

Volt-Age *IGNITE* Grant Application: Instructions

1. PURPOSE

Volt-Age's mission is to accelerate the equitable energy transition in Canada and around the world towards decarbonized and energy-resilient communities. We aim to do this by supporting the development of new innovations and technologies, facilitating the implementation of a series of Living Labs, realizing lasting socio-economic impacts through inclusive partnership-driven projects, and modelling strong governance for major research initiatives.

This mission necessitates profound interdisciplinary research collaborations. Volt-Age research incorporates design, innovation and production, optimization, automation, and security of clean energy solutions with the exploration of equity and accessibility, public policy and governance, and knowledge mobilization around new technologies and clean energy solutions.

This call for proposals is specifically intended to support early career researchers (ECR), in recognition of their vital importance to the future of energy innovation. Investing in ECRs is essential to building the next generation of leadership and to ensure a strong pipeline of talent, ideas and discovery in this field. Through this support, Volt-Age seeks to enable emerging scholars to bring fresh perspectives, novel approaches, and interdisciplinary thinking to the complex challenges of energy transition.

2. GRANT TERMS

Each selected project will be awarded *up to* \$200,000 in research funds, including HQP and research trainee costs. Projects are expected to be 2 years in length, with a grant start date of November 1, 2026.

3. EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

When designing and conducting research, it is critical to prioritize Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) to ensure that research actively addresses systemic barriers and promotes fair treatment. You can learn more about systemic barriers [here](#). Researchers should strive to design processes that consider unequal starting points (equity), encourage participation from underrepresented voices (diversity), and create an environment where everyone feels valued and can contribute meaningfully (inclusion). This includes investing time into building meaningful partnerships, providing access to a variety of training and learning opportunities, and fostering inclusive research environments. By integrating EDI principles into every stage of the research process—design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination—researchers can ensure that their work is relevant, impactful, and reflective of diverse perspectives. Applicants should reflect on specific EDI strategies to promote a fair, inclusive, and supportive research process. For EDI references and further information, please see the Volt-Age [EDI Resources page](#).

4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Volt-Age research projects are meant to contribute to a just transition and have a real impact by:

- Contributing out-of-the-box ideas and unconventional approaches that challenge existing norms and open new possibilities for equitable energy solutions;
- contributing to policies, guidelines, regulations, laws, standards and/or practice;
- developing tools, including software, for use by researchers or others;
- translating research to commercialization through creation of intellectual property, including patents, copyrights, trademarks or trade secrets and nurturing entrepreneurial ventures;
- building research capacity by providing enriched training opportunities for trainees and HQP;
- defining goals and outcomes based on societal needs and community values ;
- incorporating diverse perspectives, experiences, and knowledge systems;
- supporting societal acceptability and social integration of new technology throughout the research process;
- seeking to make lasting change beyond the scope of the project.

Proposals must exhibit the potential for significant, sustained, scalable, and replicable impacts, aligning with Volt-Age's themes and platforms, Canada's decarbonization goals and setting a benchmark for future sustainability initiatives. A broad range of academic, public, community and private partners must be involved in the project to demonstrate real and significant impacts focusing on innovation, economic viability, equity, and the well-being of society.

Projects are expected to:

- Engage in active collaboration and/or co-creation with partners;
- Produce new knowledge, techniques or strategies, and/or technology;
- Contribute to the broader Canadian clean energy initiatives;
- Support and uphold Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion principles and values in all aspects of the research, including team makeup, research design, solution/technology access and accessibility, and knowledge mobilization;
- Respect Indigenous rights and traditional knowledge throughout the research process;
- Participate in sharing knowledge of data and outcomes to a wide variety of audiences;
- Support the next generation of clean energy researchers through research opportunities and mentorship.

5. ELIGIBILITY

Volt-Age is committed to creating a large network of researchers with diverse voices and fostering opportunities for new and emerging scholars. Each research team should include Co-Applicants from diverse fields of study, career stages, backgrounds, and experiences. Including a minimum of one social sciences and/or humanities Principal Applicant or Co-Applicants is highly recommended.

- The Principal Applicant must be from Concordia University. All PI funds must remain at Concordia University.
- The Principal Applicant must be an Early Career Researcher ([ECR](#)) as of the application deadline June 1, 2026. Early career researchers (ECR), as defined by the Tri-Agency are applicants who

have held their first independent academic position within the last five years. All eligible leaves (for example, maternity and parental leave, personal illness, chronic illness, or disability associated with reduced research activity, leave taken by applicants for family-related illness, bereavement), as well as delays related to COVID-19, are credited as twice the amount of time taken. Professional leaves (for example, training, sabbatical, administrative) are not credited. In case of discrepancy, Volt-Age will follow the Tri-Agency definition of ECR.

- Researchers that are principal investigators on previous Volt-Age funded programs cannot be a PI on this call.
- The co-investigators from previous Volt-Age funded programs can apply to this grant, however there should not be conceptual overlap with their existing projects.
- Academic Collaborators may be included from other universities, including one of the institutional partners from the Volt-Age CFREF grant (University of Calgary, Toronto Metropolitan University, Dalhousie University). Academic Collaborators cannot receive funds.

6. MUTUAL COLLABORATION

Types of Partners

Projects are encouraged to have a wide variety of partners included in their projects. Partnerships must reflect Volt-Age's emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion both in research design and outcomes.

Partners can be:

1. Private Sector:
 - Canadian companies must be registered/incorporated and employ at least two full-time staff.
 - Multinational corporations with operations in Canada are eligible.
 - Foreign companies may participate if partnered with a recognized Canadian entity.
2. Public Sector:
 - Eligible organizations include municipalities, government departments, public utilities, and Crown corporations.
3. Not-for-Profit Sector:
 - Organizations such as industrial associations, producer groups, and community organizations are eligible if they contribute resources (cash or in-kind).
4. Indigenous organizations and Communities:
 - Indigenous governments or nations, and/or entities owned and led by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples that support governance, rights and sovereignty, cultural preservation, social services, education and economic development, as well as Indigenous groups connected through shared culture, language, regional affiliation, geography, or collective interests.
5. Academic Collaborators:
 - Collaborations with researchers based at existing institutional partners (University of Calgary, Toronto Metropolitan University, Dalhousie University), institutional collaborators (Carleton University, University of Windsor, ÉTS, Polytechnique Montréal, and Université de Montréal) or other academic institutions.

Contribution Types

There are two types of contributions partners can make to the project:

- Cash Contributions: Financial support to cover eligible project costs. Only money transferred to the project's account at Concordia University will be considered as cash contributions. All other forms of support for the project are considered in-kind.
- In-Kind Contributions: In-kind contributions refer to non-monetary support provided to a project, such as goods, services, or resources, that would normally incur a cost but are offered free of charge. Examples include access to facilities, data, equipment, and technical expertise relevant to the project's goals. In-kind contributions also include cash contributions that partners make directly to project expenses.

All external partners must submit a Letter of Support, signed by an authorized institutional representative, that outlines their commitments to the project.

Governance and Project Management

In addition to contributions, each partner must play an active role in the research project. Partners will be integrated and highly involved in the management of the project to ensure transparency and effective oversight. With the academic team, partners are expected to contribute meaningfully to strategic decision-making and the practical application of the research outcomes. Partners will also participate in developing a plan to integrate project results into their operations, whether through commercialization, operational changes, or societal impacts, translating research results into practical technologies, tools, policies, and/or solutions. Governance participation by partners does not override Concordia University's institutional authority regarding contractual arrangements, intellectual property management, and compliance requirements.

Intellectual Property (IP) and Commercialization

Intellectual property arising from Volt-Age funded projects will be determined based on inventorship in accordance with applicable laws and Concordia University policies. Industry partners will not automatically own project results. The protection, management, and commercialization of intellectual property will be governed by Volt-Age's standard terms and conditions and associated research agreements administered through Concordia University.

Research Security and Due Diligence

Private sector partnerships may require research security risk assessments in accordance with the National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships. Additional due diligence may be conducted by Concordia University prior to project approval.

Indigenous Engagement

While it is by no means a requirement to engage Indigenous communities, projects that choose to involve Indigenous partners must submit a reciprocity agreement and a description of how Indigenous knowledge will be integrated into the project. Research with Indigenous communities should be co-created to support their goals, ideally involving a Principal Applicant or Co-Applicant with an established relationship with the community/ies. For guidance, please refer to the [NSERC Guide for Research with Indigenous peoples and communities](#).

6. RESEARCH TRAINEES AND HQP

A key component of all Volt-Age funded projects is the recruitment and training of research trainees and HQP. Providing opportunities for the next generation of researchers to build their skills and receive valuable training and mentorship must be a key component of all projects.

All Volt-Age funded research trainees must be budgeted with the following *minimums*: Masters: \$22,000/yr; PhD: \$35,000/yr; Post-Doctoral Fellow: \$50,000/yr. Additional funds that can be used for topping up Research Trainee amounts can be found [here](#). HQP (including Research Assistants or Associates, staff scientists, technicians, professional and technical services, and consultants) should be paid according to relevant Concordia University [union regulations](#) commensurate with level of education and experience, and salary estimates should include benefits and expected salary increases over time.

7. IMPACTS ON SOCIETY

Volt-Age projects contribute not only to electrification and decarbonization initiatives in Canada, but also to the advancement of sustainability and resilience goals to enhance the lives of Canadian citizens and create a more equitable society. Volt-Age projects should address or impact some or all of the sustainability and resilience criteria described below.

Sustainability

Criteria	Volt-Age Definition (based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Dimensions and Pillars Definitions)
People	To end the sociopolitical and financial inequity of access to clean energy technologies to allow people to live with dignity in a healthy environment
Planet	To protect the planet through renewable energy research and solutions that have the potential to reduce greenhouse gases and create a better world for tomorrow
Prosperity	To ensure that all outcomes and partnerships are mutually beneficial and promote economic and social well-being for all stakeholders without compromising the natural environment
Peace	To foster communities and environments with clean energy solutions that advance safety and security of all people
Partnership	To mobilize the development and implementation of new green technologies and solutions in communities across Canada

Resilience

Criteria	Volt-Age Definition (based on the UN SDG Dimensions and Pillars Definitions)
Social Inclusion	Supporting or creating opportunities for sustained livelihood and contributing to a high-quality basic standard of living in terms of social and environmental protection
Economic Growth	Developing solutions and opportunities that have a positive impact on communities and the environment, contributing to the advancement of investment policy that focus on sustainability goals, and creating opportunities for long-term economic growth
Environmental Sustainability	Preserving and restoring biodiversity while reducing pollution and the contribution to and effects of climate change, and supporting the protection and management of natural resources

8. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Application Format:

When completing your application, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Use 12-point Arial font with single line spacing;
- Margins of 2cm around each page;
- Figures and tables are welcome, but page limits must be respected and will be strictly enforced;
- Do not submit a cover page or opening letter/statement or the application instructions and preamble.

Submitting your final application

1. Complete the application (proposal and budget) and submit to volt-age@concordia.ca by 13:00 EST **June 1, 2026**. The Principal Applicant (or designated individual submitting the application) will receive an email confirming the receipt of the application.
2. Each core team member (Principal Applicant and Co-Applicants) will receive a link to the self-identification survey. **Each member must complete the survey and submit by June 8, 2026.** Note: Gathering this data is a TIPS requirement (see more information [here](#)). The data collected in the self-identification survey will be used for reporting purposes only. It will not be included in the review and evaluation process of the applications. Participation is mandatory, but individuals will have the option to select "I prefer not to disclose" for each question. The data will be stored securely in accordance with Concordia University's cybersecurity and privacy policies.

Application Checklist

- Single PDF complete with the following components submitted by June 1, 2026.
 - Volt-Age Early Career Researcher Grant Application: Template (instruction section removed).
 - Letters of Support from each partner.
 - CVs for the Principal Applicant and each Co-Applicant; Note: We highly encourage the use of the new [Tri-Agency CV Format](#), however the existing CCV format will also be accepted.
 - FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ONLY: Reciprocity Agreements with each Indigenous community partner (can be submitted within 1 year if the proposal is accepted).
- Completed Volt-Age Early Career Researcher Grant Application Budget Template (in Excel format) submitted by June 1, 2026.
- All core team members have completed the self-identification survey by June 8, 2026.

Following your submission

Once the deadline has closed at 13:00 EST on June 1, 2026, an administrative review will be performed on all applications. This review is to assess technical and eligibility elements, such as team size and makeup, page limits, and budget template formatting. **This review is not evaluative.**

The Administrative Review Reports will be returned to PIs on June 8, 2026, at the latest. Revisions to ensure application eligibility for the evaluation process can be done at this point. The deadline for resubmission is 13:00PM EST June 15, 2026. **Only changes mentioned in the Administrative Review**

Reports can be made. No other additions or changes can be made after the application deadline of June 1, 2026.

All eligible applications will then proceed to a two-step evaluation process involving Master Reviewers and a separate Adjudication Jury.