

Industrial Technology Capital Connector
DE-FOA-0003573

DATE: May 14, 2026
SUBJECT: Request for Information (RFI)

Description

The United States (U.S.) Department of Energy (DOE)'s Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI) is issuing this RFI to notify parties of its potential interest in initiating the Industrial Technology Capital Connector (ITCC), a partnering program to connect private sector capital interested in early-stage industrial technologies with CMEI-supported technology developers. DOE seeks input from all stakeholders through this RFI to gauge the interest in and to inform the overall design of the ITCC.

Background

The U.S. industrial sector contributes \$4.8 trillion to the economy and employs more than 21 million Americans, building the materials and goods we depend on every day. CMEI works to strengthen America's industrial sector and advance global competitiveness of U.S. industry by funding research, development, and early-stage demonstration (RD&D) of efficient, secure, and cost-effective industrial technologies.

CMEI's programs in industrial technologies fund both sector-specific technology solutions—with a focus on helping the most energy-intensive industries overcome barriers and benefit from the latest in technology innovation and strategic analysis—and cross-cutting technologies that can be applied across the industrial sector. CMEI also provides tailored technical assistance programs to leverage energy efficiency measures and help manufacturers save money and streamline operations.

Examples of CMEI's industrial technology focus areas include multi-sector solutions for data center efficiency, industrial artificial intelligence, industrial load flexibility, fuel combustion systems, fuel-flexible process heating, membrane separations, and water supply and treatment, stewarded by the Cross-sector Technologies (CST) team¹ and sector-specific solutions for iron and steel, cement, concrete, and other building materials, chemicals and refining, forest products, and food and beverage industries, stewarded by the Energy-Intensive Industries (EII) team.²

¹ *Cross-Sector Technologies*, U.S. DOE, <https://www.energy.gov/eere/ito/cross-sector-technologies>

² *Energy Intensive Industries*, U.S. DOE, <https://www.energy.gov/eere/ito/energy-intensive-industries>

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CMEI’s support for these industrial technologies is across a broad range of Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) or Adoption Readiness Levels (ARL)³ from concept to adoption and predominately focuses on early-stage technology developers, including pre-entrepreneurs, pre-Seed to Series B startups, small businesses, and industry. Through a competitive application and due diligence process, CMEI provides these organizations with non-dilutive funding for applied RD&D, in the form of financial or technical assistance, to advance TRL/ARL and de-risk feasibility of new technology prior to commercialization.

Commercialization is capital intensive with multiyear time frames, requiring private sector support. Hence, CMEI is considering launching the ITCC. The ITCC would connect private sector capital with CMEI-supported technology developers to catalyze commercialization of early-stage industrial technologies. Figure 1 describes the contemplated key components and stages of the ITCC.

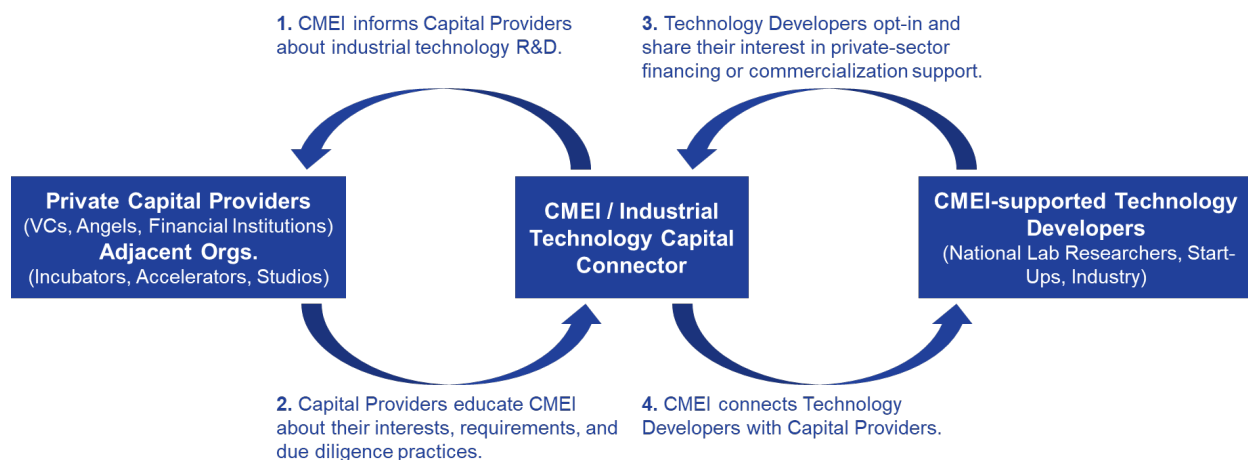


Figure 1: High-level schematic capturing key elements of the ITCC.

Purpose

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit feedback from capital providers (Venture Capital, Angel Investors, Financial Institutions, etc.) and adjacent organizations (Incubators, Accelerators, Venture Studios, etc.) as well as industry, academia, research laboratories, government agencies, and other stakeholders on issues related to the ITCC. CMEI is specifically interested in information connecting CMEI-supported technology developers with capital providers and capital providers’ perspective on CMEI programs, processes, and analyses. This is solely a request for information and not a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). CMEI is not accepting applications.

³ *Adoption Readiness Levels (ARL) Framework*, U.S. DOE, <https://www.energy.gov/technologycommercialization/adoption-readiness-levels-arl-framework>

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Disclaimer and Important Notes

This RFI is not a NOFO; therefore, CMEI is not accepting applications at this time. CMEI may issue a NOFO in the future based on or related to the content and responses to this RFI. However, CMEI may also elect not to issue a NOFO. There is no guarantee that a NOFO will be issued as a result of this RFI. Responding to this RFI does not provide any advantage or disadvantage to potential applicants if CMEI chooses to issue a NOFO regarding the subject matter. Final details, including the anticipated award size, quantity, and timing of CMEI-funded awards, will be subject to Congressional appropriations and direction.

Any information obtained as a result of this RFI is intended to be used by the Government on a non-attribution basis for planning and strategy development. This RFI does not constitute a formal solicitation for proposals or abstracts. Your response to this notice will be treated as information only. CMEI will review and consider all responses in its formulation of program strategies for the identified materials of interest that are the subject of this request. CMEI will not provide reimbursement for costs incurred in responding to this RFI. Respondents are advised that CMEI is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information received or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted under this RFI. Responses to this RFI do not bind CMEI to any further actions related to this topic.

Confidential Business Information

Pursuant to 10 CFR 1004.11, any person submitting information that he or she believes to be confidential and exempt by law from public disclosure should submit via email, postal mail, or hand deliver two well-marked copies: one copy of the document marked “confidential” including all the information believed to be confidential, and one copy of the document marked “non-confidential” with the information believed to be confidential deleted. Submit these documents via email or on a CD, if possible. DOE will make its own determination about the confidential status of the information and treat it according to its determination.

Evaluation and Administration by Federal and Non-Federal Personnel

Federal employees are subject to the non-disclosure requirements of a criminal statute, the Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1905. The Government may seek the advice of qualified non-federal personnel. The Government may also use non-federal personnel to conduct routine, nondiscretionary administrative activities. The respondents, by submitting their response, consent to CMEI providing their response to non-federal parties. Non-federal parties given access to responses must be subject to an appropriate obligation of confidentiality prior to being given access. Submissions may be reviewed by support contractors and private consultants.

Request for Information Categories and Questions

The following questions focus on the role of Capital Providers (Venture Capital, Angel Investors, Financial Institutions, etc.) and adjacent organizations (Incubators, Accelerators,

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Venture Studios, etc.) and how CMEI's programs in industrial technologies and ITCC can better serve these communities. Responses are not required for all categories or questions; please answer those for which relevant information can be provided.

Category 1: Capital Provider Information

- 1.1 What is your organization's investment strategy (e.g., target industries or sectors, startup development stage, investment round, target check size, and other requirements)?
- 1.2 Have members of your portfolio participated in any past or present CMEI funding opportunities? To what extent do these or similar programs impact investment decisions?
- 1.3 CMEI collaborates with several other offices in DOE focused on other energy technologies. Are certain technologies of greater interest/focus from an investment perspective? What attributes make a technology more or less of interest?

Category 2: ITCC Design

- 2.1 Is there a role for CMEI to facilitate connections between private-sector capital providers and publicly-funded technology developers? If so, what CMEI actions would be helpful?
- 2.2 How could CMEI/ITCC initiatives complement deal origination?
- 2.3 What factors or other criteria should CMEI consider for capital provider participation in the ITCC?
- 2.4 What is the level of interest in participating in the ITCC were CMEI to establish it? For example, would your organization be interested in the following:
 - a. Receiving information from CMEI about industrial technology RD&D, including funding opportunities, technical assistance programs, and strategic analyses.
 - b. Receiving information and connections to CMEI-supported technology developers.
 - c. Proactively presenting to CMEI and CMEI-supported technology developers about your organization, interests, and strategy.
 - d. Mentoring CMEI-supported technology developers.
 - e. Reviewing CMEI's industrial technology programs and strategy.
- 2.5 From an investment perspective, what information would be helpful to receive from CMEI-supported technology developers?
- 2.6 Would your organization be interested in having information about your interest available on a public DOE website?

Category 3: CMEI Programs & Processes

CMEI provides financial assistance for technology developers through different opportunities such as Grant Agreements, Cooperative Agreements, and Fixed Amount Awards⁴.

⁴ *CMEI Funding Opportunities*, U.S. DOE, <https://www.energy.gov/eere/funding/cmei-funding-opportunities>

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and Prizes⁵. CMEI also provides non-financial (technical) assistance for technology developers through programs that provide vouchers for support services or access to third party testing (e.g., Industrial Technology Validation Program⁶), enabling technology developers to use national laboratory facilities and personnel at reduced or no cost.

Technology developer participation in these programs is subject to a rigorous due diligence and oversight process. Applicants are required to provide information addressing multiple criteria, including but not limited to: Technical Narratives, Commercialization Plans, Statements of Project Objectives⁷, Team Qualifications & Resources, Letters of Commitment or Support, and Budget Justifications.⁸ This information is vetted through an external merit review process. After which, CMEI works with successful recipients through the course of their program, including managing quarterly reporting on accomplishments, technical progress, financial solvency and stability, and potential issues of risk.

3.1 What is your familiarity with these programs and processes?

3.2 What deliverables or outputs from these programs and processes would be beneficial in informing investment decisions?

Category 4: CMEI's Programs on Industrial Technology Analysis

DOE produces datasets, tools, and reports to aid public and private-sector researchers, developers, and decision-makers in analysis of industrial energy use. For example, CMEI has performed sector, technology, and system analyses,⁹ the National Laboratory of the Rockies has created a dataset on unit-level industrial energy estimates,¹⁰ and the Energy Information Agency

⁵ *CMEI Prizes and Competitions*, U.S. DOE, <https://www.energy.gov/eere/funding/cmei-prizes-and-competitions>

⁶ *Industrial Technology Validation Program*, Better Buildings Solution Center, <https://betterbuildingssolutioncenter.energy.gov/industrial-technology-validation-program>

⁷ Statement of Project Objectives (SOPO) – Description and timeline of work to be completed in an CMEI project, key including key tasks, milestones, go/no-go decision points, and deliverables.

⁸ Budget Justifications—Breakdown of expenses incurred during an CMEI project, including personnel, supplies, equipment, and subcontractor costs.

⁹ *Energy Analysis Data and Reports*, U.S. DOE, <https://www.energy.gov/eere/ito/energy-analysis-data-and-reports>

¹⁰ *Foundational Industry Energy Data*, NLR, <https://github.com/NatLabRockies/foundational-industry-energy-data>

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has surveyed the manufacturing sector on energy use¹¹ and forecasted energy trends.¹²

- 4.1 What is your familiarity with these types of datasets, tools, or reports?
Describe the resources that have been beneficial to influencing your investment strategy.
- 4.2 Given private-sector industrial energy analysis performed by large research and management consulting firms, what complementary information or analysis could CMEI provide that would be beneficial to informing your investment strategy?

Category 5: Other

- 4.1 CMEI invites other feedback not captured in the questions above, related to the ITCC, investment decisions, and connecting CMEI-supported technology developers with capital providers.

Request for Information Response Guidelines

Responses to this RFI must be submitted electronically to ITCC@ee.doe.gov no later than 5:00 PM (ET) on July 10, 2026. Responses must be provided as attachments to an email. It is recommended that attachments with file sizes exceeding 25MB be compressed (i.e., zipped) to ensure message delivery. Responses must be provided as a Microsoft Word (docx) attachment to the email, and no more than 10 pages in length, 12-point font, one-inch margins. Only electronic responses will be accepted.

Please identify your answers by responding to a specific question or topic, if applicable. Respondents may answer as many or as few questions as they wish.

CMEI will not respond to individual submissions or publicly publish a compendium of responses. A response to this RFI will not be viewed as a binding commitment to develop or pursue the project or ideas discussed.

Respondents are requested to provide the following information at the start of their response to this RFI:

- Company/institution name.
- Company/institution contact.
- Contact's address, phone number, and e-mail address.

¹¹ *Manufacturing Energy Consumption Survey*, U.S. EIA, <https://www.eia.gov/consumption/manufacturing/>

¹² *Annual Energy Outlook 2025*, U.S. EIA (April 15, 2025), <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/aeo/>

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