**MEL Conflict Of Interest Policy**

**About**

This document defines MEL’s conflict of interest (COI) policy, including roles, and procedures. For questions or support, please email mel\_morocco@povertyactionlab.org.

**Role Definitions**

MEL’s Request for Proposal (RFP) Overview defines the review processes and how funding decisions are made on proposals. The review process and funding decisions are overseen by:

* **Peer Reviewer:** Responsible for reviewing individual proposals and determining whether a proposal should be forwarded to the Review Board for further evaluation. In cases where two Peer Reviewers are assigned, they must align and reach a unanimous decision. Peer Reviewers will be selected from the J-PAL and Harvard CID affiliates by the MEL’s two Scientific Directors.
* **Review Board members:** Composed of one representative from UM6P, the two MEL Scientific Directors, and the MEL Director, the board evaluates proposals that have been approved by the peer reviewers.
* **Co-Chairs:** are responsible for the overall management of the review process, and serve as Review Board members.

In what follows we refer to all of the above as “participants” in the review process.

**Procedures**

The following procedures apply to all participants submitting funding requests. “Conflicts of interest” refer to conflicts with respect to the set of proposals being considered within the given review period for rolling RFPs.

1. **Determine whether a conflict of interest exists.**Upon such disclosure the Co-Chairs will determine whether a material conflict of interest exists and what participation (if any) in the review process is appropriate, subject to the following:

## Any participant submitting a proposal during a review period is automatically deemed to have a material conflict of interest.

## Any participant who is a spouse, partner, or immediate family member (parent, child, or sibling) of any individual named on a proposal application is automatically deemed to have a material conflict of interest.

1. **Duty to disclose.**It is the responsibility of each participant to disclose, individually and proactively, any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest to the MEL staff and Co-Chairs prior to participation in any review process. When in doubt as to whether a conflict of interest could exist, the participant should err on the side of disclosure.
2. **Recusal.**Any participant deemed to have a material conflict of interest with respect to a proposal submitted is required to recuse themselves from all participation in the review process for that proposal.
   1. It is strongly preferred that no more than two MEL Co-Chairs be recused from reviewing the same proposal, to ensure continuity. Whenever any one of the Co-Chairs applies for funding in any round, they should recuse themselves from all funding decisions during that review period.
   2. In the very rare case when it becomes completely unavoidable for more than two Co-Chairs to apply in the same review period, both Co-Chairs would be recused and one of the J-PAL Faculty Directors (Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, or Ben Olken) will either chair that initiative round themselves, or nominate another J-PAL affiliate to chair that Review Board.
   3. Please see the full Co-Chair recusal policy at the end of this document.
3. **Voting.** The Review Board will convene periodically to vote on funding requests. If only one proposal is under consideration, the Board may review and vote on it independently; however, this does not guarantee automatic approval. Similarly, when multiple high-quality proposals are reviewed in the same session, their simultaneous evaluation will not reduce the likelihood of approval for any individual proposal.
4. **Record-keeping.**The Co-Chairs, with assistance from MEL staff, will maintain written, electronic records of all disclosures made to them under this policy, and all determinations reached as to whether a conflict of interest exists.
5. **Violations.**If the Co-Chairs have reasonable cause to believe that any participant has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they will first inform the participant of the basis for this belief and afford them an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to make such

disclosure. If, after hearing the response and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the Co-Chairs determine that the participant in question has failed to disclose an actual or potential conflict of interest, they shall inform UM6P’s and J-PAL’s Executive Committee of the matter and take remedial action as deemed appropriate.

1. **Acknowledgment.** The MEL staff will provide a copy of this policy to all Review Board members, prior to their participation in any review process, and obtain from them and retain a written, electronic acknowledgment that they have read and understood the policy and agree to comply with it.

# **FULL J-PAL INITIATIVE CO-CHAIR RECUSAL POLICY**

Please find J-PAL’s Co-Chair Recusal Policy [here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IaozKPks1ctMNcNqLZkZa8lPxvKyY0bh/view?usp=drive_link).