

Maine Technology Institute
Seed Grant
Proposal Preparation Workshop
2008

www.mainetechnology.org

582-4790

Elizabeth Crabtree, Maine Technology Asset Fund
Program Manager

Maine Technology Institute (MTI)

✦ **Statute:** Established 1999

MRSA: 5 c407, sections 15301, etc.

✦ **Purpose:** To encourage, promote, stimulate and support *research and development activity leading to the commercialization* of new products and services in the State's seven targeted technology sectors.

- ✦ Enhance the competitive position of those sectors
- ✦ Increase the likelihood that the sectors will support clusters of industrial activity
- ✦ Create new jobs for Maine people

Translating Knowledge into Competitive Products and Jobs

- ❑ Overseen by a Governor-appointed, private, industry-led board of directors.
- ❑ Works with voluntary boards of experts from each technology sector to evaluate proposals and make recommendations to the MTI Board of Directors for funding.

❑ Technology Sectors:

Advanced Forestry and Agriculture

Aquaculture and Marine

Biotechnology

Composite Materials

Environmental

Information

Precision Manufacturing

Translating Knowledge into Competitive Products and Jobs

MTI offers early-stage, patient capital for the research and development (R&D) of technologies that create new products and services, generating high quality jobs

- ❑ Nonprofit funded annually by the State of Maine

- 93% of funding goes to Maine businesses, research groups and other award recipients.
- MTI Staff: 9. Betsy Biemann, President, an employee of DECD

- ❑ Programs evaluated annually with a report to the Legislature each year

Core Programs

❑ Seed Grants

- Up to \$12,500 each awarded six times per year
- Early-stage R&D projects and activities leading to commercialization
- Activities: market research, patent filing and prototype development

❑ Development Awards

- Up to \$500,000 each awarded three times a year
- Later stage R&D: same as seed grants plus manufacturing on pilot scale
- Repayment triggered by successful commercialization. MTI recycles funds to other Maine companies.

ALL AWARDS REQUIRE MATCHING FUNDS FROM COMPANIES

Core Programs

❑ Accelerated Commercialization Fund

- Follow-on investment for eligible development award recipients to help them bring new products to market

❑ Cluster Enhancement Award

- Up to \$200,000 available on a rolling basis
- Strengthen tech-intensive industries where Maine has competitive advantages.

❑ SBIR / STTR Phase 0 Program

- Grants of up to \$5,000 per proposal on a rolling basis
- Fosters and supports competitive federal Small Business and Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) proposal submissions from Maine applicants.

ALL AWARDS REQUIRE MATCHING FUNDS FROM COMPANIES

**Q. What Is A Seed Grant Used
for, anyway??!**

Research & Development (R&D) such as.....

- ✦ Prototype development
- ✦ Pilot studies
- ✦ Intellectual property filings
- ✦ Business Plan Development
- ✦ Market Analysis
- ✦ MTI Development Award application
- ✦ **See the RFP for more examples**

Good Proposal Writing: Easier than You Think!

- ✦ The most successful proposal writers are not professionals who have done it for years, but people who really understand their project and are really passionate about it.

Three Requirements for Winning Awards

- ✦ a Good Project Idea
- ✦ a Good Fit
- ✦ a Good Proposal

Introduction to MTI's Seed Grant Program

MTI Programs

- ✦ Seed Grant Program is a Competitive Award program
 - ✦ Requires 1:1 matching funds
 - ✦ Fund R&D leading to commercialization of new products or services

MTI Seed Grants

- ✦ 41 rounds completed to date.
 - ✦ 2185 applications received.
 - ✦ 835 projects approved for funding, totaling over \$7,942,000.
 - ✦ Matched by commitments of over \$13,872,000.
- ✦ Grants of up to \$12,500 each awarded six times per year.
 - ✦ Support very early activities for product development, business planning or development leading to commercialization.
 - ✦ Eligible projects include specific small R&D projects, technical or consulting assistance, market analysis, intellectual property work, etc.
- ✦ Next Deadline = June 12, 2008

Seed Grant Advantages

- ✱ Six times per year.
- ✱ Relatively easy, short application.
- ✱ Fast turn-around = 3 weeks between deadline date and award decision.
- ✱ 80% of project funds awarded at beginning.

Seed Grant Challenges

- ✦ Limited funding = up to \$12,500.
- ✦ Specific, small projects that will help advance products/services toward the market.
- ✦ One-step panel reviews all proposals.
- ✦ Short application.

Application and Award Process

Seed Grant RFP

“Request for Proposals”

- ✿ Roadmap for proposals
- ✿ Rules, guidelines, scoring criteria and deadline dates
- ✿ Posted on the MTI website

MTI Seed Grant Application

- ★ 8 Items required for complete application
 - ✿ On-line registration, Form A
 - ✿ 50 word non-confidential summary
 - ✿ History of previous MTI awards (if applicable)
 - ✿ Project summary, no more than 3 pages
 - ✿ Budget Summary, Form B
 - ✿ Commitment letter(s) for all matching funds
 - ✿ Biographies for all named personnel and contractors or consultants
 - ✿ Credit check authorization
- One Optional – Up to 3 pages of supporting documentation

Form A

- ✦ On-line registration, generates proposal number
- ✦ Print off Form A after registration
- ✦ Non-confidential information
- ✦ Project title no more than 50 characters

50-word Non-confidential summary

- ✦ Separate page
- ✦ 50 words in a paragraph
- ✦ Will be used for press releases and website postings

Information from Previous Awards (if applicable)

- ✦ Use up to 2 pages
- ✦ Relationship between this application and previous awards

Project Summary

- ✦ Use up to 3 pages
- ✦ Suggestion – Use 8 topics as headings
- ✦ 12 point font, 1 inch margins
- ✦ Build your case!
- ✦ Pictures/diagrams as appropriate
- ✦ Bottom line: Why should MTI fund this proposal??!!!

Budget Form – Form B

- ✦ Realistic
- ✦ Check the math
- ✦ Match $>$ or $=$ to Grant request

Commitment letters

- ✦ Letters for all matching funds
- ✦ Use example from RFP package

Strategically consider information to include—Support? Enthusiasm? Significance?

Biographies

- ✦ Required for all personnel and consultants listed on budget form B
 - ✦ Consultant bios should indicate rates
 - ✦ Work experience relevant to project
- ✦ Up to 2 pages / person

Credit Authorization Form C

- ✦ Signed/submitted in sealed envelope
- ✦ For company and principals
- ✦ CC performed only on awardees

Supporting Documentation

- ✦ Up to 3 pages
- ✦ Letters of interest, support
- ✦ Pictures, graphs

Make your case!!!!

Seed Grant Program

★ The Seed Grant Review Process

- ★ 9 individuals on Seed Grant Review Committee
- ★ 1 member from each Tech Board
- ★ 2 members from MTI Board of Directors
- ★ 50+ proposals submitted per round
- ★ 2 and a half weeks to review and score
- ★ Scoring criteria is listed in the RFP

Seed Grant Review Process

- ✦ Reviewers arrive at the Review Meeting with their scored proposals
- ✦ Each proposal is reviewed one by one
- ✦ Technology Board reviewers take the lead for proposals from within their sector
- ✦ Discussion may change some scores
- ✦ Scores are averaged
- ✦ Proposals are rank ordered
- ✦ Funding decision is made

Seed Grant Program Tips

- ✦ Make sure your proposal is understandable!
 - ✦ Majority of reviewers NOT from your sector
 - ✦ Create a balance between too much and too little technical info
 - ✦ Use 3 pages of project description plus up to 3 pages of supporting documentation wisely.
 - ✦ Diagrams and pictures as appropriate
 - ✦ Avoid the “HUH????” factor

Final Thoughts

Make sure your proposal is complete and error free!

- Read, re-read, proofread, check and double-check your proposal!!
- Check spelling and grammar.
- Check the math on the budget form.
- Do you have commitment letter(s) for all match dollars?
- Biographies for all personnel and consultants?
- Submit to MTI one week early and get a review for completeness!

Good Luck!!!!