



Strategic Partner FAQs

What is a Strategic Partner, and how does the MEIA Strategic Partnership Program Work?

A Strategic Partner is a Corporate Sponsor in the Gigawatt, Megawatt, or Kilowatt categories that provides mentorship and financial sponsorship for a Startup Team. A Corporate Sponsor becomes a Strategic Partner when it has agreed to sponsor a specific Startup Team, and the Startup Team has agreed to work with the Strategic Partner.

A Startup Team Leader who applies to MEIA for admission to a cohort will seek to match with one of MEIA's Strategic Partners as a condition of admission. A Strategic Partner provides two critically important things:

1. Mentorship to the Startup Team. The primary purpose of mentorship is to help with customer discovery (to determine the minimum number of features needed to create a product that customer will buy) and to help the Startup Team create a product development plan that will accelerate the time to market. Mentorship guidelines are under development. The Strategic Partner's goal is to help the Startup Team become an investible company.
2. A cash donation to MEIA that becomes the Startup Teams' budget to pay EEIRs, attend conferences, and to pay for other approved business expenses during the cohort program.

How does the matching process work?

MEIA will proactively seek out Startup Teams to match to each potential Strategic Partner.

When a Startup Team Leader applies for admission, a summary is delivered initially to Gigawatt Level Corporate Partners for review. Shortly thereafter, MEIA will attempt to match the Startup Team to other potential Strategic Partners by e-mailing the Startup Team application. Potential Strategic Partners may decline, may request an interview with the Startup Team Leader, or may accept the invitation along with an offer of financial support. The Startup Team Leader will make the final decision among the offers from Strategic Partners.

Do Strategic Partners earn equity or intellectual property rights for their work with Startup Teams?

No. Strategic Partners explicitly waive all rights or implied rights. The primary purpose of the relationship during the cohort period is to provide advice, not to engage in active research and development. Strategic Partners' provision of advice and funding is made

in consideration of the relationship created with the Startup Team, the benefits accrued to the Strategic Partner from MEIA/MCEC and does not include any equity nor intellectual property.

Are Non-Disclosure Agreements Required?

An NDA is not required to become a Strategic Partner since the initial information provided by Startup Teams to prospective Strategic Partners will not be proprietary. However, some Startup Teams may require an NDA as a condition for selecting a Strategic Partner, and MEIA will make Strategic Partners aware of these requirements when the initial information is distributed. Startup Team Leaders will be advised not to share proprietary information with Strategic Partners without a signed NDA. MEIA expects that much of the technology that will be presented by Startup Teams will be published in academic journals and will also be protected by patents (or patents in process) from the Startup Team Leader's institution. However, some Startup Team Leaders may be working on undisclosed technology that could be proprietary in nature. This technology cannot be disclosed without an NDA, and disclosures are subject to rules of the Startup Team Leader's current employer.

What is a positive outcome for Strategic Partnership?

Initially, the goal of the Strategic Partnership is to help the Startup Team become an investible company. This means that the technology path has been meaningfully de-risked through the customer discovery process and identification of customers or suppliers who want to buy the product. It also means that the Startup Team has built out an executive team and a Board of Advisors who are credible. Finally, it means that a company was formed, that an agreement was made among co-founders, and that IP was licensed from the Startup Team Leader's institution. MEIA hopes that Strategic Partners will continue their relationship with their Startup Team once the Team has graduated from MEIA's program and has formed a company. The Strategic Partner could enter into a Joint Development Agreement, Service Agreement (or off-take agreement), provide seed investment, or take a position on the company's advisory board. There are many ways that a relationship might continue after the Startup Team graduates from MEIA that will benefit the Strategic Sponsor.

What other benefits are there for becoming a Strategic Partner?

For a list of benefits for becoming a Corporate Sponsor, ask for the latest *Sponsorship Prospectus*.

How do I become a Strategic Sponsor?

Contact MEIA via the website form (<https://mdeia.org/contact-us>) or send an email to info@mdeia.org.