

**2021 Cohort Launch Program Information and Media Kit**

**Introduction**

The Incubatenergy® Labs 2021 cohort launched on Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020, with the opening of its call for startup applications.

Included in this document are key program information and schedule, 2021 challenge categories, press release, and examples of social media content you can cut and paste into your outreach efforts.

Please reach out to Annie Haas, ahaas@epri.com or 704-608-6314, with questions or comments.

 **About the Program**

Incubatenergy® Labs is built by the Electric Power Research Institute for startups to engage utilities in paid demonstration projects. A utilities summit and collaborative demonstrations program in one, the program links startup companies leading the advancement of electrification, decarbonization, and grid modernization with utilities from around the world that have the capacity and desire to demonstrate and scale those innovations. We structured the program to give you maximum exposure to utilities and ensure that the results of a successful demonstration with one utility turns into opportunities with many.

**How it Works**

Through Incubatenergy Labs, EPRI subject matter experts, and a group of leading utilities are engaging early stage companies to demonstrate and deploy innovative solutions in targeted areas, in an accelerated fashion.

First, startups apply on the Incubatenergy Labs [website](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CPaha008%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CBox%5CBox%20Edit%5CDocuments%5C_NE7yLu%2B2EmjvNAtxyJ6Zw%3D%3D%5Clabs.incubatenergy.org). Then, the collaborative team of EPRI and utility personnel evaluate and select a number of companies to engage in paid demonstrations. There’s no set number of slots, and there’s no set demonstration “cost”. They key is flexibility to encourage innovation. Last year, we chose ten startups from an applicant pool of 136 startups. Once final startups are determined, we work together to scope and execute the demonstration projects.

For those demonstrations, we’re pushing ourselves to move fast and engage the startups and utilities as a group to facilitate the scale of promising approaches to modernize and decarbonize our grid, delight our customers, communities, and workforce, and build new business opportunities. We’ll spend four to six weeks scoping projects, sixteen weeks executing them, and showcase the results at a Demo Day event in the Fall of 2021.

**KEY DATES: 2021 Incubatenergy Labs Challenge**

* December 2, 2020: Application site live; press release distributed 10 a.m. ET
* Week of January 11, 2021: Onboarding for utility and EPRI SMEs
* January 14: Application window closes
* January 15-29: Downselect to Top 30
* Feb 2021: Top 30 introductions and prep
* (Weeks of) March 8 & 15: *Pitch Week* window for Top 30; finalist selection begins
* (Week of) April 5: Final demonstrations announced, scoping begins
* May 2021: Demonstration project scoping and contracting
* June-Sept: Demonstration project execution
* Fall 2021: *Demo Day* and project report out presentations

**CHALLENGE AREA NARRATIVES**

The following describes the eight challenge areas in which we’re seeking startup applications for the Incubatenergy Labs 2021 cohort.

**Customer and Community Engagement**

Customers and their satisfaction lie at the core of any business. As an industry, we want to be more proactive to better serve customer needs, provide more personalized communications, offer targeted services, and deliver the information they need and the services they value. Bring us your solutions that help us engage our customers and communities and empower them to become more proactive and informed participants in a cleaner, more integrated energy system.

Examples:

* Seamless integration and management of connected energy devices
* Price signaling or transactive energy platforms
* Virtual Assistants, Automated Dispatch or other rapid response solutions
* Customized / Targeted energy offerings

 **Decarbonization and Sustainability**

There is a worldwide push to decarbonize and the electric power industry is leading the charge. Since 2005, the US reduced its carbon footprint one gigaton by switching from coal to gas, expanding renewables and driving efficiencies. To get the next gigaton, we need solutions to integrate and manage more low carbon energy generation: from distributed to utility scale solutions covering wind, solar, hydro and nuclear. We need to address intermittency challenges of increased renewable energy penetration, integrate storage and manage distributed energy resources in a manner that improves the operation and planning of the electricity grid while maintaining quality and reliability for customers and communities. To achieve deep decarbonization by 2050, we need long-duration storage, storage, low-

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carbon fuels and energy carriers, advanced nuclear reactors and effective carbon capture. In each of these areas, we need to deploy with sustainable materials, keeping recycling and circularity in mind.

Examples:

* Integrated DER management systems (DERMS), low carbon generation, and targeted demand response
* Transactive energy platforms that enable fair compensation for owners of DERs and utility-customer-funded infrastructure that enables the energy exchange.
* Grid scale and long-duration storage solutions
* Low carbon fuels and energy carriers, such as hydrogen or ammonia

**Electrification**

Electrification is key component of the strategy to decarbonize; in transportation, building systems and industrial processes. Building efficiencies have delivered tremendous benefits for years and continue to represent one of the largest opportunities for energy savings. Electrifying our transportation sector is also now at the forefront in reducing carbon emissions economy-wide. To accelerate electrification, we are seeking solutions that leverage data analytics, provide customer insights and enable management to increase customer satisfaction and reduce grid impact.

Examples:

* Tools for EV fleet adoption, management and optimization
* Peer-to-peer charging platforms and solutions for multi-unit dwellings
* Integration of storage and electrification to improve customer experience while minimizing grid impact and providing grid services
* Advanced building management solutions

**Digital Utility**

With the growth in renewables, distributed energy systems and electrification, modeling and managing our grid is more important than ever. Digital overlays are fundamentally transforming the electric power system and we seek solutions that provide more automated and data-driven operations, maintenance, and planning while building a safer, more efficient, equitable, decentralized, and decarbonized grid that better serves our customers.

Examples:

* Predictive maintenance, prognostics and planning
* Prescriptive maintenance to build on predictive analytics
* Digital twin solutions for asset management and operations
* Resilient, secure communications to support ubiquitous connectivity

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**Accelerating Adoption of Artificial Intelligence in the Electric Power Industry via AI.EPRI**

EPRI seeks to harness the capabilities of AI and accelerate its implementation in the electric power industry through the AI.EPRI initiative.  The vision of AI.EPRI is to be the AI catalyst for tomorrow’s energy system.  AI.EPRI is seeking solutions to utilize AI tools and technologies to provide utilities with

capabilities not available today such as making better decisions faster, automating repetitive tasks, or providing deeper insights into large data sets.

Specific topics leverage the EPRI10 data sets, focused on the integrated grid, generating plant operations and maintenance data, and environmental issues (see [www.epri.comp/envdatasci](http://www.epri.comp/envdatasci)), among others. The results from these projects could improve safety, reduce costs and time associated with electricity generation, improve demand flexibility, improve system reliability for customers, and reduce environmental impacts.

Examples:

* AI algorithms for automated smart grid management including distributed energy resources and baseload generation
* Machine-learning (ML) based digital twins to evaluating plant operations and how to optimize plant operations to maximize efficiency, prolong component life, detect the onset/evolution of degradation to predict failures, etc.
* Use of satellite data with AI/ML for environmental resource monitoring (water, air, habitat) as well as vegetation management to prevent electrical outages
* Identification of aquatic and terrestrial species of concern for planning, compliance monitoring, and reduction of impacts in real time
* Use of operational and AMI data to better predict T&D electrical outages and identify safety issues (grid operator 2.0).

**Workforce of the Future**

Technology can help our workers perform their jobs more safely, efficiently, and effectively. Wearables, augmented reality, the convergence of information and operational technologies, the internet of things (IoT), and big data solutions are being combined in creative new ways to help our workforce thrive. We’d like to see what you have in this space.

Examples:

* Wearables for personnel and/or environmental monitoring and safety
* Robotics, exoskeletons, and unmanned systems for completion of hazardous tasks
* AR / VR solutions for immersive, remote training, information accessibility and increased efficiency in task execution
* Digital worker enhancements and remote, real-time assistance on complicated tasks
* Digital Office solutions for a post-COVID 19 world

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**Customer and Community Resilience**

Fires, extreme weather and flooding are becoming all too common. Preparing for such events and keeping customers and communities safe, informed and with access to power through them is a top priority. Bring your solutions that help us better predict localized events, prevent outages where possible and, when they happen, communicate with our customers and restore power quickly.

Examples:

* Wildfire and extreme events mitigation, risk analytics and dynamic control systems
* Distributed analytics and controls for balancing and operation of islanded microgrids
* Solutions to inform resilience planning, aid situational awareness and automate communications and dispatch,
* “As-a-service” offerings for residential energy storage or on-site backup generation
* Solutions to keep customers updated and informed throughout restoration efforts
* “Plug-and-play” residential energy storage systems, microgrids and smart home energy management platforms

**Open**

Do you think we’re missing the boat on something? If you have a relevant technology that doesn’t fit into one of the areas above, we want to hear about it!

**FINAL PRESS RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 12-2-2020, 10 AM ET**

**Incubatenergy**® **Labs Program: EPRI Invites Startups to Pitch Energy Innovations to Electric Power Utilities**

*Application period closes on January 14, 2021*

**PALO ALTO, Calif. (Dec. 2, 2020)** – The Electric Power Research Institute’s (EPRI’s) Incubatenergy Labs—a program that connects leading startup companies with electric power utilities from around the world—invites startup companies to apply for the opportunity to propose innovative solutions to the most challenging issues facing the electric power industry. Selected applicants will be invited to participate in the 2021 Incubatenergy Labs Demo Day Challenge.

Startups must apply online to pitch their proposal to a group of electric power utilities in March 2021. Startups that deliver successful pitches at this event will go on to work with EPRI and electric power utility experts to scope and execute a paid pilot research and demonstration project within the service area of a participating utility next summer. This collaborative approach increases the value of the projects for all participants by expanding the reach of the startups and providing valuable investment information for the utilities. Applications can be submitted until January 14, 2021 through an online portal [here](https://labs.incubatenergy.org/).

“This program will connect promising startups with the electric power industry backing they need to put some momentum behind their innovations,” said Erik Steeb, who leads the Incubatenergy program. “And this program allows utilities to see for themselves how these innovations perform in a real-world environment without incurring the risk associated with deploying capital.”

The Incubatenergy Labs program offers startup companies the opportunity to demonstrate and scale their innovations in electrification, decarbonization, and grid modernization. For 2021, the program seeks solutions that address challenges associated with artificial intelligence, customer and community engagement, customer and community resilience, decarbonization and sustainability, the digital utility, electrification, and the workforce of the future. Startups with solutions that address other energy challenges will also be considered; they can submit applications in an ‘open’ category.

“Incubatenergy Labs is a terrific opportunity to use EPRI’s collaborative research model and apply it in a way that drives results faster than utilities normally can,” said Steve Kidwell, Vice President of Corporate Planning at Ameren Corporation. “Incubatenergy Labs is a way for our industry to be more agile with innovation, and I encourage more utilities to join us for 2021,” he said. Ameren and the Ameren Accelerator will be in its third year as a foundational member and host utility in the program, and in its fifth year of running its own accelerator efforts.

Incubatenergy Labs completed its most recent round of projects and demonstrations during the [2020 Demo Day](https://labs.incubatenergy.org/en/page/demo-day-2020-en) in October. Of the 10 startups, seven are adding new and expanded opportunities with their host utilities.

In 2021, North American utility Fortis and California utility Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) will join the growing roster of utilities participating in the program.

**About EPRI**

The Electric Power Research Institute, Inc. (EPRI, [www.epri.com](https://www.epri.com/)) conducts research and development relating to the generation, delivery and use of electricity for the benefit of the public. An independent, nonprofit organization, EPRI brings together its scientists and engineers as well as experts from academia and industry to help address challenges in electricity, including reliability, efficiency, affordability, health, safety and the environment. EPRI members represent 90% of the electricity generated and delivered in the United States with international participation extending to 40 countries. EPRI's principal offices and laboratories are located in Palo Alto, Calif.; Charlotte, N.C.; Knoxville, Tenn.; Dallas, Texas; Lenox, Mass.; and Washington, D.C.

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**SUGGESTED SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT**

**TWITTER:**

#Energy #startups: apply now to the @Incubatenergy Labs 2021 challenge to gain massive exposure to #utilities via paid, accelerated demonstrations at labs.incubatenergy.org. Applications close Jan. 14.

@XCOMPANYHANDLE is proud to collaborate in the @Incubatenergy Labs challenge for #energy #startups. Apply now for our 2021 cohort at labs.incubatenergy.org. Applications close Jan. 14.

@XCOMPANYHANDLE is looking for the next great #energy #startup for the @Incubatenergy Labs 2021 cohort! Apply until Jan. 14 at labs.incubatenergy.org.

**LINKEDIN:**

@XCOMPANYHANDLE is looking for a few great #energy #startups to help us accelerate #decarbonization and #innovation via the @Incubatenergy Network Labs 2021 challenge. Apply now for a chance to participate in a paid demonstration project via the program, which includes SMEs from @Electric Power Research Institute and other utilities – application window closes Jan. 14.

Attention #energy #startups, apply now to join @XCOMPANYHANDLE and other leading utilities for the 2021 @Incubatenergy Network Labs challenge --- and a chance to conduct a paid, accelerated demonstration of your product, service, or solution in a real-world utility environment. Application period closes Jan. 14. Learn more at labs.incubatenergy.org.

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