Ideation Grant Program 2024/25

General Information: The ideation grants are intended to fund scientists and engineers interested in translating their ideas and technologies into wider world impact, and potentially in creating new ventures. These grants support the Resnick Sustainability Institute's mission to advance global sustainability by addressing unmet challenges and opportunities associated with driving RSI's mission. The fundamental insights gained through these awards may lead towards implementation and scale-up for real-world impact. We support all stages of conceptualizing technology development from ideation to laying the foundation for kickstarting a business. The time for completion of the grant is twelve months from receiving the grant. At the end grantees may have opportunity to present at a showcase event

Added benefit: For more applied work not permitted under current research funding, Ideation Grants can be used to pay student or post doc salaries to cover time spent on practical application of their research.

Note: special consideration is given to projects enrolled in RSI Explorer or Impact programs

Eligibility: Candidates should meet the following criteria:

- Project aligns with one or more of RSI's initiatives or sustainability in some other way
- Project illustrates impactful use of grants ranging from $10,000 - $20,000
- Grants should be for applied research, proof of concept or for activities to support the business case for company formation
- Time period for completion should be twelve months atter receiving award
- Spending items open to negotiation
- Strong consideration given to engagement with the campus's E/SEC 102 (entrepreneurship credit course fall 2024), Caltech's NSF I-Corps ZAP program
- Team make-up: at least one member must be a Caltech student, post doc, faculty member or employee and the grant must be used to fund Caltech-based activities
- Require PI sponsorship for the project prior to submitting application.

Ideation Grant Process:

- Candidates contact RSI office about initial interest
- Meet with RSI to discuss proposed project and funding requirements
- Seek PI approval to sponsor application
- Complete application form, budget, and secure DAF signatures, then submit
- Awardees notified by RSI
- Funding process implemented by RSI, working with divisional grant manager
- RSI and Awardees: meet and establish agreed milestones, goals, and timelines
- Once funding received: arrange follow up meetings to review progress

Deadline for applications: Submissions will be considered on a rolling basis until all awards are made by January 31, 2024. We suggest that you submit your interest early.

For questions or to set up initial meeting please contact Stephanie Yanchinski, RSI Director of Entrepreneurial Programs, stephanie.yanchinski@caltech.edu.

RSI Office of Entrepreneurial Programs 11.01.24

Ideation Grant Program: Submission Form

Name _____

Title _____

PI (If applicant is not a faculty member) _____

Division_____

Email address/Telephone _____

Project Title or Company name _____

Summary of project (500 words maximum):

Please summarize the technology developed to date, the overall goals for moving it forward towards broader translation, and the next steps that the Ideation Grant will help you reach. Ideation Grants typically support technologies developing in a more translational direction, typically approximately equivalent to Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 2 – 3 as defined by the Department of Energy (Appendix A).

Where possible please include your thoughts about exploring potential markets, and outside partners for developing the commercial potential of your technology. Mention any intentions to help these discoveries move forward by attending educational programs e.g., the ongoing NSF I-Corps™ ZAP or other campus courses including *E/SEC 102 Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Practical Steps Towards Forming a Venture and Case Histories Fall 2024;* bootcamps and other business development programs such as Fifty Years; UC Berkeley's Haas Applied Innovation Initiative C2M; and Activate; consulting advisors or mentors; attending industry or business conferences; and researching business information.

Describe budget justification. Please list, as one-line summaries, categories of expenditures, purpose, and the time for completion and a one paragraph spending plan.

Statement of Impact: Please describe the climate tech challenge that the proposal addresses, how the technology might impact that challenge, and your concept of how the potential outcomes might be translated to realize that impact. Where possible identify relevant metrics and outcomes that the grant will help you achieve e.g., include Gt CO_2 emission reduction; cubic feet of water purified; industry decarbonization and waste reduction or repurposing; advancement of the technology's Technology Readiness Level; advancement of patent or other IP currently under early consideration; preliminary interest from industry; and potential sources for further funding. Please state if you have begun applying techno-economic analysis (TEA) or carbon life cycle to evaluating your technology.

Does the proposal leverage unique internal or external resources, or time-sensitive opportunities such as federal grants?

Internal Approval: Candidates must provide a signed [Division Approval Form](#) and complete the attached budget form. For complete process see Appendix B.

Please submit your application including forms to Stephanie Yanchinski, RSI Director of Entrepreneurial Programs, stephanie.yanchinski@caltech.edu.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Department of Energy Technology Readiness Levels

(TRL) Technology Readiness Levels	
1	Exploratory research transition basic science into laboratory applications
2	Technology concepts and/or application formulated
3	Proof of concept validation
4	Subsystem or component validation in laboratory environment to simulate service conditions
5	Early system validation demonstrated in laboratory or limited field application
6	Early field demonstration and system refinements completed.
7	Complete system demonstration in an operational environment.
8	Early commercial deployment
9	Wide-scale commercial deployment

Appendix B: Ideation Grant Process:

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