

Building Innovation in Minnesota

Grid Catalyst was established to elevate Minnesota's leadership in climate action and innovation, while also expanding the opportunities for clean energy jobs. We need a broad network of partners to provide a pathway for emerging businesses to demonstrate and deploy their solutions.

Joining the Innovators Network

We are seeking partners to join our Innovators Network and be part of our growing ecosystem. Partners are asked to commit to the following:

- Promote our accelerator and related opportunities. Adding your brand to our list of partners helps us attract high-caliber startups to our program and provides visibility to your organization.
- Participate in pitch sessions with startups with a genuine interest in identifying partnerships—whether for strategic development, technology demonstration, or investment. We recruit a wide variety of technologies and do not expect partners to align or match every cycle.
- When appropriate, help us provide feedback to startups on how they can improve their pitch, value proposition, or pathway to the marketplace.

A Flexible Partnership

Pledging interest in the Innovators Network does not obligate any organization or individual to host a demonstration project or work directly with any cohort member of the accelerator. This is a non-binding commitment to help our initiative build momentum and highlight the immense capacity and interest of clean energy partners in Minnesota. There is also no financial obligation to the accelerator or the demonstration projects; however, there are sponsorship opportunities available for those interested.

Benefits Provided to Innovation Network Partners

Impact - Working together to act on climate and strengthen our regional economy

Your partnership shows startups and investors that Minnesota is serious about deploying innovation.

Visibility - Elevate your organization's commitment to clean energy

Innovator Network partners will be featured on the Grid Catalyst website, in digital media, and industry storytelling. Hosts will be featured in ongoing media and communications campaigns.

Opportunity – Introductions to emerging technology and promising entrepreneurs

Partners will be introduced to emerging businesses with innovative solutions that have been vetted by technical and financial advisors. This creates an opportunity for investment, collaboration, and customizing solutions to meet your unique climate and clean energy needs.

What's Next - Cohort and Demonstration Selection Process

We are recruiting for the 2025 Demonstration Cohort between June 10 and August 2. We expect to identify 6-8 finalists for the Innovators Network pitch, slated for September 25, 2024, during the [Minnesota Cleantech Innovation Summit](#). Recordings will be made available after sessions.

The matchmaking process will occur between October 2024 and January 2025 for those who identify a startup and technology that meets their interests and priorities. We expect most projects to mobilize by March 2025, which usually starts with a more detailed planning phase for implementation.

The program is built to accommodate the detailed planning that projects require, including agreements, site planning, permitting, financing, engineering, and other applicable steps. The process has many go/no-go gates to ensure that projects only proceed when they continue to meet both parties' expectations. We aim to complete all projects within 12 months of their kickoff.

Minnesota Energy Alley

In 2024, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Grid Catalyst, and Clean Energy Economy Minnesota launched [Minnesota Energy Alley](#). An initiative focused on growing the innovation ecosystem, creating new economic opportunities, and helping our state meet our climate goals. Funding from this initiative will support demonstration projects through seed funding and enable additional entrepreneur and innovation programming by Grid Catalyst.

2024 Innovators Network

