

MIT Deshpande Center Catalyst Roles and Responsibilities

Welcome to the Deshpande Center for Technological Innovation ecosystem. Our Center transforms promising research at MIT into cutting-edge spinout companies that produce innovative products to impact the world. We appreciate your generous donation of time and energy to mentor and guide our faculty and students. This document outlines your roles and responsibilities as a Deshpande Catalyst.

Your involvement as a Catalyst is critical to help us assess ideas from an industry perspective, identify the most effective path to commercialization, and assist the teams in advancing their research to provide an innovation worthy of external investment. By no means is this a one-way relationship: you likely will find that lending your expertise to MIT's vibrant research community is deeply satisfying on an intellectual, professional and personal level.

Confidentiality

- Keep all information confidential. Please read, sign and return to us the [DESHPANDE CENTER CATALYST GUIDELINES FOR CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST](#) .

Conflict of interest

- Avoid any perception of conflict of interest. Place the interests of the project team first and do not use your relationship with it for personal financial gain.

If you are considering involvement with a potential startup from a project where you are a Catalyst, before you enter into any discussions with the team you must first inform the Deshpande Center office and step aside as a Catalyst for that project. This applies to any role where you will have a financial stake in the startup, including as a member of the management, advisor or investor. We will appoint another Catalyst to the project to provide the team with independent and unbiased advice.

Note that there is no conflict of interest if your role is an uncompensated advisor to the startup. We do encourage you to stay in touch and continue to help the team. Once a startup has spun out of MIT and raised its initial capital, it is no longer a Deshpande project and the conflict of interest rules do not apply.

Project team meetings when you are a project Catalyst

- Attend the formal Deshpande project review meetings (kick-off, project updates, and final review or renewal presentation). In-person attendance is preferred, but video conferencing is also an option.

- Meet with your project team about once per month to guide progress toward milestones. In the Catalyst role, you are both a coach and an expert advisor, and we ask you to initiate contact with the team if they do not reach out directly to you.
- During and outside of scheduled meetings, feel free to provide the grantee team industry contacts that would enhance their learning about product specifications or how their technology might be applied in the commercial world. You can also introduce them to potential team members and others in your network who might be useful connections.

Event participation

- Join us for any Deshpande events such as the Catalyst Party (typically late September) Open House and Innovation Showcase (~ early December), IdeaStream (~ April).

Grant selection

- When asked, please review incoming proposals to help us select our grantees.

Thank you, again, for making our program the ongoing example of translating technology to innovation! If you have any questions, please reach out to Leon Sandler (leons@mit.edu).