

Grid Catalyst Demonstration Partnership Information

About The Demonstration Program

Grid Catalyst provides startups with opportunities to pilot their technology with Minnesota-based companies and organizations through an annual recruitment and matchmaking cycle. This program is supported by the Grid Catalyst staff and made possible through the [Minnesota Energy Alley initiative](#), including seed funding for pilots.

- **Exploratory Phase (Matchmaking)** - Following an extensive application, vetting, and selection process, Grid Catalyst identifies finalists for its annual program. It hosts a pitch event for the startups to share their innovation with our network. If a prospective host is interested in working with a startup, we initiate an exploratory meeting. If there continues to be interest, we facilitate additional information exchange and meetings to explore technology feasibility, use cases, and applicability to projects, sites, and goals. This part of the cycle lasts 3-5 months (starting in the fall after the pitch event).
- **Developing a Scope of Work Agreement** - If a startup and prospective host align, a scope of work document is designed to outline a potential site, scope, timeline, budget, and clarity of goals and roles for the project. This is an agreement to proceed into the project's first phase, allowing the startups to access funding from the Minnesota Energy Alley initiative. It is one of several gates established to ensure partners are aligned and proceeding as expected into subsequent phases of work.
- **Proceeding with Phase One** - We aim to have projects kickoff each year in March. It is common for this first phase to be focused on additional vetting of the opportunity, digging deeper into site logistics, preliminary engineering or design, refining the budget, and any additional rigor needed to proceed into a secondary implementation phase.
- **12-Month Timeline and Go/No Go Gates** - Projects in each year's cycle have 12 months to be completed, with opportunities for extensions if needed to accommodate additional technical feasibility, site prep, securing equipment, or testing and validation. Each project is unique, with development phases and go/no go gates developed to fit the partnership and scope of the project. We know partners often work with constrained resources, so we are cautious about proceeding if partners lack alignment on goals, timeline, budget, etc.

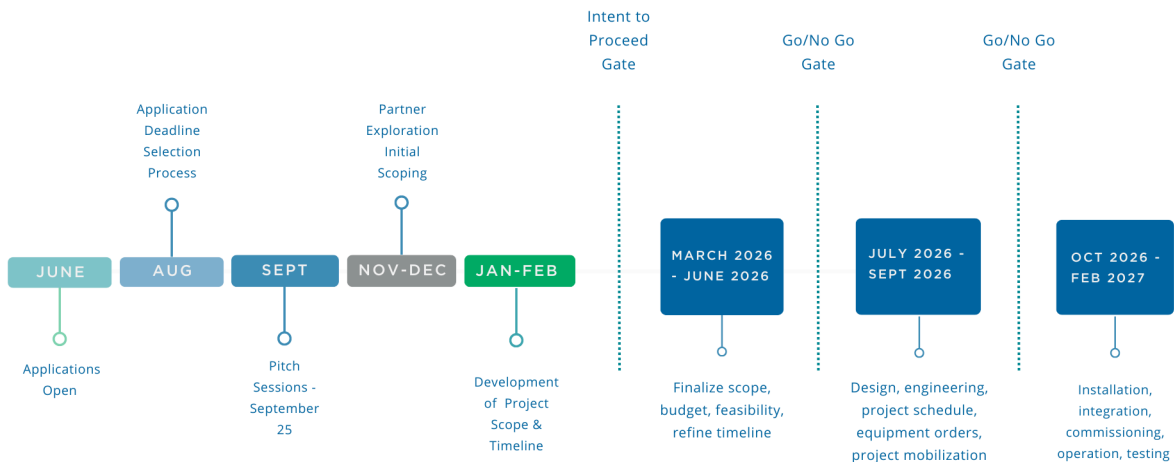
Funding Allocation for Demonstration Projects

In most cycles, startups are exploring projects with more than one partner. Minnesota Energy Alley funds are allocated to the first opportunity to execute a scope of work.

To determine the use of funds in each cycle, the following criteria are considered:

- Each startup is eligible for up to \$100,000 to mobilize a project but must show the use of funds and timeline for funding needs.
- There is no minimum investment, and some startups may not need seed funding through the program to advance since funding may come through the host or other available funds.
- Preference will be given to projects where the host/partner provides additional resources or funding to mobilize the project. This can be in the form of staff time, equipment, offsetting direct costs incurred for the project, or helping the project find other third-party funding sources.
- Additional preference will be given to projects that serve historically marginalized communities.
- Funding cannot be dispatched until a startup and host have agreed to a scope of work.
- Startups may work with one or more partner and leverage Minnesota Energy Alley funds with matched contributions or additional financing mechanisms.

DEMONSTRATION COHORT SAMPLE TIMELINE



Innovators Network Summary

Grid Catalyst launched the Innovators Network in 2021 to leverage the leadership and innovation within our utility, industry, academic, government, and nonprofit partners to advance emerging technologies and help startups commercialize faster and more effectively through these partnerships. Innovators Network members commit to the following principles to participate in our program:

- Be part of promoting our accelerator and related opportunities. Adding your name and logo to our list of partners helps us attract high-caliber startups to our program. It also provides visibility to your organization.
- Attend pitch sessions with a genuine interest in identifying partnerships with startups. Partners may be interested in opportunities for strategic development, technology demonstration, or investment. However, you are not expected or required to match in any given cycle. We are proud to work with a wide variety of technologies, which may not always sync with your organization's current priorities or scope. [More information is on our website.](#)