



New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology

**Clean Tech Research and Development Pilot Seed Grant
Program, Round 3**

Notice of Funding Availability

The New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology (“CSIT”) will launch an online application for Clean Tech Research and Development (“R&D”) Pilot Seed Grant Program, Round 3 (“Program”) at 9 am on December 12, 2023 at www.njeda.com/csit. Applications will be open through January 18, 2023 at 5 pm.

The Program has a total budget of \$1,500,000 for grant awards of **up to \$75,000** each. This is a competitive grant. No application, transaction, or termination fees will be collected by CSIT for this program. Decisions on this grant award are expected to be made by first quarter of 2024.

Purpose

This grant opportunity is issued by the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology (CSIT). The goal of the Program is to help early-stage clean technology/clean energy companies in New Jersey (“NJ”) accelerate development and innovation of clean technologies to transform new discoveries from research stage into commercially viable technologies. The grant funds will enable clean technology and clean energy companies make significant progress and have a meaningful impact on their commercialization outcomes.

The Program is for companies developing or testing clean technologies intended to avoid emissions of, or recapture, greenhouse gases and/or criteria pollutants, or to enable such avoidance or recapture in the following targeted industry areas:

- Chemicals/Advance Materials
- Energy Distribution/Storage
- Energy Efficiency
- Energy Generation
- Green Buildings
- Transportation
- Waste Processing
- Water and Agriculture

All applicants must be conducting research between a Technology Readiness Level (“TRL”) 2 (Applied Research) and 7 (Integrated Pilot System Demonstrated). TRL is a method of estimating technology maturity. The TRL scale ranges from 1 (basic principle observed) through 9 (total system used successfully in project operations). See Exhibit A, attached.

Applicants are requested to use the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (“NYSERDA”) Technology and Commercialization Readiness Calculator tool included in the Technical Proposal to determine their TRL score.

Program Overview

The Program has a total budget of \$1,500,000 and will award grants of **up to \$75,000** to support twenty (20) early-stage innovation-based NJ companies that have the potential to impact the targeted industries. Funding is provided by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities and the the Program will be implemented by CSIT.

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, with awards going to the twenty (20) highest scoring applicants, provided each of those highest scoring applicants has met the minimum score of 70.

Applicants can only submit one application for this grant. Multiple application from the same company will NOT be accepted. Recipients of two or more active CSIT Seed or Demonstration Grants are ineligible for this Program.

Each approved grant will be valid for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of the execution of the grant agreement. Any unused portion of the grant will be cancelled after the twelve months and must be returned to CSIT. An extension for up to an additional three (3) months may be permitted at the sole discretion of CSIT.

Eligibility

Each applicant to the Program must meet the following eligibility criteria at the time of application and during the entire review period to be eligible for an award:

- Be authorized and in good standing to conduct business in New Jersey as evidenced by a current New Jersey tax clearance certificate addressed to CSIT. All certificates listing another state agency will be rejected.
- Have no more than fifty full-time equivalent (“FTE”) workers (FTE calculated on a 35-hour work week) at time of application.
- Have a minimum of one full time worker. A worker may be the founder and may be paid or unpaid.
- Fifty percent or more of the cumulative hours worked by all workers, founders, and contractors must be conducted in NJ (calculated on an FTE basis of 35 hours per week).
- Have less than or equal to five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in prior calendar year sales revenue (excluding grant revenue).

Eligible Uses

The grant funding can be utilized for project research and development activities specified in the grantee's application.

Ineligible Uses

The following expense categories are ineligible for funding by this grant:

- Direct services to individuals or organizations;
- Manufacturing of products for sale or commercial use;
- Real estate rental expenses;
- Patient clinical trial expenses;
- Construction costs;
- Travel, entertainment, and other similar expenses;
- Allocations of general overhead expenses;
- Any expenditures incurred before the grant agreement is signed by both the grantee and CSIT;
- Any expenses for equipment and materials that applicant does not use for the Project during the Project period; or
- Fees related to Conferences **not** associated with the Project

In addition, no more than 30% of the budget proposed for the Project may be spent on:

- Marketing and customer discovery specific to the innovation;
- IP patent prosecution and licensing-related expenses; and
- Registration fees for conferences associated with the Project.

Disbursement of funds

The first disbursement of eighty percent (80%) of the grant award will be disbursed upon execution of the Grant Agreement following the award, and the remaining twenty percent (20%) will be disbursed after the submission of Final Report and Project Completion report to CSIT.

Application Process

All applications to the Program, must include the following documentation:

- a. Completed online application
- b. Budget and Milestone Proposals (Excel template embedded within online application)
- c. Uploaded results from Technology Readiness Level (TRL) Calculator Excel file (The *TRL Template* is embedded within online application)
- d. Employee information as appropriate for applicable company structure and staffing -i.e., most recent NJ WR-30 (W2 employees) or 1099 (contractors), shareholder agreement or K-1 or offer letters. Please note that if a professional employment organization (PEO) is

utilized, the applicant must submit confirmation of PEO-A form issued by the NJ Department of Labor (DOL), These confirmations are issued on an annual basis and are valid for a year. See <https://www.nj.gov/labor/ea/employer-services/leasing-companies/> for additional information on PEOs.

- e. Summary of the most recent Internal Payroll (Q4 2023 or Q1 2024) indicating each employee name and number of hours worked per week.
- f. Most recent Company tax filing: Federal 941 and either an NJ-CBT-100 (Schedule A), Form- 1065 or Form -1040 (Schedule C) or whichever is applicable to the organizational form of your business, showing the total Gross Receipts or Sales for the year.
- g. Current NJ tax clearance certificate addressed to CSIT (Tax clearance must be dated November 15, 2023 or after). https://www16.state.nj.us/NJ_PREMIER_EBIZ/jsp/home.jsp. **DUE No Later Than February 16, 2024**, or application will be declined. NJ certificates may not be immediately available; therefore, these should be applied for well before the February 16, 2024 due date.
- h. If applicable, copy of **Woman, Minority and/or Veteran-owned** business New Jersey certification <https://www.njportal.com/DOR/SBERRegistry/Default/> **DUE No Later Than February 16, 2024**, or relevant bonus points will not be awarded. NJ certificates may not be immediately available; therefore, these should be applied for well before the February 16, 2024 due date.
- i. If applicable, a copy of **Executed University License Agreement** with University. **DUE No Later Than February 16, 2024**, or relevant bonus points will not be awarded.
- j. Completed Application Certification
- k. Completed CSIT Legal Debarment Questionnaire
- l. For companies with a dba name (“doing business as”), CSIT requires proof of NJ registration reflecting the same.

Applications to the Program may be submitted using CSIT’s online application Portal at [Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology - NJEDA](#)) The online application enables applicants to electronically upload a signed PDF.

- i. The application Portal will be open from Friday, **December 12, 2023, at 9AM to Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 5PM EST**. All interested applicants must submit their applications by the deadline.
- ii. If an applicant prefers not to provide an electronic application certification, they may:
 - a. Mail a hard copy of the signed application certification postmarked by the application deadline to CSIT at:

Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology
Attn: Judith Sheft (Executive Director)
36 W State Street PO Box 990
Trenton, NJ 08625

AND

- b. Email CSIT with the subject line: “MAILED Application Certification Clean Tech Seed Grant Pilot Program, Round 3,” indicating that the certification document has been mailed. Only signed CSIT Application Certification should be mailed; the rest of the application must be submitted through the online system.
- c. Applications that are postmarked after the application deadline (January 18, 2024 at 5PM EST) will not be considered.

CSIT will host an informational webinar on the Clean Tech Seed Grant Pilot Program, Round 3, on December 7th, 2023. A recording of the webinar will be posted on CSIT's webpage. Information on registration for the webinar can be found on CSIT’s webpage.

The following steps detail the application submission and review process:

- A document completeness review will be done as applications are received.
- Applicants with missing documentation will be notified and given 10 business days to submit missing documents. If the application remains incomplete by the resubmission deadline, it will be rejected.
- Only completed applications will be evaluated and scored. Applicants must submit the NJ tax clearance certificate by the start of the application scoring period. Otherwise, the application will be declined. If the documentation for any bonus category is not received by the application scoring period, bonus points will not be applied.
- Applicants that have indicated in the application that they are a minority/women/veteran owned business, but that do not submit the NJ state certification at the time of the application, will have up to the start of the application scoring period to submit the document. If the documentation is not received by that point, bonus points will not be applied to the application.
- An evaluation committee comprised of CSIT and New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“NJEDA”) staff will review and assign a score to each application after receiving qualitative input from subject matter experts (“SMEs”). As part of the process, all applicants with complete applications will be invited, but are not required, to make a brief presentation about their project and submit it to the evaluation committee and SMEs.
- In order to be eligible for funding, an applicant must receive a minimum score of 70 out of the available 100 points on the standard scoring criteria, before allocation of bonus points.

Scoring

Scoring Criteria – Grant awards will go to twenty applicants with the highest scores, until the program funds are expended. All applicants must achieve **a minimum score of 70 points**

to be eligible for a grant.

- Innovation (up to 30 points)
- Market Opportunity and Strategy (up to 20 points) (Referred to as “Go-to Market Strategy” and “Market Opportunity and Strategy” scoring criteria in prior rounds)
- Implementation Plan - Budget and Milestones (up to 20 points)
- Economic and Broader impact, such as social, health, education, housing, safety, infrastructure impacts (up to 10 points)
- Team (up to 20 points)

Bonus Points - Once the **minimum score of 70 points** is achieved, bonus points will be awarded to applicants that satisfy the following additional criteria:

- Company is using technology initially developed at a New Jersey university, under an executed license agreement with such university (15 points)
- NJ certified woman-owned business (10 points)
- NJ certified minority-owned business (10 points)
- NJ certified veteran-owned business (10 points)
- Primary place of business or R&D located within an opportunity zone eligible census tract or government restricted municipality (5 points)
- Company has not previously received a CSIT grant or voucher (10 points)

Board Approval

The CSIT Program Committee will review scored applications and make funding recommendations to the CSIT Board. The CSIT Board will make the final decision on grant award winners.

Fees

No application, transaction, or termination fees will be collected by CSIT for this program.

Additional Requirements and Information

Applicants must be in good standing with both the New Jersey Department of Labor (“DOL”) and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (“DEP”) to be eligible for a grant award.

For three years from the date of the grant agreement, workers and consultants who continue working on the project must conduct at least 50% of their work in a NJ location. Failure to comply will result in the awardee having to make a full re-payment of the grant award.

All grant awardees must report economic impact data to CSIT upon the completion of the project and then every year for the next three years after project completion by submitting an Economic Impact Questionnaire provided by CSIT.

All grant awardees are encouraged to participate in future CSIT/NJEDA/NJBPU alumni activities, such as serving as a panel member or participating in interviews about Program experience.

Confidentiality

Applications will be reviewed only by staff of CSIT, NJEDA and SMEs. All applications are subject to requests for disclosure, including but not limited to, a request pursuant to the Open Public Records Act ("OPRA"), N.J.S.A.47:1A-1 et seq. If the applicant believes that information contained in its proposal merits confidential treatment pursuant to OPRA, any such purportedly confidential information submitted to CSIT must be specifically identified and marked as "confidential" by the applicant.

Additional Information

Comprehensive information about the Clean Tech Research and Development Pilot Seed Grant Program, Round 3 is available at <https://www.njeda.gov/csit> . Questions concerning this Program and Notice of Funding Availability should be submitted csitcleantech@njeda.gov

Attachment A: Technology Readiness Levels (TRL¹)

TRL 1

Basic Research: Initial scientific research has been conducted. Principles are qualitatively postulated and observed. Focus is on new discovery rather than applications.

TRL 2

Applied Research: Initial practical applications are identified. Potential of material or process to solve a problem, satisfy a need, or find application is confirmed.

TRL 3

Critical Function or Proof of Concept Established: Applied research advances and early-stage development begins. Studies and laboratory measurements validate analytical predictions of separate elements of the technology.

TRL 4

Lab Testing/Validation of Alpha Prototype Component/Process: Design, development and lab testing of components/processes. Results provide evidence that performance targets may be attainable based on projected or modeled systems.

TRL 5

Laboratory Testing of Integrated/Semi-Integrated System: System Component and/or process validation is achieved in a relevant environment.

TRL 6

Prototype System Verified: System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (beta prototype system level).

TRL 7

Integrated Pilot System Demonstrated: System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (integrated pilot system level).

TRL 8

System Incorporated in Commercial Design: Actual system/process completed and qualified through test and demonstration (pre-commercial demonstration).

TRL 9

System Proven and Ready for Full Commercial Deployment: Actual system proven through successful operations in operating environment, and ready for full commercial deployment.

¹US Department of Energy (DOE), Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy
https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.energy.gov%2Fsites%2Fprod%2Ffiles%2F2016%2F07%2Ff33%2Ftechnology_readiness_levels.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK