Request for Proposals
2023-2024 MIT Energy Initiative Energy Research Seed Fund Program
[Application deadline: Monday, January 22, 2024]

The MIT Energy Initiative (MITEI) requests proposals for its 2023-2024 round of seed fund grants.

MITEI's Seed Fund Program supports new lines of research and analysis with high potential impact and longer time horizons. The program is not designed to provide additional resources for projects that are already underway, or incremental in nature.

Proposals across the entire spectrum of energy and related environmental research areas are welcome, including science, technology, and social sciences. As always, we welcome proposals on any energy related topic you find novel and potentially transformative. Proposals that address innovative technologies, policy, economics, and system integration to accelerate GHG emissions reduction while meeting growing global energy needs are particularly welcome.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

MITEI anticipates there will be approximately six awards, each for up to $150,000 total, with periods of performance of up to two years. The grants are supported primarily through pooled funds from the MITEI Founding and Sustaining Members. Proposals that are not funded in this round may be resubmitted for support in the next round of seed grants, approximately one year from now. There is also the prospect that a proposal not funded through the seed fund program may receive funding directly from an interested member. This is a great way to get your ideas in front of multiple funding sources.

KEY DATES

Seed fund RFP issued:	November 29, 2023
Seed fund grant application deadline:	January 22, 2024
Announcement of grant awards:	Late-April, 2024
Earliest project start date:	June 1, 2024

ELIGIBILITY AND RESTRICTIONS

No researcher may be listed as PI on more than two proposals submitted in any given funding round.

The MITEI Seed Fund Program is open to all who, at the start of funding, are MIT faculty or members of the research staff with principal investigator privileges, **subject to the following exception**.

The MITEI Seed Fund program is funded largely from member contributions. As such, one requirement is that IP developed out of seed fund projects must be available for further funding by our members should they be interested in pursuing promising avenues of research. Therefore, any PI associated with a lab or center with a membership agreement that specifies preferential access for its members to IP developed by participating PIs, or would in any way restrict access to the IP for members of MITEI is ineligible for a MITEI Seed Fund award.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Do not route these proposals through OSP.

Proposals must be submitted **online**. When you are ready to submit your proposal, visit the MITEI Seed Fund proposal submission website at https://form.jotform.com/233317524688160

The information required for the online form includes: PI/co-PI names and **MIT email addresses**, proposal title, reviewer abstract (which can include confidential information), a public abstract (which must not include confidential information as it will be used in MITEI media releases), and selection of appropriate Areas and Topics to categorize your proposal.

There are also several required documents that must be uploaded using the online form:
  (1) body of the proposal – **PDF format**,
  (2) preliminary budget template – **Excel file**, and
  (3) Co-funding/Background IP form(s) – **PDF format** – (separate form required for each PI/Co-PI listed on the proposal).

The submission must be completed by the deadline indicated on the first page of this document.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Proposals must be submitted on-line** at https://form.jotform.com/233317524688160
2. **Cover page**
    a. Do not include a cover page, this will be generated by the system.
    b. The cover page will include the following statement:
        "This proposal may include potentially patentable material that has not been publicly disclosed. Please distribute only to individuals who are involved in the review process and who have received the MITEI proposal review instructions, and treat this material as confidential information."
3. **Body of the proposal**
    a. Use the proposal template which includes content guidelines. This document is available on-line from the start-up page of the online submission form or at https://energy.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/MITEI-SeedFund-2024-Template.docx
    b. Submit no more than five (5) pages of text, exclusive of references and illustrations. To this point we have not imposed a firm page length limit, but please be mindful of length and respectful of reviewers' time.
    c. The following statement is automatically included in the footer of each page of your proposal: "MITEI Proposal for Review – do not distribute".
4. **Budget** – Prepare the required preliminary budget using the budget template provided as an attachment to the email announcement for the seed fund call or at https://energy.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/MITEI-SeedFund-2024-BudgetTemplate.xlsx.
5. **Co-funding/Background IP form** - Submit a **separate signed form for each PI** listed on the proposal. The co-funding form is available on-line from the start-up page of the online submission form or at https://energy.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/MITEI-SeedFund-2024-CoFundingForm.pdf

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

The review criteria will emphasize the importance of the scientific problem, novelty of the ideas, and potential impact of the work, particularly on global climate change. How the proposed work complements ongoing energy research on campus will be considered. The prospects for long-term funding to continue the research project beyond the seed fund period of performance will also be considered. The MITEI Governing Board will advise the MIT Energy Council on awards.

CONDITIONS

1. **Project management** – The PI is directly responsible for performance of the work in the proposal and should not serve as proxy for others.

2. **Co-funding** – Any anticipated external support for the proposed project must be declared at time of submission. If co-funding becomes an issue during the seed fund proposal/project process, this must be discussed with MITEI leadership prior to use of such funds.

3. **Budgets** – Draft budgets must be prepared using the template provided. Final budgets will be prepared by MITEI Fiscal Office. The template has been demonstrated to be consistent with final budgets prepared using COEUS, but in the case of any discrepancies, the final budget prepared in COEUS takes precedence.

4. **Equipment** – Equipment purchases should be kept to a minimum. There is no hard cap, but keep in mind that equipment purchases are generally not looked at favorably.

5. **Sub-Awards** – For any proposal that includes a sub-award, MIT must ensure that rights to all intellectual property arising out of the proposed research will be available to MITEI Members should they want or need them at a later time. PIs proposing a sub-award should consult MITEI before submitting.

6. **Intellectual Property**

   a. If the PI has existing IP relevant to the proposed project, this must be declared at the time of submission.

   b. A PI associated with a lab or center with a membership agreement that specifies preferential access for its members to IP developed by participating PIs, or would in any way restrict access to the IP for members of MITEI is ineligible for a MITEI Seed Fund award.

   c. Contact Brian Hodder (bhodder@mit.edu) at MITEI if your research will include non-MIT collaborators.

7. **Proposal Limit** – No researcher may be listed as PI on more than two proposals submitted.

8. **Collaboration** – While individual submissions are certainly welcome, and have garnered a significant number of awards, collaborations – either within or between departments – are encouraged, and have also been very successful.

9. **Deliverables**

   a. PIs are expected to submit an interim report at the end of the first year and a final report at the end of seed fund support. The reports will be helpful in promoting the projects and in assisting PIs with finding support to continue the research and grow the projects once seed funding is finished.

PIs should send publications resulting from the seed fund award to Brian Hodder (bhodder@mit.edu).