Guidelines for Rocket Fund Applications – 2020

Awards: $25,000 - $75,000, with the opportunity to apply again

Eligibility: Incorporated or in process; validated lab technology; raised no more than $3 million equity investment; students & new graduates as well as garage entrepreneurs welcomed; fits technology scope of the Fund; national and international companies qualify as long as entity has interest in establishing California presence; customer site for prototype demonstration either arranged or under discussion that will open up an initial market, leading eventually to customer orders or new investment; estimated timeframe for building the first commercial prototype and begin testing with customer: 9 – 12 months.

We look for:
- Strong, third-party validated technologies (e.g. patents, university research, DOE national lab e.g. NREL, ARPA-E or Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) data, utility field testing or UL certification) or innovative software
- Clear idea of the value proposition of the product, market segments and target customers
- Clear use of Rocket Funds with potential customer providing a test site for your technology demonstration

Scope: The Rocket Fund provides competitive grants for funding early commercial prototype development (TRL 5 – 7, DOE*) in cleantech startups. Rocket Fund covers: Initial product design; commercial engineering; prototype build out; field testing; equipment purchase; select consulting support for specialized tasks such as programming user interfaces and manufacturing process development and scale up; product certification; lab testing for technology/product validation and manufacturing.

Intellectual Property: Please sign and submit IP Declaration and IP Disclosure forms at the time of entry, and e-mail them to the FLOW/Rocket Fund Office, C/O Stephanie C. Yanchinski, stephanie.yanchinski@caltech.edu. If you have applied for patents it is vitally important that the origin, ownership and status of IP be clarified at the time of application.

* From the Electric Power Research Institute, based on Department of Energy Information

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<th>TRL (Technology Readiness Levels)</th>
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New:
- Robotics – e.g. in agriculture for water savings; industrial manufacturing energy efficiencies
- AI and cleantech
- Blockchain
- Industrial heat processes and thermal storage
- Alternative materials and additive manufacture
- Food Processing industry

Specific member requests:
- Small, cheap control systems for residential “nanogrid” homes with solar, battery and fuel cells
- Catalytic oxidation of fuels for zero NOx thermal applications
- Spark and other ignition systems for Natural Gas Vehicle (NGV) running on H2 blends
- Home and commercial biogas digesters
- Modular prefab retrofit/structural materials
- Systems integration for buildings – from a functional point standpoint e.g. chip—level OEM systems communications standards for energy, automation and other security and environmental controls.
- Efficient water production (e.g. membranes, desalination)
- Efficient water transport (e.g. pumps, Demand Response in water treatment/water conveyance plants
- Efficient water use in Residential, Commercial and Industrial applications
- Agriculture water use
- Water and wastewater treatment
- Hot water and energy efficiencies

Application Deadline: Rocket Fund applications will be open November 1 – March 1, 2020. Note: we welcome Rocket Fund applications throughout the year; those arriving after the deadline will be considered in the following Rocket Fund intake. The review process and awarding of grants follow closure of the application process. Register with FLOW for announcements: FLOWinfo@caltech.edu.

The FLOW/Rocket Fund Office, November 2020