Test Site and Real World Deployment Grant Information Session Questions & Answers

Applicant Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply?

We require a mobility company submit the application. Michigan based non-profits and universities can serve as local partners.

Can a foreign company apply if they have Michigan partners?

Yes, we welcome foreign companies to apply with at least one local partner.

For foreign companies that want to establish a presence in Michigan, can the W9 be pending at time of application but completed by award?

Yes, evidence of a W9 will is not required until prior to executing an award contract.

For foreign companies can a W-8 be used instead of a W-9 if they have partnered with a test site?

A W-8 can be used in lieu of a W-9 in cases where the applicant is a foreign company.

If we previously received a Real World Deployment and/or Test-site Grant, are we eligible to apply again?

Yes, as long as it's for a new project (new SOW) and doesn't overlap with the previous project.

Grant Application and Process

How many grants does MEDC anticipate funding per round?

This largely depends on the grant applications we receive and proposed budgets by selected applicants. On estimate this would be a minimum of 4-5 grants, with a likely number of grants around 10.

Is there a standard application format or template that applicants are expected to follow?

Please apply via this link: https://www.michiganbusiness.org/ofme/projects-and-programs/funding-and-testing/technology-deployments/real-world-deployments/

After creating a profile you'll be able to view the full application.

Is there any feedback provided following application submission (especially if not chosen)?

No, applicant scores will not be shared following the application.

We have built a prototype of autonomous robots to charge EV fleets. However, we are in Philly and Chattanooga area and will be looking out for partners. How can you assist?

Companies outside of Michigan are welcome to apply for this grant opportunity, as long as they are engaged with at least one local partner. If applying for a test site grant, please reach out to test sites directly. If you're looking to be connected to potential partners for real world deployment opportunities, please feel free to reach out with us to provide further details and OFME can assist with connecting you with potential local partners. Feel free to email Erika Linenfelser at erikal@nextenergy.org.

Can you define Michigan-based? Does that only refer to companies with HQ in Michigan, or would companies with regional offices in Michigan also count?

You do not need to be Michigan-based to qualify but you do need a Michigan-based project/pilot partner. If you choose to apply for a test site opportunity the test site would be your Michigan-based partner. If a company or organization has a physical location in Michigan it counts as MI-based.

If we are developing multiple products, will we have one application for all of them?

While this depends on the specifics of your individual project, we suggest submitting separate applications for different technologies. Projects with a phased approach of one technology could be included in one application.

Can the real world deployment grant be for multi-year operations? So deploying this year for a 2-3 contract? Or is it for 1-year deployments only?

Timelines will be created in consideration for scope of work and budget. Please note that scope of work and timeline are considerations in overall project proposal scoring.

Can one project consist of two different but nearby locations?

Yes. Please ensure that you provide letters of commitment or support from relevant partners at each location.

Are real world deployment locations limited to a fixed list of pre-approved sites (as with the testing grant), or can deployments occur at other public locations (e.g., schools, public facilities, etc.)?

Real world deployment projects can take place anywhere within the state of Michigan. Please ensure that you provide letters of commitment or support from relevant local partners.

For Minority owned businesses, some certifications have been paused due to federal changes. (e.g. you can see the wording for LA Metro as an example) Small Business

Programs Compliance Reporting System | LA Metro) Do the Minority Owned business have to have a certain certification? Are you ok with a certification prior to the federal changes being paused?

There are no certifications for small business or minority-owned business reporting requirements in the application for this grant.

When should the grant be submitted — before the deployment starts, or can it be submitted during an active deployment?

A proposal should be submitted for a new scope of work not in active deployment. This can include a next phase of a currently active project.

Matching funds

Could you elaborate on what is considered as matching funds?

We consider two types of contributions as matching funds. This includes financial contributions and in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions would be an estimate of provided services or equipment by your team and/or partners during the life of the proposed project. Matching funds are only considered those which are specific to your application project, not general funds to the company. In-kind contributions cannot include any efforts spent on developing a project prior to the start of the grant period.

Can the time that founders contribute be used as an in-kind contribution?

Any of your time as a founder toward the specific project during the period of performance can count as in-kind contributions and can be provided as an estimate in your application.

Is there a required matching fund amount (e.g., a 1:1 match)?

There is no minimum required matching fund amount, but this is a factor in the scoring criteria.

Expenses and Reimbursements

Is there a list of allowed expenses (eg. test site fees) vs non-allowed expenses (eg. prototyping, capital expenditures)?

Qualified expenses include project operating costs, such as staff time, rent, utility bills, and office supplies.

Capital expenditures are not allowed under this grant. Capital expenditures differ from operating expenses because capital expenditure assets are expected to generate long-term benefits.

Operating expenditures are costs that have a shorter-term benefit, such as rent, utility bills, and office supplies.

An example would be that we could cover the cost to lease a vehicle for you to use for testing for the duration of your project (short-term benefit) but not the cost to purchase one (long-term benefit). These funds are also able to offset the costs of operating including human capital meaning you could invoice for hours dedicated to a project based on an agreed upon hourly rate for specific employees working on the project.

Other specific items:

- No more than 7% for qualified travel expenses
- No construction (construction is defined as anything over $2000)

Can the reimbursement be for my company labor in the testing or the partner fees?

Yes. See response above for more details.

How does the reimbursement work and what is the timing from submission to payment?

This a reimbursement-based grant. If awarded, your project's scope of work will be broken down into milestones and reimbursements will be made upon completion of such milestones. Net pay is 60 days from the time of submission to payment.

Is NextEnergy the only fiduciary partner for this grant? Do we have to factor in a fiduciary / management fee into our grant application?

The Michigan Office of Future Mobility & Electrification (OFME) deploys this particular grant with support from a third-party administrator, NextEnergy. NextEnergy's management fees are factored outside of grant awards and do not need to be considered in grant application budgets. However, for test-site awardees, you will work directly with the Test Site for reimbursements and project management.

Are there guidelines on what a budget should or shouldn't have?

Within the application there is a link to a budget template that can be used for your proposed project.

Terms and Conditions

Do you have to have evidence of the $5 million liability insurance at the time of submission?

No, evidence of insurance is not required at the time of submission. Proof of insurance is required for contract execution.

Does OFME provide any guidance on insurance agencies?

OFME does not typically provide this.

Regarding deliverables, data, and IP: will MEDC / OFME have any usage rights or public disclosure obligations (e.g. publication/reporting requirements)?

Yes, there are monthly reporting requirements. Any documentation provided by grantees to OFME is subject to FOIA regulations and is considered public information.

Are products required to be Build America, Buy America (BABA) compliant for the pilot?

There is no formal requirement for BABA-compliance. However, the application review does include considerations for sustainability and alignment with state of Michigan priorities, which include strengthening Michigan's mobility ecosystem.

Technology Eligibility and Readiness

Would development of an AMR (autonomous mobile robot) application to be used within manufacturing facilities be eligible?

Projects that include technologies under development in the 'prototyping' phase are not eligible for these grant opportunities. Technology should be ready to be tested in a closed environment (for test site grants) or ready for piloting via deployment in a real world setting (real world deployment grants). In the past, specific grant opportunities have included support for prototyping mobility solutions. Feel free to check out previous prototype grant funds and look out for future prototype grant opportunities at this website: https://www.michiganbusiness.org/ofme/projects-and-programs/funding-and-testing/technology-deployments/mobility-prototype-grant/

You mentioned prototyping. Do you already need to have prototype complete and ready?

Yes. Prototypes need to be complete and ready for testing or deployment to receive a grant. Please see above question and response for further details.

The technology section of the scoring matrix says a high score is received if the "technology is fully mature, deployed successfully in multiple real-world environments". However, the examples you gave for real-world deployments seemed like pilot projects. Can you please clarify what OFME is looking for here?

This grant is not intended to support applicants getting to prototype phasing. This is intended for projects ready for testing.

Do clean fuel technologies (e.g., fuel efficiency and emissions-reduction technologies) qualify under this program?

Absolutely yes! Qualified technologies are not only vehicles across land, air and water but also the supporting technologies and infrastructure.

Test Sites

Is FLITE a test site?

FLITE is included as a test site. More information can be found here: https://www.grr.org/flite

Should I talk to a test site before submitting my application? How can I get in touch with a test site?

Yes, we ask that you reach out to the test site ahead of time in order to discuss your technology needs. OFME is happy to facilitate introductions if needed. The application does require a letter of support from the test site as well as information about your budget which will likely include fees from specific test sites to use their facilities. Please use the links provided in the slide deck or on this web page to learn more about specific test sites and connect with them.

Are the test sites free to use or do we have work with them to get their cost in the proposal?

Each test site works on a different model. Many of them have a membership or payment model, with most having a fee attached. We ask that you connect with the test site that works for your needs to talk through technology needs, budget, and fees.

Does MSU have a UAS Flight Test Area, like M City Air, MI Centrepolis, and MTU or do they depend on other test areas?

Michigan State University does have a UAS flight test area for use. We recommend reaching out to test sites for further information. Find out more information about test sites on this webpage.

Does TIZ fast tracking include FAA approvals?

Michigan Central's Advanced Aerial Innovation Region is located within the TIZ (Transportation Innovation Zone) in Detroit and has experience supporting companies with FAA approvals and regulations. We recommend reaching out directly to the TIZ for further details.