

GPI Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility and Submitting Proposals

1. Can I submit two separate proposals with the same government partner during the same round?

Yes, applicants can submit multiple Type 1 and Type 2 proposals with the same government partner per round, as long as they are distinct projects (two separate research projects, two separate scale-ups, or one of each).

There is also no rule preventing applicants from submitting a Type 1 plus a Type 3 proposal, or a Type 2 plus a Type 3 proposal with the same partner in the same round, as long as the two components of the project are separate (e.g. a specific RCT or scale-up plus a completely separate project helping the same government partner institutionalize the use of evidence more broadly). Applicants can only submit one type 3 proposal per government partner per round.

If an applicant wants to apply for two types of grants in one round, he should submit only one full application packet (not two separate applications), with a narrative up to 7 pages in length describing both sets of activities. Please indicate on the cover sheet the two types of grants for which you're applying.

In your proposal narrative, please be sure to describe the two separate components of the partnership in detail and outline why you believe it is important that both components are funded at the same time (as opposed to applying for one now and one in a later RFP round).

In the budget file, please have two separate budgets on one sheet: the total budget and line items for the first type of grant and the total budget and line items for the second type of grant.

In all cases where an applicant submits two proposals during the same round: if the Board decides to fund the proposal, they may choose to fund only one type of grant and not the other, or a portion of both.

2. Can regional offices apply for a Type 1 grant without a J-PAL affiliate as a PI on the study?

No, all type 1 grants must have a J-PAL affiliated professor as a PI or co-PI on the pilot study or full RCT.

3. Can IPA offices apply to GPI?

IPA offices can partner with a J-PAL affiliate and/or regional office to apply to GPI. The J-PAL affiliate (if IPA is partnering with a PI) or office (if IPA is partnering directly with a J-PAL office and no PIs) should be listed as the applicant with IPA listed as a lead partner in these cases.

4. Type 2 proposals fund scale-ups based on evidence. Type 3 proposals fund partnerships to help institutionalize the use of evidence more broadly. In each type of grant, does “evidence” mean evidence produced by RCTs only, or can it mean empirical evidence from observational studies too, appropriately interpreted?

For Type 3 proposals, evidence can mean both RCT and non-RCT evidence as long as the government partner is a strategic partner for a J-PAL affiliate and/or office. It should be a government that is interested in longer-term partnership with J-PAL and not just a one-off engagement. Strategic government

partners are typically ones that are excited about the prospect of either using evidence from RCTs to improve policy, exploring new RCTs they could potentially partner with J-PAL affiliates on, and/or scaling up specific policies found effective in past RCTs, in addition to wanting to incorporate evidence from observational studies or monitoring data. There should be interest in using evidence from RCTs in addition to other sources. For Type 2 proposals (scale-ups of specific policies), the "evidence" must be from an RCT by a J-PAL affiliate, otherwise we do not feel like the network would have sufficient expertise to provide technical support for a scale-up.

5. Some J-PAL initiatives have caps for the amount of funding they can award one RCT during its lifecycle. Once an RCT has received the maximum level of funding under one initiative, can it still apply to GPI for additional funding?

Full RCTs are eligible to apply to GPI even if they have already been awarded the maximum amount under one initiative. However, pilot studies are not eligible to apply to GPI for additional pilot funding if they have already been awarded the maximum US\$50,000 for their pilot under another initiative. If they received less than US\$50,000 in their first pilot award, they are eligible to apply for the remainder to GPI. Once a pilot has received the full US\$50,000 in pilot funding, it is not eligible to receive any additional pilot funding from GPI.

6. Can Type 3 GPI grants be used to support individual RCTs that emerge from a partnership with the government to institutionalize the use of evidence more broadly?

No, Type 3 grants cannot be used to fund *individual* RCTs that emerge from the partnership. You can use a Type 3 grant to support early stage research project development to help a government identify key priorities for evaluation and explore several different potential evaluation opportunities at once. Yet, once an individual idea for an evaluation is far enough along that substantive work on the evaluation needs to begin (i.e. hiring an RA to start the pilot research, randomization, etc.), a separate Type 1 research proposal must be submitted to GPI for this specific research project. One advantage of this is that full RCTs are able to apply for up to \$150K per round and are not subject to the Type 3 grant cap.

7. If my project is awarded funding, can I immediately re-apply for more funding for that project in the next round?

Yes. However, you would have to demonstrate that the vast majority of funding that was allocated to you in the first round either has been spent or will be spent by the time the second round funding is released.

The reason for staggering funding in this way is so that GPI can help the maximum number of promising projects take advantage of a tight policy window or fill a funding gap, not necessarily to be the primary source of funding. Therefore, in future rounds the Review Board would consider both how any allocated funds have been spent and other fundraising efforts. Caps for single rounds and the lifecycle of a project still apply.

8. If my proposal is rejected, can I re-apply to GPI in a future round?

If you received an explicit invitation to re-apply in your funding decision, you are of course welcome to re-apply.

If GPI previously rejected your proposal, a resubmission of the same proposal will **not** be considered. However, if you previously received a rejection but have made *substantive* changes to your proposal, you may submit a new application clearly highlighting what has changed and addressing any comments previously provided by the Board. If you have questions about whether a proposal could be eligible for resubmission, please contact GPI@povertyactionlab.org.

9. Is it necessary for the government partner to have a financial stake in the project?

It is highly preferred. In exceptional cases, GPI may allow an exemption but must state why the government is not committing financial resources and what other types of support are being provided instead.

Letters of Support

10. What should be in the letters of support?

There is one key difference between GPI and other J-PAL initiatives that directly affects the outcome of the review process. The primary goal of GPI is to build long-term relationships with governments and therefore the proposal should clearly demonstrate a well-thought out partnership between the researcher, the regional J-PAL office, and the government and explain how the proposed activities will help institutionalize the relationship beyond this specific project.

This means that the **letter of support from the regional J-PAL office** is not a mere formality but requires extensive discussion with the regional ED / lead policy staff to clearly lay out a role for the J-PAL office in this project. While that role will be different depending on the type of proposal, the role to be played by the regional J-PAL office is as important a consideration as the strength of the research design (Type 1), the potential for scale-up (Type 2) or the need for creating institutions to promote evidence informed policy (Type 3). This is the reason that our six regional EDs have requested at least 3-weeks lead time for these discussions before the proposal deadline so they have enough time to independently assess the strength of the potential partnership, how it aligns with J-PAL's mission, their capacity to support it and the budgetary support requested for J-PAL staff's activities. If a J-PAL office is involved in a project, their staff time and travel should be included in the GPI project budget.

Letters of support from the government are also a demonstration of a well-thought out partnership, and should clearly explain how the government feels the project can help inform policy and future action. Letters of support should state the government's support for the activities proposed, how the government plans to use the results of the research or other activities to strengthen its policymaking, how it sees a long-term partnership with J-PAL (or our other partner organizations like IPA where appropriate) to be valuable, what costs will be shared by the government, and willingness to share program implementation cost data.

11. How do I request a letter of support from the J-PAL regional office for my proposal?

Please email the Executive Director of the J-PAL regional office responsible for the country in which your proposed activities would take place. Be sure to email the regional Executive Director **at least 3 weeks in advance of the RFP deadline** for which you would like to apply in order to ensure that the office has enough time to produce the letter, which requires a thorough review of the proposal and budget. You can find the contact information for the J-PAL Executive Directors of the regional offices at <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/people/region-name/executive> (i.e. <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/people/africa/executive>). If you cannot locate the contact information for the J-PAL ED, you can send the request to GPI staff (GPI@povertyactionlab.org).

12. If a J-PAL regional office applies for GPI does the regional office still need to provide a letter of support?

Yes, GPI still requires a general letter of support from the Executive Director of the J-PAL regional office that is applying stating that the regional office supports this project, has the capacity to take it on, has

approved the budget, and sees the government body as a strategic partner for the office. Regional offices do not have to submit additional letters of support from their host universities.

13. If my project is located in a region without a J-PAL office, do I need a letter of support from a J-PAL office?

If there is no J-PAL office in the region (e.g. none of J-PAL's six regional offices cover China), you do not need a letter of support from a J-PAL office. However, since one of the primary goals of GPI is building long-term relationships between researchers and governments, the hurdle to get funding from GPI will be higher in such cases where there are not J-PAL offices to help institutionalize the relationship with the government partner. Therefore, the proposal should be sure to state clearly how the project will help inform policy and institutionalize the relationship with the government beyond this specific project.

14. When re-applying to a second round of GPI funding for a project that was previously funded, do I still need a letter of government support?

Yes. Since your project is presumably taking on new and updated activities, it would also be great if the government's letter was updated to reflect progress thus far and their support for moving forward.

Finance Logistics

15. How often can J-PAL offices invoice MIT?

As frequently as monthly.

16. Can Type 1 grants include some intervention implementation costs?

GPI has no restriction against including a portion of the intervention implementation costs in your proposed budget for a research project in addition to research/evaluation costs.

17. Can GPI backdate expenses?

It is possible for GPI to cover retrospective expenses when no IRB is required and the receiving institution is a J-PAL office, as long as you submit your proposal to GPI before you start incurring expenses on this project. GPI can backdate expenses to the date on which the application was submitted.