



# D-Lab Scale-Ups

## MIT Alumni - Proposal Guidelines - 2016

### About D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellowships

The D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellowship Program was launched in 2011 as an acceleration platform for MIT alumni innovators and entrepreneurs seeking to turn appropriate technologies into scalable and sustainable social ventures.

The fellowship is a 12-month program that provides a \$20,000 grant and access to customized mentoring, skill-building resources, and partnership opportunities. Projects typically enter the program at a stage when the technology concept is relatively proven and applicants have already gained a base understanding of their value proposition and target market. Over the fellowship period the focus is on product and enterprise development.

**Due: April 15th, 2016 by 11:59 PM**

### Overview

Your proposal is the key document for describing your project and arguing for its selection. Our reviewers will evaluate your proposal using the criteria outlined below. Only one proposal per applicant may be submitted.

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### 1. Eligibility Criteria

We will accept applications from individuals only. While we prefer that you work as part of a team, a team leader must put forth the application and accept responsibility for the terms of the fellowship. The eligibility criteria are as follows:

- *MIT or D-Lab alumni:* Alumni of MIT or D-Lab—including Harvard and Wellesley alumni who completed a D-Lab course—are eligible to apply.
- *Hardware Technology:* Strong preference will be given to applicants working on a new or significantly improved physical product that can deliver value to a large number of people in the so-called Base of the Pyramid. We are looking for technologies with a proof of concept, i.e. a prototype has been built and some user testing has occurred to validate the idea. If your project includes a hardware component, but is not exclusively a hardware product, you may be eligible. Please contact Scale-Ups Fellowship Administrator Eric Reynolds at [ewr@mit.edu](mailto:ewr@mit.edu) with questions.

- *Availability:* You must be able to devote a minimum of 80% full-time equivalent to the project and be based in or spend a minimum of three months in your target market during the fellowship period.
- *Experience in target market:* You must demonstrate knowledge of your target market and have experience working in partnership with local organizations and community members there.
- *Mentors:* You must have at least one technical mentor and one business mentor identified.
- *Partnerships:* You must have identified key local or international partners and engaged at least one.

### 2. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

- *Applicant:* Motivation, skills and experience, commitment, team composition, relevance of mentors' expertise.
- *Technology:* Value proposition of product or service, validation with users, potential for social impact.
- *Context:* Understanding of need, market analysis, relevance of partnerships.
- *Work plan:* Clarity of goals, pertinence of milestones, feasibility of plan.

### 3. Components of the Proposal

The proposal narrative should not exceed 10 pages. Include enough detail to allow the reviewers to judge the merits of the project while not divulging proprietary information. The work of partners and collaborators should be clearly identified.

Use the questions on the following pages to guide the development of your proposal and budget. Don't feel obliged to answer all questions but be sure to address those that are most critical to your project.

### A. The Problem (1 page maximum)

What is the problem you are addressing? Why is it important to address this need? Why have previous attempts, if any, failed to resolve this need? What is the scale of the problem? How many people or groups will it affect? Use statistics and references to identify the size and scope of the problem. Make sure to quantify the scale of the problem not only at a global level but also in the market you are addressing.

### B. The Technology Solution (2 pages maximum)

What is your technology concept and how does it solve the problem? Use pictures, sketches etc. to explain the technology concept. Is your project something new or a significant improvement upon what already exists? What are the products or solutions with which the product will be competing? How is it better than existing solutions? How long have you been working on this technology? What preliminary work have you done already? What design process did you follow? Do you have a prototype built? What validation testing have you already done and where? What aspects of the technology concept are still to be validated?

### C. The Market (1 page maximum)

Where do you plan to test and deploy your technology? Why did you target that market in particular to start? Who are the main stakeholders of your value-chain? What are the key components of your value proposition? How do you justify the market opportunity for your product? Use statistics and references to support your assumptions and rationale. What market challenges do you anticipate addressing in the design of your product and dissemination strategy?

### D. The Social Impact (1 page maximum)

Who will be affected by your work? How will it affect the people for whom it is intended? What other effects do you anticipate from your work? What impact indicators would you want to measure? What is the anticipated scale of your project's social impact? Where is your pilot community? What relationships do you have there? What other relationships will you need to establish in the next year to test your product or service at the community level?

### E. The Work Plan (3 pages maximum)

- *Goals:* What are your goals for the 12-month fellowship?
- *Milestones:* What will be your key milestones? What will be your main activities? Make sure to address both product development and business development activities. How will you measure your progress? What are the challenges you anticipate in developing your product and business? How will you address these challenges?
- *Partnerships:* What key business partners (other than your community-level partners) have you identified to support your work during the 12-month fellowship? Why do you

believe those organizations are the right partners? What roles will they serve in developing the product or business? What other partnerships do you plan to develop?

- *Timeline:* Sketch out your main steps in a Gantt chart or timeline. At a minimum, you need to address what you will do over the 12-month fellowship period. If you are unsure of the timeline of all your activities, provide more details on your first six months and make an informed guess on the rest of the year. Make sure to not only provide a timetable but to also explain details of your planned activities including the What, the How and Who.

### F. The Team (2 pages maximum)

- *Applicant:* What is driving you to take on this challenge? How does this project fit with your career goals? Why is this the right moment for you to take this action? Be sure to include any experiences you have working in this field and geographic area, as well as any experiences you have with the population you intend to serve. This should not be a reiteration of your resume, but instead should help us understand your passion and commitment to this issue, idea, and/or community. What skills or experiences demonstrate that you will be able to attract financing, team members, mentors and other resources to support your project? What will your time commitment be over the fellowship period?
- *Team:* Who is on your team? What skill sets does each member (including you) bring to this project? What is the time commitment of each team member to the project? Who is responsible for what? Describe your individual roles within the organization and the nature of your working relationship. What complementary skills will you need to add or develop within your team in the next year?
- *Mentors:* Who are your technology and business mentors? For what area of their expertise did you choose these individuals? How will you engage them in your work throughout the fellowship? In what other areas could you use mentoring in the next year?

### G. The Budget

Use the budget to itemize the projected costs of your project over the 12-month fellowship. Your budget should include all the expenses necessary to support the project including stipends, travel, materials and services. The total amount can exceed the \$20,000\* Scale-Ups award, but if it does, indicate where other sources of funding may come from. List the names, dates and specific amounts of funding from individuals or organizations that have agreed to fund you as well as any pending or anticipated requests for funding. Indicate how you plan to use funds from D-Lab Scale-Ups and as well as other sources.

\* This \$20,000 award includes spending caps on each budgeting category: \$10,000 on stipends, \$10,000 on travel expenses and \$5,000 on materials & services.

#### 4. Proposal Format

- Your proposal should be 12 point single spaced with a one inch margin and is limited to 10 pages plus a budget.
- The budget is not included in the 10-page limit, but must be included with the main proposal. If you use Excel to create your budget, be certain you can convert it into a nicely designed table for the proposal or consider using another program to generate your budget.
- Feel free to include additional illustrations, diagrams, graphs, photos, or tables to clarify your application as separate attachments. These items are not included in the 10-page limit and the reviewers are NOT required to review these documents.
- You may provide a link to a webpage that has supplemental illustrations, but the reviewers may NOT review these sites.
- Prototypes, videotapes and other items not submitted electronically can be displayed at the Interview Session.
- Include a completed cover page form, found at the end of these guidelines.

#### 5. Interviews

*May 3-May 9, 2016*

If you are selected as a finalist, you will be required to participate in a 30-minute interview session with select reviewers. Make sure to be available during this week as exact interview times may be scheduled with less than one week's notice. In person interviews are preferred, although Skype interviews will be considered on a case by case basis.

#### 6. Awards Announcement

Award winners will be announced by May 13. Winners will receive offer letters and confirmation documents that they will be expected to complete and return no later than May 20, 2016.

The fellowship period will begin June 1, 2016 and end May 31, 2017.

#### 7. Expectations of Scale-Ups Fellows

D-Lab Scale-Ups is more than a source of funding. We see our fellows as part of a community of sharing and learning that will contribute to D-Lab's vision of becoming a knowledge center for technology dissemination for development. The program offers multiple benefits beyond funding and fellows are expected to take advantage of the entire package which includes mentoring, skills development, and partnership cultivation opportunities.

##### A. Acknowledgment

During the fellowship period, fellows should appropriately acknowledge the D-Lab Scale-Ups grant in any printed promotional materials, audio-visual materials and digital materials relating to their project.

##### B. Reporting

- Submit quarterly progress reports and accounting following D-lab Scale-Ups reporting guidelines.

##### C. Mentorship

- Meet with your Scale-Ups mentor or the fellowship administrator every two to four weeks (remotely as necessary). You will be responsible for scheduling and preparing for these meetings.

##### D. Learning & Sharing

- Attend periodic seminars with other Scale-Ups fellows and staff (in person when possible, via Skype as needed).
- Attend the Scale-Ups all-fellows retreat and the MIT Scaling Development Ventures conference (April 2017).
- Participate in skills development classes or seminars such as the VentureWell or Inclusive Business Accelerator workshops or other recommended classes.
- Collaborate with Scale-Ups staff to develop lessons-learned notes and case studies to be used as resources for teaching materials.
- When possible, represent D-Lab Scale-Ups and IDIN at promotional events.

#### Ready to submit your Final Proposal?

##### 1. Proposal Checklist

- Completed project cover page
- Project proposal following the proposal guidelines
- Your up-to-date resume
- A letter of support from your business and technical mentors. Include a short bio for each mentor, his/her contact information and an explanation of his/her commitment or past involvement with the project.
- A letter of support from your most relevant partner. Also include a short description of the organization, the role it will play in the commercialization of the project and the name and contact information of your main liaison at the organization.

##### 2. How to Submit

Send all documents by email to [scaleupsapply@mit.edu](mailto:scaleupsapply@mit.edu) by April 15th, 2016 at 11:59PM. All documents should be submitted at the same time. Applications left incomplete will not be considered.