Volt-Age Grant Application: Instructions

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.

Living Labs are inclusive spaces to tackle collective challenges through collaborations between researchers and different societal stakeholders across the innovation cycle. Living Labs must exhibit three main characteristics: (1) co-creation of research, (2) engagement of diverse stakeholders, and (3) taking place in a real-life context. We aim to identify and support transformative, high-impact living Labs that demonstrate innovative solutions to decarbonization. These Living Labs must have the goal to be sustained beyond the program duration, with Volt-Age funded projects acting as pilots and demonstrating the value of the Living Lab approach.

GRANT TERMS

Each selected project will be awarded *up to* $1.5M for Research Funds, including HQP and Research Trainee costs. Projects are expected to be 3 years in length, ending no later than March 31, 2030. No extensions will be granted.

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, we recommend the SSHRC Guide to Addressing EDI and the SSHRC Best Practices Guide, specifically regarding systemic barriers.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

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

- 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
- translating research to commercialization through creation of intellectual property and nurturing entrepreneurial ventures.

Proposals must exhibit the potential for significant, sustained, scalable, and replicable impacts, aligning with 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

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 PA or Co-Applicants is highly recommended.

- The Principal Applicant and Co-Applicants must be from Concordia University.
- A researcher who is a Principal Investigator on a Volt-Age Impact Project or Living Lab selected during the Impact Round cannot be a Principal Applicant in this call. They *can* be a Co-Applicant on one application in this call.
- We highly encourage that core research teams include at least one Early Career Researcher and a minimum of three fields of study.
- 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), but cannot be from Concordia University. Academic Collaborators cannot receive funds.
- No money will be transferred outside of Canada.

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.
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. **For Living Labs only:** In-kind contributions also include financial contributions that partners make directly to project expenses or Living Lab host community/ies.

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.

Letters of Support

All external partners must submit a Letter of Support, signed by an authorized institutional representative, that outlines their commitments to the project. For each private sector partner, a risk assessment and mitigation plan must be completed in accordance with the National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships and Sensitive Technology Research Affiliations of Concern. For accepted projects, Concordia will share Volt-Age's standard terms and conditions that will include intellectual property and commercialization terms to ensure alignment and efficiency in collaboration. A key non-negotiable term is that all intellectual property (IP) developed during the project will be based strictly on inventorship. To clarify, industry partners will not own the results of the project outright; ownership will be determined according to the contributions of inventors, ensuring fair and equitable management of the IP generated.

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.

RESEARCH TRAINEES AND HQP

A key component of all Volt-Age funded projects is the recruitment 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 will receive *at minimum* the following amounts from Volt-Age: Masters: $22,000/yr up to two years; PhD: $35,000/yr up to 3 years; Post-Doctoral Fellow: $50,000/yr up to two years. Note: Researchers may use research funds from Volt-Age to top up minimum Research Trainee amounts. 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 union regulations commensurate with level of education and experience, and salary estimates should include benefits and expected salary increases over time.

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

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Deadline(s)

Optional Review Deadline: 12:00PM EDT, October 24, 2025

Submission Deadline: 12:00PM EST, December 1, 2025

Completing your application

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

- Use 12-point font with single line spacing
- Margins of 1-inch 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

Optional Review

Volt-Age is here to help you develop the best possible project proposal for a Living Lab. We are offering the opportunity for you to have our team review your proposal to offer feedback and development support. You will then have time to revise your drafts before the submission deadline. **Note: Participating in the optional review process does not guarantee funding.**

Submitting your final application

There are three steps to apply for a Volt-Age grant. Note: All documents are available on the Volt-Age Living Labs call page here.

1. Complete the Volt-Age Grant Application Core Team Contact Information Form.
2. Each core team member (PA and Co-Applicants) will receive a link to the self-identification survey. **Each member must complete the survey. Only once all team members have completed it will the PA receive the link to submit the application.** 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. The data will be stored securely in accordance with Concordia University's cybersecurity and privacy policies.
3. Complete the application (proposal template and budget) and submit through the Volt-Age Application Form link that will be provided to the Principal Applicant once the self-identification surveys have been completed. The PA (or designated individual submitting the application) will receive an email confirming the receipt of the application.

Application Checklist

- ❑ Core Team Contact Information Form complete
- ❑ All core team members have completed the self-identification survey
- ❑ Single PDF complete with the following components:
    - ❑ Volt-Age Grant Application: Template
    - ❑ Letters of Support from each partner
    - ❑ Risk and mitigation plan for each private partner
    - ❑ CVs for the PA 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.
    - ❑ Community needs and Feasibility studies (can be submitted within 1 year if proposal is accepted)
    - ❑ FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ONLY: Reciprocity Agreements with each Indigenous community partner (can be submitted within 1 year if the proposal is accepted)
- ❑ Complete Volt-Age Grant Application Budget Template (in Excel format)

Following your submission

Once the deadline has closed at 12:00PM EST on December 1, 2025, an administrative review will be performed on all of the applications. This review is only to assess technical and eligibility elements, such as team size and makeup, page limits, and budget template formatting. **This review is not evaluative.**

The Technical Review Reports will be returned to PIs on December 2, 2025. Revisions to ensure application eligibility for the evaluation process can be done at this point. The deadline for resubmission is 12:00PM EST December 5, 2025. **Only changes mentioned in the Administrative Review Reports can be made. No other additions or changes can be made after the application deadline of December 1st.**

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