

Fueling Growth for Emerging Technologies

The Wells Fargo Innovation Incubator (IN2) is an energy technology program funded by Wells Fargo & Company and coadministered by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

Through its Emerging Tech track, IN2 supports startups developing innovations in the built environment and infrastructure sectors, helping to validate, refine, and advance their solutions.



Selected startups receive up to \$250,000 in nondilutive funding in the form of hands-on technical assistance from NREL's world-class scientists, providing both credibility and a faster path to market.

How IN2 and NREL Support Startups

NREL's independent, third-party evaluation accelerates commercialization by helping startups derisk their technologies and build confidence with partners and investors.

Technical assistance may include:

- Performance testing and evaluation to assess real-world effectiveness
- Life cycle assessments and techno-economic analyses to quantify impact
- Product design and development assistance to enhance prototypes and market readiness
- Systems integration testing to reduce deployment risk in real-world applications
- Modeling, simulation, and accelerated time testing to evaluate long-term performance and durability at scale.

Our Impact Since 2014

IN2 is a proven model for assisting startups in speeding their paths to market.



74 companies in the IN2 portfolio



\$2.6B in external follow-on funding



20% of portfolio companies exited via mergers, acquisitions, or IPOs



121:1 leverage rate for every \$1 invested by IN2



83% of portfolio companies advanced to a higher technical stage



Enabling Innovation Through a Connected Ecosystem

IN2 supports innovation through a national ecosystem of startups, investors, industry adopters, and referrers. This includes more than 60 Channel Partners—incubators, accelerators, and universities—as well as NREL’s Investor Advisory Board, that refer high-potential startups and share insights on emerging trends.

Each startup is part of a themed IN2 cohort aligned with market demand and research insights. These themes also inform the Scalable Tech track—a parallel IN2 effort that assists corporations and municipalities in adopting validated solutions. Participation in the Emerging Tech track raises a startup’s visibility among scalable adopters considering technologies for real-world deployment.

By connecting early-stage innovators with technical experts, cross-sector peers, and implementation partners, IN2 creates a feedback-rich environment that drives technology adoption and amplifies impact across the innovation landscape.

How To Apply

Startups are referred to IN2 by Channel Partners and evaluated through a selection process with NREL researchers, the Wells Fargo Advisory Board, and industry experts.

For application inquiries or introductions to Channel Partners, email IN2@nrel.gov.