MaRS

MISSION FROM MaRS

BETTER BUILDINGS ADOPTION ACCELERATOR

2026 COHORT THEME: HOUSING

MADE POSSIBLE BY THE PETER GILGAN FOUNDATION

APPLICANT GUIDE

Introduction

Mission from MaRS is a series of ambitious technology adoption programs addressing the climate crisis. **Mission from MaRS: Better Buildings** works with cleantech ecosystem leaders to scale climate solutions, grow Canada's economy and create a more livable, climate-resilient built environment. Our 2026 cohort will focus on the residential building sector.

We're helping Canadian innovation lead the way to a sustainable, future-forward built environment.

Our three mission objectives are:

1. **Reduce operational emissions** of Canada's existing buildings through the adoption of innovations.
2. **Lower the embodied carbon** of new buildings by accelerating the uptake of low-carbon building materials and methods.
3. **Amplify the role of Canadian cleantech** in existing efforts to create a more resilient, adaptive and affordable built environment.

The **Better Buildings Adoption Accelerator**, made possible by the Peter Gilgan Foundation, is a key part of Mission from MaRS: Better Buildings' programming. This accelerator will recruit six Canadian ventures working to solve the housing sector's greatest decarbonization challenges and support broad-scale adoption and commercialization.

Image courtesy of 2025 Mission from MaRS: Better Building cohort memberIntelligent City

The challenge we're facing

Canada's residential buildings account for 47 percent of building sector emissions (not including electricity). The recent federal budget acknowledges the need for innovation in order to build more new homes and improve housing affordability.

We must collectively ensure existing structure retrofits and new builds — crucial to addressing our country's housing shortage — will not take a greater toll on our environment. That's where innovative solutions come into play.

MaRS will provide six venture participants with the tools they need to scale their decarbonization potential and achieve commercial success.

Program Details

Selected companies will be one of six participants in this accelerator, each of which will receive access to:

- Case-by-case support, including introductions with potential adopters, capacity support to seek funding for pilot/commercial deployment, project implementation/procurement process support and relationship management.
- A curriculum of workshops to help prepare for commercial success, designed by MaRS experts with feedback from potential industry adopters.
- Enhanced public profile and exposure through the Mission from MaRS, including press releases, case studies, media reports, pitching and speaking opportunities and attendance at cleantech industry events.
- Curated introductions to domestic and international investors.
- Access to mentor networks, investor showcases and curated events with industry experts, customers and partners.
- Access to MaRS market intelligence, capital, talent and communications services.
- Opportunities to build relationships with fellow selected ventures and industry coalitions through ongoing workshops and activities.
- The opportunity to access a special-purpose grant ranging from $10,000–$25,000 to be used toward commercial projects (six available).

Technologies we're looking for

The 2026 cohort will focus on housing technology solutions for new builds and retrofits.

Working with real estate owners, operators, developers and industry experts, Mission from MaRS has identified key technologies and innovations shaping the housing sector. Supported by the Adoption Accelerator, these solutions will address the demand for tech that supports both operational and embodied carbon reduction. If your solution doesn't fit neatly into these categories but still supports residential sector decarbonization, you are still encouraged to apply.

Please join our informational webinar on January 14, 2026 or contact mfm@marsdd.com with any specific questions about your venture's eligibility.

Operational carbon innovations

Innovations that can reduce the operational emissions of Canada's existing residential buildings, including:

- Technologies for building envelope, cladding or other forms of passive energy efficiency improvements (including improved openings and windows installation and materials).
- Advanced mechanical systems, including electrification of heating and cooling, humidification management and mechanical ventilation.
- Renewable energy generation and/or energy storage solutions.
- Refrigerants or alternatives with low global warming potential.
- Utility load shifting and/or management technologies, as well as controls and software to improve automation, monitoring and control, which boosts comfort and reduces controller error.
- Other operational emission reduction solutions.

Embodied carbon innovations

Low-carbon building materials and methods that lower the embodied carbon of new homes, including:

- Like-for-like material replacements with low embodied carbon, such as concrete, steel, insulation and cladding.
- Low-carbon and carbon-negative products, including biomaterials and wood/mass timber.
- Clean construction techniques, equipment and software that optimize on-site fuel use and smart ordering platforms, and innovations in large-scale development processes.
- Technologies that boost construction efficiency and lower embodied carbon, such as off-site construction and modular prefabrication.
- Solutions that support compliance with embodied carbon regulations, including the tracking of projects from initial design to completion.
- Other solutions, including:
  - Densification enabling technologies (ground-up or existing).
  - Disruption in design to generate options and/or optimize efficiency.

Image courtesy of MaRS venture Promise Robotics

Eligibility

As it relates to the climate technology solution featured in the company's application, the company must, at the time of application:

- be a subsidiary of a larger parent company that would otherwise not be eligible for the accelerator;
- be incorporated, based and operating in Canada;
- be majority owned by Canadian shareholders;
- have been established for at least one year since the application start date;
- own a housing decarbonization solution with applicability to the residential sector, including the intellectual property of any technology relevant to the solution;
- the solution must, in the viewpoint of MaRS:
  - have the potential to significantly reduce GHG emissions or ongoing contributors to global warming, and/or address the impacts of climate change;
  - be proprietary and/or patentable; and
  - have the potential to be scaled for major impact;
- be a small and mid-sized enterprise (SME), as defined by Innovation Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada; and
- fall within TRL6 and TRL9 on the nine-point Technology Readiness Level spectrum, as defined by Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada:
  - TRL 6: System/subsystem model or prototype demonstration in a simulated environment.
  - TRL 7: Prototype ready for demonstration in an appropriate operational environment.
  - TRL 8: Actual technology completed and qualified through tests and demonstrations.

Timeline/Key dates

Applications open
December 9, 2025

Deadline for application submission
January 23, 2026

Eligibility screening
January 26 – February 6, 2026

Shortlist and technical details request notification date
February 9, 2026

Submission of technical details
February 16, 2026

Third-party technical review
February 9 – March 13, 2026

Interview dates
February 23 – 27, 2026

Industry alignment review
March 2 – 13, 2026

Committee review
March 16 – 27, 2026

Committee meeting
Week of March 30, 2026

Participant selection date
April 7, 2026

Program start
April 15, 2026

End of accelerator
December 31, 2026

Program start

April 15, 2026

Program end

December 31, 2026

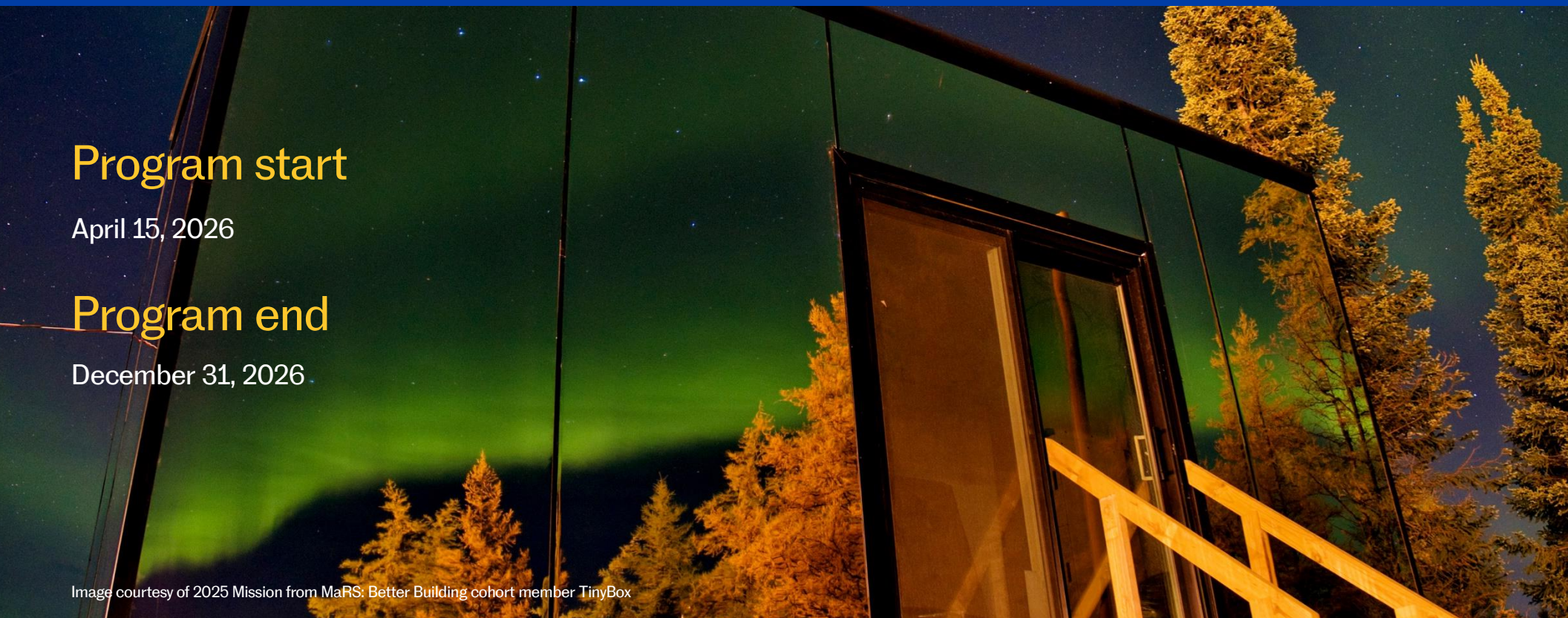

Image courtesy of 2025 Mission from MaRS: Better Building cohort member TinyBox

Application

You can apply by completing the online application form and submitting all documents and information described below. You must enter all information accurately, and you must accept the terms and conditions displayed as part of the application process.

By submitting an application, you confirm that:

- You (the venture's contact) have the company's authorization to file this application and enter into this agreement on behalf of the company;
- The contents of your entry are true, accurate, complete and do not violate any third-party intellectual property rights;
- MaRS Discovery District ("MaRS") is hereby authorized to collect, use and disclose the information in this application and any other information MaRS requires to consider this application (the "purpose").
- MaRS may disclose any or all of the above information to its review committee, external reviewers and mentors as reasonable for the purpose.
- You personally consent to MaRS collecting, using and disclosing your personal information for the purpose.

Opt In

PR/media exposure consent:

- If selected, are you comfortable with being interviewed by the media and appearing at various events and promoting your business/technology?

MaRS wants to ensure fair and equal participation in this program and will provide necessary accommodations (alternative arrangements) for individuals who have needs protected by human rights legislation (e.g. people experiencing a disability); to request an accommodation related to such a need, email mfm@marsdd.com with the necessary details. In some cases, MaRS may request more information to better understand your needs and determine how it can make the process more accessible.

Selection process

There are five stages of the Mission from MaRS cohort selection process, starting with a national recruitment campaign. Here is how the program will unfold:

Recruitment	A nationwide recruitment campaign will launch on December 9, 2025, with applications accepted until January 23, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EST.
Stage 1: Screening and quality review	From January 26 to February 6, 2026, a MaRS review committee will undertake a first-stage screening of all applications to verify eligibility as per terms and conditions and program relevance. The committee will ask questions from the evaluation methodology below.
Stage 2: Interviews and third-party technical review	Ventures deemed eligible in the first screening phase will be notified on February 9, 2026, with a request to provide technical details of their climate technology. Technical details must be submitted by February 16, 2026. From February 9 to March 13, 2026, technical details will be reviewed by a third-party technical expert. Simultaneously, shortlisted companies will be contacted for brief, individual interviews with the MaRS team.
Stage 3: Industry alignment review	From March 2 to 13, 2026, the shortlisted ventures will have their applications and technical reports reviewed by industry experts to identify venture alignment with the industry's current needs and goals.
Stage 4: Final selection committee review and meeting	The committee will be a panel of experts who will gauge the strengths and weaknesses of individual applicant companies to recommend the final six ventures. The committee will review the applications and technical reports, incorporate industry input, and make a joint recommendation. The committee meeting will take place the week of March 30, 2026. The final decision will be informed by the committee, but ultimately, the responsibility/decision to determine the cohort is up to the discretion of the MaRS program team.
Notification date	MaRS and its funding partners will notify the selected ventures of the final cohort on April 7, 2026.

Evaluation methodology

The following criteria will be applied to all applications submitted by eligible ventures during the quality review stage:

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING & SCALE
Program fit	• To what extent does this technology address the challenge(s) outlined for the accelerator? • How directly does this technology respond to the issues identified? • To what degree could MaRS and the program offerings support the commercialization of this venture?	**30 %**
Technology and value proposition	• To what degree is the technology innovative? Does it solve a significant problem, and/or offer an important value proposition to the industry? • To what extent is the product differentiated and offering a clear competitive advantage in customers' eyes?	**20 %**
Viability of solution	• To what extent could/does this solution result in lower operational/embodied carbon emissions for residential buildings and/or the construction sector? • How scalable is the solution? • Is sustained growth/market penetration likely? • To what extent is industry likely to adopt this solution? • Does it present a viable alternative to current practices?	**20 %**
Adoption readiness	• To what degree is the company capable of engaging with prospective customers on a commercial scale? • Does the company have previous and/or current relevant experience, such as demonstration projects, pilots or commercial engagements? • How ready is the company to scale to meet the demand of customers?	**20 %**
Intellectual property	• To what extent is the applicant innovating in one or more technology areas versus simply using off-the-shelf technologies? • To what extent does the applicant's intellectual property provide it with an economic 'moat' or a distinct advantage that the applicant has over its competitors, which will allow it to protect its market share and profitability?	**10 %**

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

How do I apply?

Visit the accelerator webpage at missionfrommars.com/better-buildings-adoption-accelerator and click on the Apply Now button, after which you will be walked through the application process. Late or incomplete entries will not be accepted. By accepting our official rules and entering a submission, you also agree to MaRS Discovery District's venture terms and conditions, found here. Applications must be in English only.

What technologies are eligible for the Mission from MaRS: Better Buildings Adoption Accelerator?

The Better Buildings Adoption Accelerator aims to help innovators and adopters reach their decarbonization potential. As such, this call for applications is seeking to recruit ventures with commercial or near-commercial solutions that are ready for pilots, or have completed pilots in operational environments. Eligible innovations will have achieved a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) as defined by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada of at least TRL6. Past pilots, demonstration projects, or commercial deployments are not necessary but preferable.

Eligible technologies include the technology types listed in the "Technologies we're looking for" section above. However, we know that innovation doesn't always fit in a box. MaRS is open to receiving applications from companies with technologies that can assist with reducing operational and/or embodied GHG emissions that are not specified on the lists. This includes, but is not limited to, technologies that enable circularity, leverage data, minimize tenant impact, integrate renewable energy technologies in buildings or fintech innovations which will result in decarbonizing the residential building and the construction sector. Please contact mfm@marsdd.com with any specific questions about your venture's eligibility. We are also hosting an informational webinar on January 14, 2026 to answer any questions or concerns.

What are your selection criteria?

Please refer to the selection criteria section in the application guide.

How will the information I submit be used?

Privacy is important to us, and we respect the need for confidentiality. If you do apply, all of the information collected through our online application form will only be viewed by our selection committee, the MaRS team operating the program, and members of the Peter Gilgan Foundation team involved in the program (as the Peter Gilgan Foundation is helping to make the program possible). While we encourage you to be as open as possible in your application, we would advise against including any critically sensitive proprietary details. If you are not selected for the cohort, your application will be permanently deleted unless you tell us otherwise. Subject to the foregoing, MaRS will otherwise treat your application as confidential information, and will protect it in a manner no less protective than it treats its own confidential information. Collection, storage, protection and use of private information included in your application will be subject to the MaRS privacy policy.

If I am selected for the final cohort, will information about my research and project — i.e. intellectual property, financial information, etc. — be kept confidential?

If you are selected, you will be asked to sign an agreement that will detail how your information will be treated by MaRS, subject to our official rules, and when this information might be shared, for example, with investors and potential customers/partners. Your information will be kept confidential and will not be shared unless you have given us permission.

Do you take any equity in the projects?

We do not take equity.

If I have other questions, who can I contact?

If you'd like to ask the Mission from MaRS team something, please email mfm@marsdd.com.

The Better Buildings Adoption Accelerator is made possible by the Peter Gilgan Foundation.

Peter Gilgan Foundation