



## FY 2020 Energy Innovation Seed Grant

The Maryland Energy Innovation Institute (MEI<sup>2</sup>) is focused on translating university energy research into new clean energy companies in the State of Maryland and thus simultaneously benefiting our environment and creating high paying jobs to help our State economy. MEI<sup>2</sup> proposes a unique opportunity through the following seed grant program to bridge the gap between academic transformative laboratory research results and prototype demonstrations to obtain investor interest. This call will support multiple seed grant awards with a maximum award ceiling of \$100,000 USD as well as potential Phase 2 awards with a maximum ceiling of \$200,000 USD for those projects that received a prior seed grant. The total amount of funding available for the 2020 Seed Grant Program is \$400,000 USD.

### Criteria

**Eligibility:** All full-time tenured or tenure track faculty members at any Maryland state academic institution or Maryland companies affiliated with and commercializing inventions created by those faculty.

**Program Focus:** The intent of the program is to foster commercialization by translating energy research into a prototype device or process through technology development, creation and/or advancement of university start-up companies within the state of Maryland.

**Expectations:** The project should advance energy technology and economic growth in Maryland in partnership with a local university faculty- or student-led company. The device or process should have appropriate intellectual property protection (invention disclosure, patent application, or patent) filed with the applicant institution. At the end of one year the final deliverable for the project will be a report that describes work done and the technical readiness of the resulting prototype device or process. The report should also include a commercialization plan with: 1) a clear market assessment and strategy; 2) a viable revenue model; and 3) a strategy for financing the plan.

**Review:** Funding for the seed grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. The MEI<sup>2</sup> Investment Committee will review and select proposed projects. Applicants should not expect detailed written critiques of their proposals. Proposals will be reviewed for: 1) the likelihood of attracting outside funding, 2) innovative and scholarly merit, and 3) potential for commercial readiness.

*MEI<sup>2</sup>, in its sole discretion, selects projects for funding on a competitive basis with the primary aim of advancing the State of Maryland's interest in clean energy. MEI<sup>2</sup> is under no obligation to fund any particular proposed project and MEI<sup>2</sup> reviewers assume no liability related to proposals.*

**Allowable Expenses:** Research supplies; purchase or rental of equipment and materials; travel for project purposes (excluding travel to meetings or symposia); salary support for a temporary position (1 year or less) technician, or research associates (post-docs), and/or graduate students.

**Unallowable Expenses:** Salaries for PIs; administrative support.

**Conditions of the Award:** Funds will be allocated in two tranches, with the first tranche provided after approval of the proposal milestones, and the second tranche after receipt and review of an interim report documenting progress against the milestones.

**Proposal Content:**

**Cover Page (1 page) including:**

- Title of Project
- Names of all Co-PI's (specify position and affiliation)
- Name of partnering company and University affiliation
- Statement of how this project will translate research into prototype or demonstration and enable private investment (technology validation)
- Total amount of funding requested

*MEI<sup>2</sup> endeavors to protect confidential information but neither MEI<sup>2</sup> nor outside reviewers can guarantee confidentiality or security of the information submitted in a proposal.*

**Project Proposal (maximum 8 single-spaced pages) including:**

- Project Motivation—rationale for project and potential for investment (2 pages maximum)
- Project Description (4 pages maximum)
  - Description of market and why proposed technology provides a unique or preferred solution to meet those market needs
  - Detailed description of the technology device or process summarizing previous results obtained
  - Description of proposed technology development, including specific milestones, and how achieving the chosen milestones will enable follow on investment funding
  - Description of intellectual property secured
  - Brief risk assessment
- Additional Information including References (including full titles) 1 page maximum
- Proposal Budget - (be specific about what the funds will be used for and how the PIs will allocate funds between the PIs). 1 page maximum
- Biosketches (not included in page count) – 2-page NIH or NSF format (all senior personnel)

**Phase 2 Proposal Addenda**

- Phase 2 proposals must also include progress made on the technical and business aspects of the previous proposal as well as a more complete business plan towards commercialization (3 pages max)

Proposals must be submitted electronically to Cathy Stephens ([csteph5@umd.edu](mailto:csteph5@umd.edu)) as a combined .pdf prior to close of business on **January 24, 2020**.