

# NREL Industry Growth Forum: 2026 Application Guide

Now in its 31st year, the [Industry Growth Forum](#) (IGF) is the premier event for energy innovation and investment. IGF brings together cutting-edge startups and forward-thinking investors to accelerate high-impact partnerships and drive the speed and quality of deal flow in the energy innovation ecosystem. Advanced energy entrepreneurs, investors, and experts from industry and the public sector build relationships, showcase emerging technologies, and identify disruptive business solutions.

The IGF builds on decades of technical expertise and market analysis accumulated at NREL, the nation's only federal lab dedicated to energy systems innovation and integration. NREL bridges foundational research with practical applications to integrate various energy sources, storage, buildings, transportation, and emerging technologies.

## Two Opportunities to Pitch at IGF

- **In-Person Pitch Competition (Apr. 1, 2026):** Selected startups pitch live at IGF in Denver for top awards, investor visibility, and industry recognition. Application fee \$400.
- **International Demo Day (Feb. 18, 2026):** Selected startups outside the United States, Canada, and Europe pitch virtually in February 2026, with the chance to earn the Best International Award. Application fee \$100.

## Benefits of Applying

As an IGF applicant, you receive:

- **Complimentary registration** for one (1) attendee to the event and discounted registration for your colleagues (in-person application only)
- **Application review and feedback** from leading investors and industry experts
- **Early access** to sign up for 1:1 networking session with investors
- **Dedicated applicant webinars** designed to propel your company forward
- **Eligibility for awards** including Best Venture overall, Outstanding Venture by track, and People's Choice awards.
- **International Startups:** Opportunity to pitch at virtual demo day (February 2026) and compete for Best International award.

## Application Timeline

|                                             |                                                          |                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Submission deadline</b><br>Nov. 26, 2025 | <b>Application Review</b><br>Nov. 18, 2025–Jan. 16, 2026 | <b>Notification of Acceptance</b><br>Mid-January 2026 |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|

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## Application & Selection Process

1. [Apply to present](#) at the 2026 NREL Industry Growth Forum pitch competition. If you are a new user, please click **REGISTER** to create an account in the portal. Otherwise, use the **LOGIN** link to access your account. **LOGIN** link to access your account.
2. Refer to the section on [Tips for a Robust Application](#) below before starting the application.
3. Deadline for application submission: **November 17, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. MST.**
4. To be considered, you must pay the application fee (\$400 for in-person IGF, \$100 for International Demo Day) and complete the required application tasks on the Survey Monkey Apply platform by the submission deadline. The in-person (\$400) application fee includes **one** complimentary registration for one person from your company to attend the IGF as well as 15% discount code additional members of your teams to attend. Registration tickets are valued at \$650 and applying for the pitch competition offers 40% discount on registration.

**Once IGF registration opens in December 2025, you will receive instructions on how to register and claim your complementary IGF pass.**

5. **Eligibility to Apply:** Companies in all development stages, are welcome at the IGF. Our selection committee prioritizes companies in the following verticals:
  - Agriculture and Food
  - Built Environment
  - Electricity
  - Enabling Technologies
  - Fuels and Chemicals
  - Materials and Industrial Manufacturing
  - Resource Management and Adaptation
  - Transportation and Mobility

Your company must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Must be a legally registered entity
- Must be in the process of raising capital by December 31, 2026. If you are selected to present, we will confirm that you will be raising at the time of the event.
- Must have proven technology and prototype
- **Must not** have presented live in the last two IGFs (2025 and 2024). (If you applied for the pitch competition for either (or both years) and were not selected to present, you are eligible to apply again.)
- Must accept the terms & conditions
  - i. I understand that this application should not contain any confidential or business sensitive information.
  - ii. I approve this application to be reviewed by the IGF Selection Committee (an independent panel made up of investors, incubators/accelerators, and technical experts).

- iii. I understand that the IGF team may share that my company applied with the broader NREL ecosystem or other external parties.
- 6. **Company Tech Type:** Select the technology type that best aligns with your company. This information is used to match your application to reviewers with the most relevant technical expertise.
- 7. **Company Stages of Development:** The IGF is committed to providing opportunities for companies at various stages of development. To ensure a fair selection process, each applicant will be evaluated using rubric specific to their current stage. Your application's stage category will be assigned based on your technology's stage of development, estimated time-to-market, revenue status, the type of financing you are currently seeking, and the composition of your team.
- 8. **In-person IGF:** Forty companies will be selected to pitch live at the IGF from March 31-April 2, 2026. Presenting companies will be divided into tracks based on their development stage (early, pre-commercialization, commercialization, and growth).
- 9. **Virtual International Demo Day:** To boost innovation and connectivity for emerging, international economies and provide companies with access to the advanced energy ecosystem in the U.S., we will host a virtual pitch competition on February 18, 2026, for startups headquartered in certain geographies. **Only companies headquartered outside of U.S., Canada, and Europe are eligible for this track.** Up to 8 companies from these geographies will be selected to present in this competition. The top winner will be invited to present live at the IGF in March. If your company is headquartered in one of these regions, please reach out to Nikulas Dworek at [nikulas.dworek@nrel.gov](mailto:nikulas.dworek@nrel.gov) for more details as well as a discount on the application fee.
- 10. Each application will be reviewed and scored by the IGF Selection Committee, an independent panel of active investors and energy industry professionals. After all applications are reviewed, the selection committee will decide which companies will be invited to present.
- 11. Notifications of acceptance for the virtual and in-person IGF will be sent by **mid-January 2026**.
- 12. Each applicant, regardless of their selection decision, will receive detailed constructive feedback from their reviewers.

## How to use the Survey Monkey Apply Platform

NREL uses a platform called *Survey Monkey Apply* to collect applications for the Industry Growth Forum.

To create your application:

- 1. **Register to apply.**
  - a. **New users:** If you are new to Survey Monkey Apply [register](#) to apply. After entering the name of your company, select **Register** in the top right corner of the browser. Fill out the required fields to create your account. You will receive an email to verify your account. If it does not appear in your inbox, be sure to check your spam folder. You will

not be able to submit applications or complete certain tasks until you have verified your email address. Once verified, you will receive another email confirming your registration with a link to the applicant portal. The email address you provide will be the one we use to contact you for further IGF communications.

- b. **Returning users:** If you already have an account with Survey Monkey Apply, enter your email and password to log in. If you don't see the NREL Industry Growth Forum 2026 application, you will have to change your eligibility. Go to your name in the top-right corner and click My Accounts -> Eligibility -> Update Your Eligibility Profile. Select "I am a company or person applying to a program" and "Industry Growth Forum" from the list of programs and save your profile. You should see the NREL IGF 2026 application on the dashboard.
2. **Start the application.** On the application portal page, select **Start** to begin filling out your application.
3. **Invite a collaborator.** You can invite your colleague(s) to collaborate on your application. Click on the "Add Collaborator" button on the left and enter your collaborator's email, type of access you want to provide (View only or View + Edit), and an optional message. Your collaborator(s) will receive an email with a link to access the application.
4. **Complete the "Basic Information" and "Eligibility" tasks first.** If you do not meet the eligibility criteria for applying to the IGF, you will not be able to pay the application fee or complete the application form.
5. **Pay the application fee.** There is a non-refundable application fee of \$400 for the in-person IGF and \$100 for the virtual pitch competition. Only companies headquartered outside of U.S., Canada, and Europe, can choose between the virtual and in-person pitch competition. If you are eligible for the virtual pitch competition, reach out to Nikulas Dworek [nikulas.dworek@nrel.gov](mailto:nikulas.dworek@nrel.gov) for a discount code. Applying for the in-person pitch competition entitles you to one (1) complimentary full-conference pass to attend the IGF, even if you are not selected to present. Registration tickets are valued at \$650 and applying for the pitch competition offers 40% discount on registration. **We will provide you with a discount code and you will have to complete a separate registration form to claim your event ticket.**
6. **Complete application tasks.** On the left-hand side of the application screen, you will see a progress bar with the number of application tasks you have completed. Sections A through I are required. You can begin with any task. While completing a task, you have the following options:
  - **Save & Continue Editing:** Use if you are not done and would like to continue working on the task later. Note, the Survey Monkey Apply platform autosaves every 20 seconds.
  - **Mark as Complete:** You must mark each task as Complete before moving into the next section. Use if you are done with the task. After marking as complete, you will be taken to a page to review your answers. If you would like to make edits, select the **Edit** button in the upper right corner.

7. **Submit the application.** Once you have completed all the tasks, select **Review & Submit**. Review your application, and if you are ready to submit, click **Submit**. **Make sure you download a copy of your application for your reference.** Once submitted, you will not be able to make any changes. If you need access after you submit, please reach out to [igf@nrel.gov](mailto:igf@nrel.gov).

## Tips for a Robust Application

A well-written application that conveys information about your product and company in a clear and concise manner has a better chance of catching the investors' attention. Here are some tips on how you can write a robust application. Note that these tips serve as guidelines and do not guarantee you will be selected.

- Make sure you address all the prompts in the questions. Refer to the Application Scoring Rubric on page 16 of this guide to see how your application will be graded.
- Answer all questions to the best of your ability. Investors need to understand your technology and financials to determine investment potential. Note that the investor audience is well-versed in advanced energy issues and markets - take this into consideration to keep your material concise and focused on your value proposition.
- Be sure to supply enough detail regarding your solution for a technical expert to evaluate for technical merit and novelty.
- Take time to understand your competitive landscape and highlight all major competitors. Persuade reviewers why your solution is better than existing technologies.
- When possible, use the bottom-up approach to determine market potential as it uses substantiated assumptions and is more convincing than the top-down approach. Refer to the [Market Sizing Guide](#) on the [Startup Resource Center](#) to help you with estimation.
- Complete the financial table in section G to the best of your ability. Investors are interested in seeing realistic sales and growth projections for the next four years.
- Be authentic and use your own language. Avoid using AI-generated responses. Make use of bullets to improve readability. To highlight a point, use bold or underline. Do not write in all caps.
- Proofread your application. Invite a colleague or mentor to review your application before submission.

## Application Form

Below are the required application fields you will need to complete. Commentary, hints, and suggestions are provided for you to consider prior to completing your application. Note the associated word limits per field, where applicable.

## Basic Information

Please provide information for the primary contact (name, email, and phone number) and company name (as you would like it to appear on the IGF website and other materials).

## Eligibility

Answer the questions in this form to confirm that you meet the requirements for applying to present at the IGF.

- 1) Is your start-up a legally registered company? (Yes, No)
- 2) Have you demonstrated the feasibility of the technology in the lab and/or have a working prototype? (Yes, No)
- 3) Are you currently seeking financing, or do you expect to be seeking financing by December 31, 2026? (Yes, No)
- 4) Has your company presented at the NREL Industry Growth Forum in the last two years (2025 or 2024)? (Yes, No)
- 5) Read the Terms and Conditions and select whether you agree or not.

## Section A: Company Introduction

**Company Name** (extracted from the Basic Information section)

### Company location

- City
- State/Province
- Country

**If the company is located in regions other than the US, Canada, or Europe, you have the option to participate in the virtual pitch competition with group networking capability (application fee is \$100) or attend the in-person IGF and participate in all networking events (application fee of \$400 covers registration for one person. Registration tickets are valued at \$650).**

### How do you want to participate in the IGF?

- Virtual pitch competition only (reach out to us for a discount code)
- In-person IGF

### Company Website

**Upload company logo (PNG or JPG Format)**

**LinkedIn URL** (optional)

**Year Founded**

**Are you an IEC portfolio company? (yes/no)**

**If yes, which program(s) are you a part of?**

- Chevron Studio
- GCxN
- Wells Fargo IN2
- West Gate
- NREL Energy I-corps alumni
- NREL technology licensee
- Other, please specify

**Does your organization identify as any of the following? (optional)**

We use this information to strategize our outreach efforts, and the response will not affect your selection.

- ☐ HUBZone
- ☐ Service-Disabled Veteran-owned business
- ☐ Veteran-owned business
- ☐ Small Disadvantaged business
- ☐ Woman-owned business
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please clarify)

**Who will be presenting on behalf of your company?**

**Upload a headshot of your proposed presenter. (PNG or JPG format)**

**How did you hear about the NREL Industry Growth Forum?**

- ☐ Investor Referral (please specify)
- ☐ Incubator/Accelerator Referral (please specify)
- ☐ Networking/Industry Event (please specify)
- ☐ Email from NREL Staff
- ☐ NREL Newsletter
- ☐ IGF Website
- ☐ Social Media (please specify)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**Have you previously participated in an incubator or accelerator? (yes/no)**

**If yes, name of the incubator(s)/accelerator(s)**

**Have you previously presented at the IGF pitch competition? (yes/no)**

**If yes:**

- **What year did you present? In what stage?**
- **What significant milestones have you achieved since then?**

**Please select the most applicable technology category from the drop down below.**

- ☐ Agriculture and Food



- Built Environment
- Electricity
- Enabling Technologies
- Fuels and Chemicals
- Materials and Industrial Manufacturing
- Resource Management and Adaptation
- Transportation and Mobility

**Please select up to three applicable technology types in the Agriculture and Food category:**

- |                                                     |                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Agricultural Practices                            | • Food Distribution            |
| • Agriculture Automation                            | • Food Waste                   |
| • Agriculture Innovation                            | • Indoor agriculture           |
| • Agrivoltaics                                      | • IoT / Sensors / Controls     |
| • Alternative Proteins & Dairy                      | • New Crops                    |
| • Aquaculture                                       | • Packaging                    |
| • Cellular and Cultivated Products (lab grown food) | • Regenerative Agriculture     |
| • Crop Inputs / Nutrition / Fertilizers             | • Synthetic Biology / Genetics |
| • Food & Food Systems                               | • Water Use Management         |

**Please select up to three applicable technology types in the Built Environment category:**

- |                           |                                                 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| • Building Materials      | • Energy Management & Analysis                  |
| • Building Technology     | • Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) |
| • Construction Innovation | • Indoor Air Quality                            |
| • Controls & Automation   | • IoT / Sensors / Controls                      |
| • Data Center Cooling     | • Lighting                                      |
| • Data Centers            | • Permitting and Approvals                      |
| • Demand Response         | • Smart Glass / Coatings                        |
| • Digital Twin Modeling   |                                                 |

**Please select up to three applicable technology types in the Electricity category:**

- |                                                   |                               |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Battery Energy Storage                          | • Grid Technologies           |
| • Concentrated Solar Power                        | • Hydropower                  |
| • Data Center Power                               | • Industrial Power Supply     |
| • Demand Response                                 | • IoT / Sensors / Controls    |
| • Distributed Energy Resources (DER) & Microgrids | • Mechanical Energy Storage   |
| • Energy Management & Analysis                    | • Nuclear Power               |
| • Energy Storage                                  | • Power Electronics           |
| • Floating PV                                     | • Solar Photovoltaics         |
| • Forecasting Technologies                        | • Solar Thermal               |
| • Fuel Cells                                      | • Thermal Energy Storage      |
| • Fuels                                           | • Waste Heat                  |
| • Geothermal Power                                | • Wave / Tidal / Marine Power |
|                                                   | • Wind Power                  |

**Please select up to three applicable technology types in the Enabling Technologies category:**

- AI / Machine Learning
- Blockchain / Tracking & Tracing
- Cybersecurity
- Data Infrastructure
- Financial Tools
- IoT / Sensors / Controls
- Modeling Software
- Permitting and Approvals
- Quantum computing
- Quantum sensing
- Robotics/Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV)

**Please select up to three applicable technology types in the Fuels and Chemicals category:**

- Alternative fuels
- Ammonia
- Biofuels
- Biomaterials
- Captured Carbon Utilization
- Electrolyzers
- Fossil Fuels
- Fuel Storage & Transport
- Hydrogen
- IoT / Sensors / Controls
- Membranes
- Waste & Recycling
- Waste-to-Energy

**Please select up to three applicable technology types in Materials and Industrial Manufacturing category:**

- Additive Manufacturing
- Advanced materials
- Biomaterials
- Captured Carbon Utilization
- Controls & Automation
- Deep sea mining
- High Process Heat
- Manufacturing Innovation
- Metals and Mining
- Mining / Resource Extraction
- Next Generation Aluminum
- Next Generation Concrete and Cement
- Next Generation Plastics
- Next Generation Steel
- Packaging
- Process Electrification
- Textiles
- Waste & Reuse/Repurpose
- Waste Heat

**Please select up to three applicable technology types in Resource Management and Adaptation:**

- Adaptation / Natural Disasters
- Air Quality
- Biodiversity and Habitat Preservation
- Carbon Markets
- CCUS: Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration
- Clean up/Remediation
- Data Management and AI
- Desalination
- Direct Air Capture
- Extreme Weather Adaptation
- Geoengineering
- Industrial Clean Water
- IoT/Sensors/Controls
- Methane Reduction
- Natural Resource Management
- Natural Systems Restoration
- Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement
- Textiles
- Wastewater management
- Water Filtration and Purification
- Water use management

**Please select up to three applicable technology types in the Transportation and Mobility category:**

- Alternative Fuels
- Aviation
- Battery Technology
- Fleet Management
- Fuel Cells
- Fuel Efficiency
- IoT / Sensors / Controls
- Modeling Software Maritime Transportation
- Materials Innovation
- Micromobility
- Rail Transportation
- Road Vehicles
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Vehicle to Grid

**Is your technology software, hardware, or both?**

- ☐ Software
- ☐ Hardware
- ☐ Both
- ☐ Not Applicable

**If software, select which category your technology falls under (select one):**

- ☐ AI or Predictive Analytics
- ☐ AR and VR
- ☐ Cryptocurrency-based (Examples, solutions to minimize environmental impact such as track emissions, sell and track clean energy with efficiency and transparency, reduce pollution, etc.)
- ☐ Cybersecurity applications
- ☐ GIS
- ☐ Environmental Monitoring Software (EMS)
- ☐ Fintech (examples accountability, carbon credits, energy trading, renewable energy financing, etc.)
- ☐ Training tools
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**Does your technology make use of AI? (yes/no)**

**If yes, in what ways do you use AI or predictive analysis, and how do these technologies enhance outcomes or decision-making?**

**What is your development stage?**

We will use this information to validate the stage identified by our rubric. (Refer to point # 7 on page 3 of the application guide to see how we determine your development stage.)

- ☐ Early (Companies with innovative lab-tested technology and working towards a prototype)
- ☐ Pre-Commercialization (Companies with a prototype or minimum viable product seeking pilots or demonstrations)
- ☐ Commercialization (Companies with sound technical validation through at least one pilot or demonstration and ready for commercial-scale production)
- ☐ Growth (Companies with proven technology and significant performance data and ready-to-scale production)

**Is your company planning to be (or is already) deployed in an emerging economy? (yes/no)**

**If yes, describe the ongoing or proposed projects in the emerging economy. (150-word)**

## Section B: Big Picture

### **Brief elevator pitch for your company (100-word limit)**

Provide a clear, succinct, and captivating elevator pitch for your company. Incorporate quantitative data if possible.

### **What is the unique value proposition and impact of your technology? (150 words)**

What unique customer pain does your technology solve, and what is its societal, environmental, or economic impact (e.g., energy/resource savings, quality of life)?

### **Upload your slide deck (PDF format)**

Use the slide template to tell the story of your company in a concise and persuasive manner. Limit the deck to less than 10MB.

### **Elevator Pitch Video (optional but highly encouraged)**

If desired, upload a video of your elevator pitch (no more than 1 minute in length). File size should not exceed 300MB.

#### **Video Rules:**

- 1-minute in length.
- Upload to YouTube: If you don't want others to be able to watch your video, mark it as unlisted. DO NOT mark as private or disallow embedding.
- Include 1 or 2 employees talking to the camera. Please no animation or screenshots.
- No background music.
- Make sure lighting and audio are good. We suggest playing the video yourself to check and make sure you can hear the audio and see the people talking.
- Along with audio quality, please make sure you're speaking clearly. We advise you not to read off a script you wrote beforehand.

## Section C: Product Description and Plan

### **Describe your product or service. (250words)**

What is your product or service, and how does it work? Where are you in technical development, and what milestones/validations demonstrate performance?

### **Which of the following best describes the stage of development of your technology? (select one)**

- Stage 1: Technology is lab-tested. Working towards a prototype.
- Stage 2: System prototype has been proven in an experimental environment.
- Stage 3: Minimum viable product is ready, or technology has been demonstrated through testing in operational environment.
- Stage 4: Technology is being applied in successful operations with at least one paying customer.
- Stage 5: Technology is being applied in successful operations with multiple paying customers.

### **Upload an image or graphic of your technology (optional)**

**What is your estimated time for commercialization?**

- ☐ More than 12 months
- ☐ Between 6 and 12 months
- ☐ Less than six months
- ☐ Product is commercially launched in at least one location
- ☐ Product is already commercially launched and has established sales and manufacturing channels.

**Describe your company's current intellectual property status and plans. (150 words)**

Describe your current IP status (patents, applications, trade secrets, licenses) and future protection plans.

## Section D: Market Opportunity & Strategy

**Describe your target market. (150 words)**

Who is your target market and customer archetype? How big is the opportunity (size, growth, beachhead market), and what sources validate this?

**Describe your competition. (100 words)**

Who are your competitors, and what sets you apart? What is your competitive moat?

## Section E: Market Traction and Awards

**Describe your customers and market traction. (200 words)**

Who are your current or prospective customers? What engagement/feedback have you had so far, and how are you validating market need?

**What is your go-to-market strategy? (150 words)**

How do/will you reach and acquire customers? What partnerships, purchasing pathways, or distribution channels will you leverage?

**List any awards and recognitions you have received (75 words)**

This is your chance to showcase any wins, selections, or honors you've earned through competitions, professional achievements, or other notable accomplishments.

## Section F: Business Model

**Describe your business model. (150 words)**

Indicate your primary revenue streams and describe your distribution channels. What is your expected profit margin? What is your anticipated deployment and scaling strategy?

**Which of the following best describes your current revenue status?**

- ☐ Pre-revenue
- ☐ Some revenue from sales or pre-sales received from early customers
- ☐ Established revenue streams with plans to expand customer base
- ☐ Over \$500k revenue

**If earning revenue, how much sales revenue have you achieved in the past 12 months?**

Please indicate US dollar amount in the format x,xxx,xxx.

## Section G: Financials

### How much capital have you raised to date (dilutive and non-dilutive)?

Please indicate US dollar amount in the format x,xxx,xxx.

### How were the funds used? What milestones did you achieve?

### What financing instruments did you raise this through?

Select all that apply. If desired, text boxes can be used to specify sources of funding.

- ☐ Crowd Funding
- ☐ Debt
- ☐ Equity
- ☐ Family & Friends
- ☐ Grant
- ☐ Other Award (please specify)

### Which stage of financing are you currently seeking?

- ☐ Pre-seed
- ☐ Seed
- ☐ Series A
- ☐ Series B
- ☐ Series C
- ☐ Series C+

Please fill out the Financial Summary and Projections to the best of your ability. The Selection Committee needs to see the information to gauge your plans to scale.

If you are pre-revenue, you can mark values in the current year (2025) as "N/A" if you don't have them but make sure to enter your projections for 2026 - 2029.

|                                               | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |
|-----------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Employee Headcount                            |      |      |      |      |      |
| OPEX (Operating Expense)                      |      |      |      |      |      |
| CAPEX (Capital Expense)                       |      |      |      |      |      |
| COGS (Cost of Goods Sold)                     |      |      |      |      |      |
| Margin (%)                                    |      |      |      |      |      |
| Revenue from sales                            |      |      |      |      |      |
| EBITDA (Operating Income Before Depreciation) |      |      |      |      |      |
| Funding Required                              |      |      |      |      |      |

## Section H: Team

**Which statement best describes the composition of your team?**

- ☐ For now, the team is comprised of only founders.
- ☐ The team is comprised of founders and a few additional staff.
- ☐ The team is comprised of founders and a few additional staff. Core operations are being built.
- ☐ Essential roles are filled by full-time staff; team headcount is rapidly growing. Operations team in place. Sales strategy can be executed by the team.

**Do you have a Board of Directors in place? (yes/no)**

**How many employees are currently employed by the company?**

Please indicate full-time and part-time employees.

**List and describe your key team members. (150 words)**

What is your team's history of success, experience with the identified market and industry, and in your startup's current stage of venture and growth? What risks has your team mitigated so far? What gaps exist in your team?

**List and describe your key advisors and their contributions. (100 words)**

## Section I: Future Plans

**Describe your technical development plans for the next year and beyond. (100 words)**

What are your next steps for technical development? How do you plan to mitigate future technical risks and barriers?

**Will you be conducting a pilot or demonstration in the next 12 months? (yes/no)**

**If yes, describe your plan for the pilot or demonstration. (150 words)**

What do you plan to achieve? Who are your partners?

**How much capital are you planning to raise in the next round (dilutive and non-dilutive)?**

Please indicate US dollar amount in the format x,xxx,xxx.

**What key activities will your next round of funding enable and support? (100 words)**

How far will this round take you? Will you need another round? How much and when?

**What is your exit strategy? (75 words)**

**Please remember to download a copy of your application. Click the three dots next to your application in the portal and click Download.**

# NREL Industry Growth Forum Scoring Rubric

| Application Section                                                           | Weight                                                         | Early                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Pre-Commercialization                                                                                  | Commercialization                                                                                                                           | Growth                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section B & C: Big Picture and Product Description and Plan                   | 15%                                                            | Innovative technology with great commercial promise.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Innovative technology with valid preliminary performance results.                                      | Sound technical validation.                                                                                                                 | Proven technology with significant performance data available.                                                                           |
|                                                                               |                                                                | Company has a clear plan for developing the technology into a minimum viable product that can be experimented with in the market.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Minimum viable product is ready and working toward a commercial product.                               | Clear path to get to commercial-scale production/adoption.                                                                                  | Commercial-scale traction has been proven.                                                                                               |
|                                                                               |                                                                | Initial IP position developed; downstream IP development strategy defined.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                        | IP is holding up against any competitive pressure with plans to develop further as necessary.                                               | Strong IP position established.                                                                                                          |
| Section D & E: Market Opportunity and Strategy and Market Traction and Awards | 20%                                                            | Applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of market dynamics and trends.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                               |                                                                | The target market segment is large enough and/or growing rapidly enough to create an investable opportunity.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                               |                                                                | Value proposition to customers and partners is clearly articulated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                               | Partner and customer acquisition strategy has been identified. | Partners have been approached and feedback has been sought.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Partners have been approached and feedback has been sought. Customers have been engaged.               | Market credibility derived from realized sales to key customers                                                                             |                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                               | 5%                                                             | Initial target market identified and market penetration feasible. Clear competitive advantage.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                        | High potential for market penetration. Competitive advantage remains strong.                                                                | High potential to achieve a significant market share. Considerable competitive advantage.                                                |
| Section F & G: Business Model and Financials                                  | 10%                                                            | Business model is supported by market practice and/or clear customer needs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                             | The business model is proven and innovative.                                                                                             |
|                                                                               | 10%                                                            | Clear representation of target customers and model for doing business. Model demonstrates careful customer discovery and allows for profitability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                        | Realistic and scalable deployment strategy with strong financial margins is in place. Compelling ROI for end-users and partners identified. |                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                               |                                                                | The company has demonstrated the ability to attract investment/grant capital, in-kind technical or commercial support, or awards (IP strategy, marketing, additional technical capacity, etc.).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                        | The company has attracted investment capital.                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                          |
| Section H: Team                                                               | 15%                                                            | Outstanding founder team.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Outstanding management team in place with strong technical support                                     | Outstanding management team is aligned with technical staff.                                                                                | Outstanding management team in place and operational.                                                                                    |
|                                                                               |                                                                | A solid plan is in place for next key hires.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Core Operations team is being built.                                                                   |                                                                                                                                             | Operations team in place. Sales strategy can be executed by the team in place.                                                           |
| Section I: Future Plans                                                       | 10%                                                            | Amount of funding sought and its uses are clearly defined. De-risking plan for technical milestones is clear.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Amount of funding sought and its uses are clearly defined. Commercial launch planned within 12 months. | Amount of funding sought and its uses are clearly defined. Commercial launch expected within 6 months.                                      | Amount of funding sought and its uses are clearly defined. Near-term growth plan will establish pattern for continued successful growth. |
| Overall: Investment Potential                                                 | 15%                                                            | Acquisition plan for physical and HR assets shows intelligent use of capital.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                               |                                                                | The business represents a real investment opportunity with a sizable return.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                        | The business represents a real investment opportunity with a sizable return. Early revenues indicate promising ROI.                         | The business represents a real investment opportunity with a sizable return. Revenues demonstrate good traction in market.               |
| Total (100%)                                                                  |                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                          |
| Bonus: Overall Impression "IGF Factor"                                        | up to +3 points                                                | The "IGF-Factor" is your opportunity to provide a subjective perspective, allowing you to give additional points to companies you find particularly compelling for reasons such as quality of application, diversity of founders, uniqueness of technology, impact to underserved markets, etc. Start from a standard assignment of zero points and award extra only for those companies you particularly want to see onstage at the IGF. Please elaborate on your evaluation. |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                          |