

## K-CAI Spring 2024 RFP

Scaling Proposals Application Form and Instructions

### INSTRUCTIONS

**Instructions:** Proposals for K-CAI scaling funding consist of (i) basic contact and logistical information; (ii) a proposal narrative; (iii) a budget; and (iv) letters of support. Please note that full proposals are due by **11:59 am ET on April 4, 2024**. Applicants are **required to submit a letter of interest** by 11:59 am ET on February 29 before submitting a full proposal.

**Please note:** J-PAL initiatives, including K-CAI, have transitioned to using an online portal system for all proposal submissions and reviews, as well as for grantee reporting. All registration and application instructions can be found on [K-CAI's webpage](#). The K-CAI team will notify you via our online portal once we have received your letter of interest and you are clear to submit a full proposal. In the interim, to facilitate your proposal development, we have provided reference documents, like this one, that outline in detail all required information that applicants will be asked to provide when submitting a research or scaling proposal to K-CAI. You are welcome to begin drafting your proposal materials using these forms, as the fields and content included in these reference documents will be required in the portal system. Please do not complete or submit these reference documents to K-CAI for consideration.

Questions? Please reach out to [kcai@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:kcai@povertyactionlab.org).

## COVERSHEET AND NARRATIVE

### SECTION: COVERSHEET

Please note that all fields are required.

TITLE OF PROPOSAL		COUNTRY
J-PAL AFFILIATED OR K-CAI INVITED RESEARCHER(S)		
INSTITUTION TO RECEIVE FUNDS (J-PAL REGIONAL OFFICE, IPA COUNTRY OFFICE, OR ANOTHER RESEARCH OR NGO PARTNER)*		
NON-J-PAL CO-PI(s) (Institutional Affiliation)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>By checking this box, all J-PAL affiliates and K-CAI invited researchers 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 project; 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 K-CAI invited researcher.</i></p>	
IMPLEMENTING PARTNER(S)		CONTACT (NAME, EMAIL, PHONE)
CO-FUNDER(S)		FUNDED AWARD (PI, Project Title, Amount)
<p><b>Have you submitted this or a related proposal to any other J-PAL funding initiative?</b></p>		

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		If yes, which initiative and when?	
<b>K-CAI FUNDING REQUEST</b> <b>Focus Area:</b> Mitigation <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptation <input type="checkbox"/> Pollution Reduction <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Access <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Award Type:</b> Adapt (up to \$100,000) <input type="checkbox"/> Policy Pilot (up to \$250,000) <input type="checkbox"/> Full Scale-up (up to \$400,000) <input type="checkbox"/>			
Requested	\$	Total co-funded	\$
<b>GRANT PERIOD</b>			
Start date: (yyyy-mm-dd)		End date: (yyyy-mm-dd)	
Institution to receive award*		Contact for contracting issues	
<i>Some projects will not be conducting research involving human subjects. However, if this project will involve research on human subjects, please fill out the two boxes below.</i>			
IRB OF RECORD		IRB CONTACT	
We are also in touch with other funders and occasionally share proposals that are relevant to their interests. If you <b>do not</b> want this proposal shared with them, please check this box: <input type="checkbox"/>			

\* Please indicate the institution that will actually receive the grant funds. If this project is taking place in a country that has a J-PAL or an IPA office but these organizations are not the host institutions, please provide a comment detailing why in your proposal narrative.

## SECTION: NARRATIVE

**Instructions:** Before proceeding, please consult K-CAI's RFP Overview and Annex 1 below to confirm that your project meets the required evidence base for scaling projects. Please include a short response to each of the following sub-sections. Questions with asterisks (\*) will be required.

**Abstract:** Please summarize the partnership to adapt, pilot, and/or scale an evidence-informed innovation with a specific partner(s). This will be added to K-CAI's webpage if the project receives funding. \**[suggested answer format: 150 - 200 words]*

**The problem and opportunity:** A summary of the context and policy problem/opportunity that the partner has identified that motivates the partnership and a description of how this proposal will address the problem. \* *[suggested answer format: Up to 250 words]*

**The innovation:** The innovation the partner will explore adapting, piloting, and/or scaling as well as a brief summary of the experimental evidence on this innovation to date in one or more of K-CAI's four focus areas and how it could potentially benefit people living in poverty. Innovations can be new programs or changes to existing programs, processes, technologies, or delivery systems. \* *[suggested answer format: Up to 250 words]*

**K-CAI outcomes:** Which of the four K-CAI focus areas does this project fall under? \**[Select one: climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, pollution reduction, energy access]*

**Existing evidence:** Please upload the corresponding written document(s) on which your scaling proposal is based. Additional information on required documentation is outlined in Annex 1.\* *[Upload]*

**Depth of impact:** Please include a brief note on the effect size(s) found in the previous RCT(s) of this innovation for these and any other relevant outcome areas, whether they were economically significant, and whether you expect the effect size to be similar in magnitude, lower, or higher in this context and why. \* *[suggested answer format: up to 500 words]*

**Locally grounded:** Please include a clear rationale for why the innovation may be relevant or appropriate for the proposed context

and/or institution. When possible, please include descriptive statistics about the nature and extent of the problem and aspects of local systems and institutions that make it amenable to the innovation. Specify which aspects of the existing evidence are or are not likely to generalize given the proposed implementer, context, and delivery model(s). \* [suggested answer format: up to 500 words]

**Scale-up potential:** A summary of how the partner plans to use the K-CAI-funded technical assistance in specific decisions about expanding or scaling an evidenced-informed innovation. Please comment on the following: [suggested answer format: 500 words]

- *Breadth of impact:* If the partner decides to/succeeds in scaling the innovation, how many people could it potentially reach and when? What is the average income level of the target population?
- *Emission reductions:* If your proposed project seeks to reduce emissions, what is your projection of the potential emissions that will be abated as a result and when?
- *Likelihood of success:* Please include your subjective assessment of how likely this scale-up is to happen (i.e. X% likely to happen) if the pilot phase goes well. What are the main factors that could prevent this innovation from scaling and how do you plan to address them?

**The activities:** The proposed activities that K-CAI will fund and how they will contribute to achieving the end goal along with a clear timeline and milestones. We particularly encourage applications to scale up evidence-informed innovations with the original implementing partner on the randomized evaluation. Applications seeking to apply evidence in a new context should include a formal scoping process to diagnose the problem and determine whether past evidence is relevant, as well as a process for adapting, piloting, and monitoring the innovation in the new context before scaling it up. [suggested answer format: 750 words]

**The partnership:** A brief history of the partnership, the partner's involvement in project activities, any in-kind or financial support they have committed or provided to the project, and the names and titles of the main contact(s) and the roles they will play over the course of the project. Please note whether they are likely to be transferred during the

project. Include the dates of upcoming elections and/or administration changes and discuss whether these are likely to affect the project. For private sector partners, please comment on your confidence that K-CAI funding would not simply displace investments those companies would make anyway because they make good business sense. [*suggested answer format: 350 words*]

**The institutionalization of the partnership:** Do you hope to make this a long-term partnership or is it already part of one? If the key contact is transferred, are there other stakeholders who are equally invested? Are you planning to enter into an institutional MoU? [*suggested answer format: 250 words*]

- Since building partnerships with decision-makers requires on-the-ground presence, does the project have necessary institutional support of the regional J-PAL office and/or an on-the-ground research or implementing partner such as an IPA country office, university, and/or NGO?
- What is the level of J-PAL affiliate or K-CAI invited researcher involvement in terms of providing high-level leadership, guidance, and advice to staff and policy partners?
- J-PAL offices may be able to provide support in facilitating connections to policymakers, researchers, supporting key policy partnerships, and implementing technical assistance. If this is something you are interested in, please discuss it with the relevant J-PAL Executive Director as part of your J-PAL office letter of support to discuss what kind of support may be available. Any relevant J-PAL office support should be included in the project budget.

**Power calculations:** *\*required of projects with a randomization component, such as replication trials and RCTs at scale*

**Potential risks:** Please answer the following questions below in detail.\* [*suggested answer format: up to 250 words*]

- Are there any technical, logistical, or political obstacles and risks that might threaten the completion of the project (for example, implementation capacity, government authorization, or other funding)? Does this potential scale-up present any unintended opportunities for corruption or misuse of funds? How do you plan

to monitor and prevent/address both of these types of risks throughout the project?

- Are there any potential unintended consequences of this project or potential scale-up for program participants and if so, what are they? What proactive measures has your team taken to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?

**Local researcher involvement:** Please describe how the project involves researchers local to the project context. [suggested answer format: up to 200 words]

**Implementation and cost documentation:** Please comment on what efforts you will make to collect implementation costs and document implementation details and scale-up processes so these can benefit other policymakers and researchers and staff at J-PAL. \*[ *suggested answer format: 150 words*]

**Timeline:** Please provide a clear project timeline including short-term markers of success; a Gantt chart is preferred. \*

**Response to previous feedback:** If you have submitted a proposal for this project to K-CAI in a previous RFP, explain whether the project received funding, what type of funding it received (Travel/Proposal Development, Pilot, RCT, Path-to-Scale). Additionally, please explain how the project has progressed since it was last submitted to K-CAI, and explain how you addressed the feedback that was provided with your last submission (*only required for projects that have previously applied for K-CAI funding*)

**Additional information (optional):** Please discuss of the other criteria that will be used by K-CAI to evaluate this proposal, if not already addressed in the narrative. [*suggested answer format: 250 words*]

**Off-cycle proposals:** (required for off-cycle proposals) Please explain the time constraints the project faces and the reasons for requesting expedited review. [*suggested answer format: 250 words*]

**Gender (optional):** K-CAI aims to fund innovative research that also investigates how climate intersects with any number of topics including gender, inequality, etc. Please explain whether/how the project will address gender issues, including analysis disaggregated by gender, and any information on gender dynamics that could impact the scaling.



## **BUDGET**

**Instructions:** Please submit a detailed project budget using the Excel template [available online](#). To reduce the processing time, please follow these instructions for designing and submitting your budget: \*

1. If the funds requested are only a part of the total project budget, then please complete both the "Total Project Budget" and the "K-CAI Budget" in the budget template.
2. Awards are normally paid on a cost-reimbursable basis.
3. Universities in high-income countries, defined as OECD member countries, can charge up to 10% in indirect costs, applied to total

direct costs. Independent non-profits from any location and universities from middle- or low-income countries may charge up to 15% in indirect costs, applied to total direct costs.

4. All applications must include budget notes in the column provided in the budget template, specifying the 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 that are detailed clearly in the budget (e.g., # of respondents times \$/respondent = total \$) do not require additional justification in the budget notes section.
5. Please denote costs by the calendar year in which expenditures are taking place, not by fiscal year or year from project start date.
6. Any computer/equipment purchases should include a breakdown of what is being purchased, e.g. how many laptops and the project staff that will be assigned to the equipment.
7. We understand that the cap on overhead or indirect costs under this Initiative is low and that awardees may have reasonable project support costs included in budgets as direct costs. Such costs should be reasonable and explained in the budget narrative.
8. Unallowable costs include: costs labeled as "incidental," "miscellaneous," or "contingency," and rent, unless a separate project office is to be covered specifically for this effort.
9. It is your responsibility that the budget you submit is correct and follows your receiving institution's policies for costs. As part of your proposal, a letter from the receiving institution of the award is required to show that they have reviewed your proposal and accept your budget. If the institution 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 box for Receiving Institution).
10. Please note that this applies to all receiving institutions including regional J-PAL offices and IPA country offices. You should contact them in advance to make sure you are aware of their policies for proposal review and that you give them enough time to meet the proposal deadline; we suggest allowing a 3-4 week turnaround.

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT

**Instructions:** Please provide the following letters of support along with the proposal. Letters of support are not a mere formality but rather should indicate a well-thought-out partnership between the J-PAL affiliate or K-CAI invited researcher, the J-PAL office, the policy/implementing partner(s), and other partners.\*

(i) **Government and Implementing Partners:** All projects are required to provide a letter of support from the government and any other implementing partners. Such letters should state:

- a. The support for the activities proposed
- b. How the partner plans to use the results of the research or other activities to support specific scaling decisions and strengthen policymaking. Any details about the potential reach of the scaled-up program.
- c. How the partner sees a long-term partnership with J-PAL to be valuable.
- d. What costs will be shared by the partner and an initial total budget amount (if exact costs are not available, then a broad commitment to pay for implementation or other costs is sufficient)
- e. Willingness to share program implementation cost data with project for the purpose of conducting program cost analysis.
- f. **Note:** We understand that in some cases it may not be feasible or appropriate to have the partner include all of the items above in their letter. In such cases, please secure a more general letter of support and address the remaining points in your proposal narrative.

(ii) **Receiving Institution:** A letter from the receiving institution of the award is required to show 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 box for Receiving Institution).

(iii) **Relevant J-PAL Regional Office:** [If the applicant is not itself a J-PAL office] A letter from the relevant regional J-PAL office that has responsibility for the project country. Please email the Executive Director from the relevant J-PAL office **at least 3 weeks in advance of the RFP deadline** to ensure that the office has enough time to produce their letter of support, which requires a

thorough review of the proposal and budget. J-PAL regional offices can use the template for their letter of support [available online](#).

- a. J-PAL offices may be able to provide support in facilitating connections to policymakers, researchers, supporting key policy partnerships, and implementing technical assistance. If this is something you are interested in, please discuss it with the relevant J-PAL Executive Director as part of your J-PAL office letter of support to discuss what kind of support may be available. Any relevant J-PAL office support should be included in the project budget.
  - b. **Note:** If a J-PAL office is the receiving institution, they only need to submit a letter as the receiving institution (described on the Budget Tab). If a J-PAL office is the applicant, K-CAI still requires the J-PAL Executive Director from the applying office to submit a letter of support to signal their support and capacity for the project.
- (iv) **J-PAL Affiliated and/or K-CAI Invited Researcher:** The J-PAL affiliated and/or K-CAI invited researcher can complete this short [Affiliate Letter of Support form](#) and submit it along with the rest of your application.

## ANNEX I: J-PAL REQUIREMENTS ON EVIDENCE BASE FOR CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR SCALING PROJECTS

Scaling proposals applying to K-CAI must be based on **direct evidence** from one or more **randomized evaluations**,<sup>1</sup> at least one of which should have been **conducted by a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher and/or funded by a J-PAL initiative**.

1. Details on the one or more randomized evaluations on which the project is based must be provided in **writing** to the K-CAI Review Board in one of the following **formats**, rank-ordered with most preferred format noted first:
  - i. Peer-reviewed published paper

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<sup>1</sup> Many scale projects are based on an evidence base that is broader than one randomized evaluation. See, for example, the [Evidence to Policy case studies](#) on J-PAL's website.

- ii. Working paper that was released publicly at least six months prior<sup>2</sup> to the date on which a project proposal is submitted to a J-PAL initiative for funding and/or the date on which a J-PAL office initiates a request to relevant decision-makers for approval to provide substantive scale support.
  - iii. Working paper that is meaningfully publicly available<sup>3</sup>
  - iv. Working paper not yet meaningfully publicly available
2. The written document should provide **sufficient detail on the design and results** of the one or more randomized evaluations on which the project is based to enable the relevant decision-makers to understand and assess the quality and strength of the evidence base underpinning the proposed scale project, including both internal and external validity. Contents that would be useful for the relevant decision makers to make their decisions include:
- i. Description of context, intervention, RCT design, and data sources
  - ii. Balance tables
  - iii. First stage regression results (if design requires strong first stage)
  - iv. ITT regression results for at least one primary outcome, robust to different specifications, including standard errors for construction of confidence intervals
  - v. Checks for and responses to any threats to randomization: differential attrition, spillovers, etc.
  - vi. Interpretation of results

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<sup>2</sup> This timeframe ensures there is greater certainty that results do not change following initial public release.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning the working paper can be found via a relatively straightforward online search, is on the researcher's website and/or online CV, and is not in an obscure or otherwise difficult-to-find, but literally public, site.

- vii. An assessment of and considerations relevant to the generalizability of the evidence to the context in which the proposed project is to take place<sup>5</sup>
- viii. Policy implications/recommendations

## ANNEX II: EVALUATION CRITERIA

For all scaling applications, K-CAI will consider the following general criteria in making funding decisions:

Criterion	Score	Help text <i>Excellent = 4; Above average = 3; Below average = 2; Poor = 1</i>
<b>The Proposed Solution</b>		
Policy Relevance	1-4	Does the project address problems or opportunities that are important to the partner and, if addressed, could generate meaningful benefits to program participants? Did the proposal make a clear case for why the solution may be relevant or appropriate for the proposed context based on descriptive data, knowledge of local systems and institutions, and existing evidence?
Evidence-informed Solution	1-4	What is the strength of the existing evidence on the effectiveness of this type of solution in achieving one or more of K-CAI's four key outcome measures? How big or small was the impact and was it large enough to justify program expansion given its costs?  (For projects with a randomization component, such as replication trials and RCTs at scale) Do the power calculations convincingly demonstrate the ability to detect each of the proposed impacts to be measured?
Potential to Benefit People in Poverty	1-4	Did the proposed solution improve the lives of people living in poverty in previous RCTs? Does the proposal make a good case for why the scalable version has the potential to meaningfully benefit people living in poverty? What are the average income levels of the target program participants, in both levels and relative to the national or local average?

<sup>5</sup> "Context" is defined broadly here to include, e.g., geography, demographic group, capacity of implementation

partner, etc.

Cost-effectiveness	1-4	Does the proposal include convincing analysis that the solution can be cost-effective, including existing cost-effectiveness estimates if available (such as cost per ton of emissions abated for mitigation projects)? Or, does the proposal incorporate cost collection and analysis to inform a scaling decision in its activities?
Scale-up Potential	1-4	Is there potential for the partner to widely scale up the innovation in the future? What commitment has the partner expressed to move forward with implementing the scale-up if the pilot is successful? How many people will the scaled-up program reach and over what timeframe?
Implementation Risks	1-4	Are the risks of unintended negative consequences for program participants minimal? Has the team taken proactive measures to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?
<b>The Partnership</b>		
Commitment to Use Evidence in Decision-making	1-4	Is there demonstrated demand from the partner to use evidence from the proposed technical assistance and/or past research to make a key decision about expanding the innovation? Is the partner committing its own resources, especially finances, to this project?
Viability of the Partnership	1-4	Is the relationship with the partner(s) strong and likely to endure through the entire life of the project? Are there any logistical or political obstacles that might threaten the completion of the proposed activities, for example, government authorization or potential transfer of key decision-makers?
Overall Recommendation for Funding	1-4	Do you recommend this proposal for funding given your overall review? Scoring: Fund without hesitation = 4



		Fund if nothing better (meets the bar, but is not an outstanding value for money) = 3 Would not fund (just below the bar) = 2 Strongly opposed to funding = 1
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**ANNEX III: ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES**

K-CAI staff will address all communication regarding your proposal to the following:

1. J-PAL affiliated researcher(s)
2. J-PAL regional office Executive Director
3. IPA country director (when applicable)

If your proposal is accepted for award, the funding will be provided under an award from MIT to your host institution. If your proposal involves Human Subjects research, you will need to show IRB approval for the project if Human Subjects are involved before MIT establishes the funding award.

The process MIT follows for K-CAI awards is:

- The Initiative Board sends an official award notification letter.
- If not already submitted, you will need to provide formal institutional approval of the proposal and (only for proposals involving Human Subjects) your institutional IRB approval.
- For proposals involving Human Subjects, in most cases, MIT will cede oversight to your institutional IRB through an Institutional Review Board Authorization Agreement (IAA) or through Reliance Smart IRB. In certain cases, approval from MIT’s IRB will also be required. We will assist with that process if needed.
- J-PAL informs the MIT contracts office of the award.
- MIT establishes a purchase order with your institution.

We aim to set up the purchase order within 60 days of receiving all your forms and IRB approvals. We can backdate the award to cover expenses from the Award Date or the date of IRB approval, whichever is later. If a

project includes non-Human Subjects work prior to the IRB approval, please let us know following award and we may in some cases be able to cover those costs (post-award, but pre-IRB) under the award.

The full reporting requirements for a K-CAI award will be outlined in detail in your award letter. For all projects, these will include: brief annual progress reports and semiannual financial reports, a final project and financial report including a brief narrative, timeline, and any relevant testimony or documents showing whether evidence from randomized evaluations contributed to any decisions, a brief annual and final report on the project from the supporting J-PAL regional office, and participating in one of K-CAI's activities on a mutually-agreed date and place. In addition to these requirements, scale-up and research projects will be required to collect and report (i) program cost data sufficient to conduct a cost effectiveness analysis, and (ii) implementation details and scale-up processes sufficient to promote the scale-up of an effective program in a new context.