Jobs and Opportunity Initiative (JOI) and Social Protection Initiative (SPI): FULL RCT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

This document contains an Overview, Budget Guidelines, Application Checklist, and Narrative Template for RCTs. Please read this document carefully before submitting your proposal.

Submission instructions: To respond to this RFP, all applicants must first **submit the required Letter of Interest on WizeHive, using the relevant application link from the JOI and/or SPI RFP webpages, and following the Applicant Instructions here.** Successful applicants will receive an invitation to proceed with their full proposal materials.

OVERVIEW

Strong RCT proposal applicants will demonstrate:
- a clear research question that is clearly discussed in relation to one or more Initiative themes (as outlined in the RFP's research agenda)
- **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, 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.
- a feasible implementation plan, and
- a strong partnership commitment from implementing organizations (e.g., agreement to research design, sharing of costing information), including indications of the potential for significant scale-up of research findings by partners or scaling organizations.

   Please note: if J-PAL has already funded part of, or precursors to, this project in a past competition round for any initiative, **the project will not be eligible to receive additional funding unless some preliminary data (e.g. take-up rates from a pilot, etc.) from the previously funded work is available and shared in the proposal. You may submit this additional material as an addendum to your submission via the online application.**

Funding per Full RCT award: The funding limit for this RFP is US$350,000, but please note that for the JOI/SPI joint window, proposals under US$250,000 will be most competitive. Eligible PhD students can apply for up to US$50,000.

Project Timeline: The JOI soft skills window cannot fund projects beyond June 30, 2027, and the JOI/SPI joint window cannot fund projects beyond October 31, 2027.

Required Data Collection: We intend to require that all RCTs collect **data on a subset of** indicators. The initiative team will be in touch at the launch of funded projects to support research teams in the specific survey questions or modules to be used and will be mindful of the additional survey time required as well as open to budget modifications to incorporate the time it takes to collect these required indicators.

Project Costing Exercise: J-PAL RCT grantees are requested to collect and share detailed program cost data following the [J-PAL Costing Guidelines](). **The [Narrative Template]() includes details on what to include in your proposal narrative.**

> **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. In policy outreach activities, J-PAL has found that 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[1].
>
> **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. The template includes a sheet to assist with calculation of a "total program cost," and a sheet to calculate high-level cost figures that are of greatest interest to policymakers. **Your proposal should help us understand the potential for a very rough, back-of-the-envelope cost-effectiveness calculation.** 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. seeds, equipment, etc.), but also the costs of facilities and utilities, implementation staff, transport, and any other costs required to conduct the program. You may find it useful to consider the following questions when constructing your plan to collect relevant cost data:
> - Are there costs in identifying the participant populations? (e.g. costs of doing a census,

---

[1] For more information on comparative cost-effectiveness analysis, see:
https://www.povertyactionlab.org/resource/conducting-cost-effectiveness-analysis-cea. If you have feedback on this exercise, the template, or the underlying rationale, please submit feedback [online.]()

distributing flyers or other marketing materials, or holding information sessions necessary to implement the program.)
- Are there training costs for program staff implementing the intervention?
- Are there costs borne by participants (consider opportunity costs, subsidized components of the program, etc.)
- Are there activities that are reduced in size or discontinued as a result of this intervention being introduced? These might indicate cost savings from this intervention.
- Are there implementation monitoring costs involved, necessary to track progress or ensure compliance with plans to achieve effective implementation?

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 accepted your budget.**[2]

Guidelines for completing an RCT proposal budget: Please submit a detailed project budget using the RCT/Pilot Budget Template provided on the JOI and SPI RFP release pages. To reduce processing time, please keep the following in mind:
- **Institute to Receive Award (ITRA) Requirements**: RCTs are provided under an award from MIT to the grantee's host institution. PLEASE NOTE: MIT now requires that at least one project PI be employed by the organization receiving the subaward and funds.
- **IRB Requirements:** MIT requires that the IRB determination must be held by the institution that enters into the subaward agreement with MIT. The PI at the ITRA must be listed as the main PI on the IRB. If the institution does not have its own IRB, the institution must engage the services of a commercial IRB to review and provide oversight for the research activities. Heartland and Solutions provide review of international research and satisfy J-PAL's IRB requirements; fees can be found on their respective websites. Further information about this MIT policy can be found here and here. Please consult with J-PAL regarding including the cost of this commercial entity in the project budget.
  - J-PAL requires that the reviewing IRB have IRB Organization (IORG) status with the US Office of Human Protections. You can look up the IORG status of an IRB here.

---

[2] If the organization allows you to submit your proposal without such a letter (due to time constraints or some other reason), please describe this in the notes section of your submission. Please note that this applies to all projects, including those going through J-PAL and IPA offices. You should contact them in advance to make sure you are aware of their policies for proposal review and give them enough time to meet the proposal deadline.

- Please refer to the Award Requirements and Setup Process document available in the RFP Overview document to review all of the Initiative's award requirements in detail as part of preparing your submission.
- 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 the Initiative) in the budget template. **If the project has other funders, the proposal should clearly explain the marginal contribution of the requested funds from JOI and SPI.**
- **Applications must include a brief budget narrative document detailing the major costs within the budget in addition to the Excel template.**
  - **We also 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.
- Applicants should review J-PAL best practices on questionnaire design and data collection/management in the J-PAL Research Protocol Checklist, to ensure they have budgeted for expenses associated with piloting and surveyor training, survey translation, field spot checks, and back checking.
- **Awards are paid on a cost-reimbursable basis.** However, MIT may agree to advance payments via a milestone payment structure to Institutes to Receive Award that are based in low- and middle-income countries on a case-by-case basis if requested by the research team. Please note that preparing an advance payment model requires additional time and additional coordination between MIT and the Institute to Receive Award.

Allowable Direct and Indirect Costs
- **Please note that J-PAL initiatives do not cover PI salaries with the exception of PIs who completed a PhD and are based at an academic institution in a middle- or low- income country (LMIC).** Full RCTs may cover up to US$8,000 per LMIC PI/co-PI per year, but the total budgeted amount for LMIC PI time in aggregate across all co-PIs should not exceed US$20,000 per year.
- **Project Implementation Costs: For full research projects, implementation costs are expected to be borne by the project partners.** However, under some circumstances, initiatives 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.

- o 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** (e.g, if texting fees are requested as an implementation cost, the budget narrative should include a breakdown of how many texts are planned, the estimated cost per texts, number of people on a given campaign, etc).
- Universities in high-income countries (according to the [World Bank classification](#)) 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 JOI and SPI 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.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please complete all sections in the online portal (WizeHive) by the full proposal deadline. You must upload several documents to complete your full proposal. All templates for these documents are provided at the [JOI](#) and [SPI](#) RFP release webpages and listed below.

1. **Proposal Narrative:** Guidance pertaining to the narrative prompts is included in the [Narrative template](#) below. Please note that this section requires detailed power calculations.
2. **Proposal Budget**: Carefully review the Budget Guidelines in this document, then use the [RCT/Pilot Budget Template](#) provided on the [JOI](#) and [SPI](#) RFP release pages, 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 application.
3. **Budget Narrative:** Detail the major costs within the budget, referring to the Budget Guidelines above, in a Word document with the title [PI Last Name, First Name][Budget Narrative].doc(x) for upload to the application. This document is required in addition to the Proposal Budget -- i.e. notes included in the Excel sheet do not suffice.
4. **Research Timeline:** Please upload a simple table, chart, or bulleted list with a timeline that outlines key project activities.
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 application:
   a. letters from each implementing partner, indicating the details of their commitment to partner on the research, and (for RCTs,) their willingness to share relevant

program cost data. Consider including letter(s) from any potential scale-up partner(s).

b. a letter/document stating the proposed grant host institution's approval of the proposal materials.

c. **PhD students applying as the primary PI are required to include a letter of support from a researcher adviser eligible for this call.** The letter should indicate the adviser's willingness to remain involved in a supervisory role throughout the lifetime of the project. The J-PAL-affiliated researcher must be serving or be planning to serve as an advisor on the PhD student's dissertation committee.

6. **Validation and Test Accuracy data:** Proposals that include **Artificial Intelligence (AI) or any new specialized technology should include validation and test accuracy data in the proposal**, showing that the technology successfully does what it intends.

7. **(Possible) Addendum:** If your proposal builds on completed pilot findings, please submit an addendum detailing the pilot results that inform your RCT design.

LETTER OF INTEREST TEMPLATE

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

Given aspects of the RFP review are blinded, **please refrain from using identifying language in your proposal narrative, e.g. we encourage you to use the grammatical third person when citing (co-)PIs' work.**

Important Information

Primary Eligible Researcher

Please identify one researcher who is eligible for J-PAL Initiative funding. This may be the principal PI and/or any eligible co-PI. Details for only one primary eligible researcher are required in cases where there's more than one eligible researcher. Other PIs who are eligible can be added as co-PIs.

PI Eligibility Category

Indicate how the researcher is eligible for J-PAL Initiative funding. If applying through the JOI African Scholars program, please select "Regional Scholar."
[J-PAL Affiliate; Invited Researcher; PhD Student; J-PAL Postdoc; Regional Scholar]

PhD Student Applicants

If you are a PhD student, please indicate the J-PAL-affiliated researcher who serves or will serve as an advisor on your dissertation committee.

Organization Name of Eligible Researcher

Please tell us the name of the organization the eligible researcher (i.e., the professor or PhD student) is affiliated with.

Organization Type

Indicate the eligible researcher's organization type: "University" or "Other." If you choose "Other" instead of "University," please contact the JOI and SPI teams at joi@povertyactionlab.org and spi@povertyactionlab.org to provide more details.
[University; Other]

Organization Website of Eligible Researcher

[Short answer]

Country Where Organization of Eligible Researcher is Based or Headquartered

[Dropdown]

Team Members & Roles

Please add all your project team members and indicate their role(s) on the project/application. Please copy and paste the role exactly as it is written below so that it matches our internal database.

Role options are: Applicant; Primary PI; Co-PI; PI at Institute to Receive Award; Reporting Contact; Secondary Reporting Contact; IRB Contact; Finance Contact; Collaborator; Contact for Contracting (e.g., grant manager or research administrator); Other (please specify role or title).

If you are the applicant and a PI (or another role), indicate so by adding yourself as an applicant and then again as a PI. As the applicant, you will be receiving all notifications related to this application.

PI Certification

1. I certify that any listed eligible researchers have agreed to be active, engaged, and responsive PIs or advisors on this project. Eligible researchers who are involved have confirmed they will be dedicated to guaranteeing quality control on all aspects of this research and that their participation is not merely to provide access to resources and funding to other project team members who would otherwise be ineligible.
2. I certify that all eligible researchers are up to date on reporting for all existing grants, across all J-PAL initiatives.

[Yes; No]

Demographic Information

J-PAL is collecting information about all project teams, including demographic information, to better understand and support our research network. As the applicant, we kindly ask that you send the language and link included below to all PIs/Co-PIs on your proposal research team. Provide your proposal name and each member's role (as you listed them on the application) when you send out the blurb. Please complete the "Team Member and Roles" section first before sending out the email(s) so that your team members are already in the system. Completion of this step is required for all PIs on your research team. If you have any technical problems with completing this step please email help@povertyactionlab.org or the JOI and SPI teams directly.

Feel free to cut and paste this suggested language in an email to send to the PIs and Co-PIs on your team:

> *J-PAL is collecting information about all project teams, including demographic information, to better understand and support our research network. J-PAL is requiring all PIs and Co-PIs on our research team to complete this short form. This data will only be accessible in disaggregated, identifiable form to select J-PAL staff. Aggregate, anonymized data will be used to report to key partners such as donors and may be included on their website.*

Demographic Information Confirmation

Please confirm that every PI/co-PI has completed the questions in the above-linked survey. You may select "Not Yet" so as to finish other questions. However, if you submit the application without "Yes" selected, your application will not be considered (until the surveys are complete). If you select "Yes" and PIs or co-PIs have not completed their surveys, their applications will not be considered until the surveys are complete. Check here to indicate that all PIs/co-PIs have completed this survey.

[Yes; Not Yet]

Project Details

Full Title of Proposal *[30 words max]*

Funding Amount
Amount of requested funding in USD.

Proposed Period of Performance Project Start Date
What is the proposed start date for this J-PAL grant's subaward activities?

Proposed Period of Performance Project End Date
What is the proposed end date for this J-PAL grant's subaward activities? Please note that the JOI soft skills window cannot fund projects beyond June 30, 2027, and the JOI/SPI joint window cannot fund projects beyond October 31, 2027.

Past and Future Submission to J-PAL
Have you submitted or do you plan to submit this LOI and proposal to any other J-PAL Initiative RFP, including in any previous JOI or SPI rounds of funding? *[Yes; No]*

Details about Past and Future Submissions
If you answered yes above, please state which initiative(s), year/season of RFP, and the name of the LOI/proposal you submitted or plan to submit. Example: GI Spring 2019 Using Mobile Phones to Improve Service Delivery. Are the PI team, context, and research question the same as in the previously submitted proposal?

Please explain whether the project received funding and what type of funding it received (Travel/Proposal Development, Pilot, RCT, Scale, Multidisciplinary). Additionally, please explain how the project has progressed since it was last submitted to the initiative(s), and explain how you addressed the feedback that was provided with your last submission. *[350 words max]*

Existing Research Project Funded by J-PAL
Are you applying to fund additional research as part of an existing research project previously funded by J-PAL (e.g., a second proposal development grant continuing from a prior proposal development grant, a pilot grant building on a travel/proposal development, a full RCT building on a pilot, etc.)? *[Yes; No]*

Existing Research Project Details

If yes, please provide the title and/or J-PAL grant number of your previously funded project. *[250 words max]*

Abstract

Write a study abstract, including the project description, research question, and intervention or treatment to be evaluated. Discuss the project's technical design, what is going to happen during the project, the practical value of your project, the conceptual value of your research, and the distributional implications of your work. Provide context about proposed partners and a timeline. Please note that this abstract will be added to the JOI and/or SPI's webpages if the project receives funding. *[250 words max]*

Research Focus Areas and/or Cross-Cutting Themes

Please indicate which JOI and/or SPI focus areas or themes your proposal relates to; these are described in detail in the RFP materials. Options:

- Job Creation
- Training and Matching
- Social Protection
- Identifying which soft skills matter, for whom, and under what conditions
- Leveraging soft skills to increase the effectiveness of broader labor markets and private sector development policies and programs
- Do soft skills interventions require tackling other constraints to be effective?
- Improving implementation quality and scalability of soft skills intervention.

Initiative Alignment

Please briefly describe how the project aligns with JOI and/or SPI's research focus areas and/or cross-cutting themes. *[250 words max]*

National Location

In which country or countries will your research or travel take place? *[Dropdown]*

MAIN PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Important Information

Timeline

Please write out a timeline with key project activities. Please note that the JOI soft skills window cannot fund projects beyond June 30, 2027, and the JOI/SPI joint window cannot fund projects beyond October 31, 2027. *[250 words max]*

Narrative

Change of Research Focus Areas and/or Cross-Cutting Themes

Please tell us if your focus areas or themes have changed since submitting your Letter of Interest by adding this information here. For reference, the JOI and/or SPI research focus areas and/or cross-cutting themes are:

1. Job Creation;
2. Training and Matching;
3. Social Protection;
4. Identifying which soft skills matter, for whom, and under what conditions;
5. Leveraging soft skills to increase the effectiveness of broader labor markets and private sector development policies and programs;
6. Do soft skills interventions require tackling other constraints to be effective?;
7. Improving implementation quality and scalability of soft skills interventions.

Changes to Abstract

Write a study abstract, including the project description, research question, and intervention or treatment to be evaluated. Discuss the project's technical design, what is going to happen during the project, the practical value of your project, the conceptual value of your research, and the distributional implications of your work. Provide context about proposed partners. Please note that this abstract will be added to the Initiative's webpage if the project receives funding. If nothing has substantially changed since the LOI submission, please copy the original abstract here. *[250 words max]*

Policy Motivation

Provide a summary of the policy problem that motivates this preliminary research and how it fits with the topics outlined in the RFP materials. *[250 words max]*

Potential Policy Impact

Please briefly describe the potential policy impact of this intervention (policies, programs, processes, or delivery mechanisms), including whether and how the project could inform policy or program design in this context or more broadly.

1) How will it meet the needs of your partner?

2) Will results from the intervention have broader implications?

3) How, if at all, will the "lessons learned" have relevance beyond this test case?

4) Is there demand from policy makers for more/better information to influence their decisions in this area?

5) Does the study address questions crucial to understanding pressing issues on firm-level, labor markets, or social protection policies in low- and middle-income countries? Does it address the priority questions outlined in the RFP overview? *[250 words max]*

Uncertainty of Study's Results

Demonstrate meaningful ex ante uncertainty about the results of the study, i.e., that given existing evidence there are both reasons to believe the intervention(s) studied are promising and also reasons to doubt whether they will achieve their goals. *[250 words max]*

Target Population and Context

What population(s) does the intervention attempt to impact? What characteristics do they have? Do you have any comments on this population's alignment with JOI and/or SPI's priorities? *[350 words max]*

Unique Contribution to the Field

Please describe what knowledge gap you are addressing and how it will advance the field. Specifically:

1. Explain the project's potential to provide a unique scientific contribution.

2. Provide a brief literature review to demonstrate the uniqueness of your project.

3. Does the study answer new questions or introduce novel methods, measures, or interventions?

4. How does the study compare with the existing body of research?

5. Does the research strategy provide a bridge between a practical experiment and underlying economic theories?

Note that a full reference list can be attached in the "Additional Attachments" section. *[500 words max]*

Innovative Intervention Details

State how the intervention is either innovative or uses a straightforward intervention to study a big question. Could the intervention potentially improve one or more of JOI and/or SPI's priority outcomes and benefit people living in poverty? How can the intervention, or innovation, make changes to existing programs, processes, technologies, or delivery systems? *[300 words max]*

Evaluation Design

Provide a brief description of the evaluation design, and how it fits with the topics outlined in the RFP materials. Does the research design appropriately answer the questions outlined in the proposal? Please include the randomization method, treatment groups, and describe any combinations of the interventions.

Please include information about data collection and key outcomes.
1. Succinctly describe your data collection plan and key outcome measures of the study. Please include the data collection partner and your relationship with them.
    a. What are your intermediate and final outcomes? How will these be measured? When will you take measurements, and how frequently? If there are more than two treatment groups, please list them using numerals.
    b. 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.
    c. In the "Additional Attachments" section, 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.
2. Details of your evaluation design can include but are not limited to:
    a. 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.)?
    b. What is the sample size? How would it be divided into treatment and control?
    c. Are there threats that could compromise the validity of results? How do you plan to address those threats?

[800 words max]

Value of Research

Does the proposal make a compelling case for the value of the research based on at least one of the following?
1. There is prior evidence indicating that this is a promising intervention
2. This is an intervention into which considerable resources are being, or will be, invested

[500 words max]

Outcomes of Interest

Beyond the JOI and/or SPI-specific outcomes listed under the "Innovative Intervention Details" and "Evaluation Design," please list any additional outcomes from this list to tag your evaluation with, in the case that a summary is later drafted of your evaluation. This list is the wider set of outcomes of interest for all J-PAL sectors and initiatives. Please add as many as apply to your planned study. *[see full list of options under "Outcomes of Interest" filter drop-down on J-PAL Evaluations Page]*

Outcomes and Measurement

Please describe the outcome variables, how they relate to JOI and/or SPI, and how you plan to measure the outcome variables. *[250 words max]*

Mechanisms

Through what mechanisms do you expect the treatment to affect outcomes of interest? How will you test these mechanisms? What is the theorized causal relationship between the intervention and the outcomes to be tested? *[250 words max]*

Implications on Equity and Social Inclusion

Please provide a comment on whether the research proposal addresses equity or social inclusion, in any way. Topics of social inclusion include, but are not limited to, gender, income level, location, ethnicity, race, language, citizenship status, disability, and at the intersection of those factors. Explain whether and how the project design allows us to learn about baseline differences between and differential impacts on groups mentioned above. Explain what reasons (if any) there are to expect that the potential intervention(s) studied may have disproportionate benefits for disadvantaged groups. *[500 words max]*

Local Researcher Involvement

Please describe whether/how the project involves researchers local to the project context. *[250 words max]*

Gender Implications and Analysis

Does the proposal address any gender issues? For example, have you taken into account how gender considerations could affect the outcomes of the intervention? *[250 words max]*

Gender Reporting

Does the proposal disaggregate data and outcomes by gender? Pilot and RCT projects are required to report on gender-disaggregated impacts: Please briefly explain whether you will disaggregate gender impacts or why this would not be feasible. *[250 words max]*

Power Calculations

Please provide detailed, convincing, and well-justified power calculations, e.g., based on current or past pilot data, existing literature, admin data of ongoing operations, etc., for any impacts that the

research team plans to measure. Include and describe effect size, take up/compliance, variance, clusters, observations per cluster, rho). Power calculations should quantitatively demonstrate that the study is well-powered enough to detect effects on the outcome(s) of interest that would be practically or conceptually meaningful. Proposals should articulate which null hypotheses are relevant for this exercise and why (in particular, not assuming that the null of zero impact is necessarily the relevant one).

Be sure to answer these two questions:

1. What is the minimum detectable effect size? Why do you believe this is an appropriate size?
2. 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.

For more detailed information about power calculations, see this resource:
https://www.povertyactionlab.org/resource/power-calculations

[700 words max]

Project Costing Exercise

Our initiative would like to see the research team's plan for how they will gather, interpret and share program implementation cost data. Please outline 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 collection in light of this reporting requirement.

Suggested prompts:
1. 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.
2. Which elements will be considered costs of implementation, and which elements will be considered evaluation costs?
3. What types of cost data do you anticipate collecting?
4. When in the data collection process would you collect each of these types of data, and how?
5. 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?
6. Report any challenges you anticipate facing in collecting or reporting this data. How would you plan to address these challenges to make the cost collection exercise most valuable in the context of your research, given the goals of the exercise outlined above?

[500 words max]

Scalability and Translatability Potential

Please comment on the ability of this intervention to potentially scale and translate in different contexts. *[500 words max]*

Validation and Test Accuracy Data

Proposals that include Artificial Intelligence (AI) or any new specialized technology should include validation and test accuracy data in the proposal, showing that the technology successfully does what it intends. If applicable, please provide that validation and test accuracy data here, or attach it in the "Additional Attachments" section. Please write N/A if this does not apply to your proposal. *[300 words max]*

Potential Risks

To protect children, research participants, staff, and community members, to comply with donor requirements, and to maintain a strong reputation for ethical research, J-PAL wants researchers to think carefully about the risks their research projects could face and how they will address such risks. The below questions provide an opportunity for researchers to do that. Successful applicants must provide updated answers in annual narrative reports only if there have been substantial changes since their proposal or last annual narrative report. Please answer the following questions in detail.

Completion

Are there any technical, logistical, ethical, or political obstacles and risks that might threaten the completion of the project (e.g., implementation capacity, government authorization, or other funding)? How do you plan to monitor and prevent/address these types of risks throughout the project? *[200 words max]*

Implementing Partners

Please discuss any information about the implementing partner(s) that could pose ethical, reputational, or legal risks (e.g., child safeguarding, corruption or misuse of funds, etc). If applicable, what proactive measures have you taken or will you take to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks? *[150 words max]*

Child Safeguarding

Particularly for projects working with children, what child safeguarding risks exist? *[200 words max]*

Participants, Staff, Community Members

For each of the groups below, please describe any potential unintended consequences or risks of this project to them. What proactive measures have you taken or will you take to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks? i. Program and research participants ii. Staff (e.g., implementing partners, research assistants, enumerators) iii. Community members (e.g., untreated

members of a household, untreated neighbors, or broader communities if the treatment might have spillover or downstream effects beyond the study sample) *[300 words max]*

Contractual Limitations

Are there any contractual limitations on the ability of the researchers to report the results of the study? If so, what are those restrictions, and who are they from? *[150 words max]*

Institutional Review Board and Institute to Receive Award

According to US federal regulations, a human subject is a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains 1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual (e.g., through an interview, focus group, or survey), or 2) identifiable private information (e.g., individual-level health or education data).

IRB Organization Information

Note: Please be mindful that MIT requires that the IRB determination must be held by the institution that enters into the subaward agreement with MIT. The PI at the ITRA must be listed as the main PI on the IRB. If the institution does not have its own IRB, the institution must engage the services of a commercial IRB to review and provide oversight for the research activities. Heartland and Solutions provide review of international research and satisfy J-PAL's IRB requirements; fees can be found on their respective websites. Furthermore, MIT requires that the PI named on the IRB must be employed by the institute receiving the award. Information about this MIT policy can be found here and here. Consult with J-PAL regarding including the cost of this commercial entity in the project budget. J-PAL also requires that the reviewing IRB have IRB Organization (IORG) status with the US Office of Human Protections.

You can look up the IORG status of an IRB here.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Requirements

If the project has not received an IRB exemption and IRB review is required, please provide the current or expected IRB of record. IRB Requirements - If this proposal receives initiative funding, we will ask that you submit:

1. All IRB approval(s) or exemption(s)
2. All IRB-approved protocols
3. Any IRB-approved consent forms

Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Record

Provide the name of the IRB of Record below.

Is this IRB of Record IORG certified?

[Yes, No]

Local Legal Requirements Certification

All PIs and co-PIs certify that they understand they must adhere to all local legal requirements, including obtaining local IRB approval and government research permits, where applicable. Do you agree? *[Yes, No]*

Data Publication

Please confirm you plan to publish data collected in an open-access, online database at the end of the evaluation. Data publication is required for projects funded by a J-PAL initiative, unless researchers request an exemption (which J-PAL has the discretion to deny) for legal, ethical, or proprietary reasons. Please see J-PAL's Data and Code Availability Policy for more information about data publication.*[Yes, No]*

Institute to Receive Award (ITRA) Information

Please indicate the institution that will receive the grant funds. PLEASE NOTE: MIT now requires that at least one project PI be employed by the organization receiving the subaward and funds. Please provide the name of the ITRA here. Please see this memo and FAQs document for more information.

Partnership Questions

Partnership Status

Have you established communication with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to government agencies and implementing partners, for research collaboration? *[Yes, No]*

For each partner, please answer questions 1-4:

1. *Name of Partner Organization*

Indicate the name(s) of the partner organization.

2. *Role of Partner Organization*

Indicate the role of the organization on this project. If you are adding co-funders, you will not be able to submit until you (a) indicate the amount of received or committed funding, (b) add the funded proposal or project title, and (c) add the name of the primary PI for the co-funded proposal or project. *[Co-funder, Scale-up Partner, Research Partner, Intervention Implementation Partner, Government Partner, Other* (If you select "Other," please explain the role of your partner.)]*

3. *Partner Description*

Please provide a brief description of the partner(s), 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 partnership risks. *[250 words max]*

4. Point(s) of Contact Based at the Partner Organization

Please provide details about your point of contact at the partner organization: First Name, Last Name, Role or Title, Email Address, and (optional) Phone Number

Co-funder Details

If you are adding co-funders, indicate the total amount of received or committed funding, the funded proposal or project title, and the name of the primary PI for the co-funded proposal or project. *[250 words max]*

Interest in Co-funding

Are you interested in applying for co-funding from the [Fund for Innovation in Development (FID)](#) or other donors in J-PAL's network? Would you potentially like assistance from J-PAL staff in preparing a proposal to these donors? Please note that assistance will be provided on a case-by-case basis, but the first possible step is assessing interest. *[150 words max]*

Budget

Budget Template

From the JOI or SPI RFP webpages, download and complete the RCT Budget Template. There are two tabs: one for the JOI- and/or SPI-specific budget and one for the project budget (i.e., the JOI and/or SPI-specific budget plus any other sources of funding you may have). When done, please reupload the budget in the budget section of the online application portal. Please note that the budget is formatted specifically for this application. Please do not remove the formatting, change any of the formatting, or create new columns. *[File upload]*

Budget Narrative

Please justify the expenses outlined in your budget in a Word document with the title [PI Last Name, First Name][Budget Narrative].doc(x), and upload it here. This document is required in addition to the Proposal Budget. Notes included in the Excel sheet do not suffice. *[File upload]*

Letters of Support & Additional Materials

Letter of Support from Implementing Partner

RCTs are required to provide a letter of support from their implementing partner. This letter should indicate a willingness to work with the research team and an agreement to share program cost data with J-PAL (through the PI) for the purpose of conducting a cost-effectiveness analysis. *[File upload]*

Letter of Transmission

RCTs are required to provide a letter or document stating approval of the proposal materials and budget from each proposed institute to receive award (ITRA). Please note that MIT policy states that the project PI needs to be at the ITRA and that the ITRA should provide the IRB (either using the Institute's IRB or a third party IRB). The Project PI must be the PI on the IRB. *[File upload]*

Potential Scale-Up Partner Letter of Support

If available, applicants should also include letters of support from potential scale-up partners. *[File upload]*

Are you applying as a PhD student?

[Yes, No]

J-PAL Affiliate or Invited Researcher Letter of Support

For PhD students: PhD student applicants are required to submit a letter of support from a J-PAL Affiliate or Invited Researcher who serves as an adviser on the applicant's dissertation committee. This letter should indicate the adviser's willingness to advise the student throughout the project's lifetime. Please note that in some cases, the adviser may be asked to add their name to the financial award and IRB documents. *[File upload]*

Additional Attachments

Please attach any relevant materials discussed in your answers to the previous questions or required by the initiative. *[File upload]*