials.

Once invited to submit a proposal, please read both the relevant [Proposal Guideline](#) document and the FAQ documents on the [RFP release page](#) in detail before drafting your proposal. Each of the following guidelines documents includes a checklist to guide completion of all required submission materials by proposal type.

- [Proposal Guidelines: RCTs](#)
- [Proposal Guidelines: Pilot studies](#)
- [Proposal Guidelines: Travel/Proposal development grant](#)

Other FAQs

For frequently asked questions, such as how proposals are scored or what the award requirements are, please see the RFP release page, [here](#).