MEDTECH INNOVATOR & BIOTOOLS INNOVATOR

2027 Applicant Joint Info Session

Tuesday, November 12, 2026 - 9 - 10 AM PT // 12 - 1 PM ET

📹 Recording
💻 Presentation

Speakers

- **Nicole Black** | Program Director at MedTech Innovator | Email |LinkedIn
- **Jim West** | Associate Director at BioTools Innovator | Email | LinkedIn
- **Ida Garakani Good** | CEO & Founder of Cerevia Neurosciences (MTI '26) | LinkedIn
- **Joe Beggs** | CEO & Founder of GenAssist (MTI '26) | LinkedIn
- **Manios Dimitrakakis** | CEO of Panda Surgical (MTI '26) | LinkedIn
- **Surekha Karudapuram** | Chief Product Officer at QuantumCyte (BTI '26) | LinkedIn

Key Takeaways

- **Applications for both MedTech Innovator (MTI) and BioTools Innovator (BTI) are due December 1.** Start early, even if you are still deciding on a program or track. Starting an application also adds you to the weekly reminder list leading up to the deadline.
- **The main difference between the programs is your customer.** If you sell to patients, clinicians or hospitals, MTI is likely the better fit. If you sell to life science companies (pharma, CLIA labs, CROs), BTI is likely the better fit.
- **Not sure which program?** Start both applications. The questions themselves (customer type, clinical and technology categories) will help you decide. You may submit to both, and the team will help determine which program best fits your milestones.
- **Specialty tracks and hubs are optional add-ons** selected via checkboxes in the application, each requiring only one extra paragraph on fit.

About the Innovator Programs

MedTech Innovator was launched about 13–14 years ago by CEO Paul Grand following his work as a founder and investor. If you want to learn more about the origins of MTI, listen to Paul on the Project Medtech podcast, available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, YouTube and the Project Medtech website.
BioTools Innovator is heading into its 7th year. Both programs fall under the Innovator umbrella.

Combined impact to date

- 957 alumni companies

- 66+ acquisitions by major MedTech and life science companies
- 600+ products on the market
- 90%+ of companies still in business or acquired
- $12B+ in follow-on funding

What participants receive

Targeted mentorship and resources matched to each company's stage, including mentorship from strategic partners and experts, service providers tailored to business needs, webinars and workshops, leadership pods, visibility and exposure at major conferences, and access to a broad ecosystem of fellow innovators.

MedTech Innovator

Who It's For

The accelerator for medical devices, diagnostics (generally patient-facing) and digital health. The key question to ask: **does my technology address a patient, clinician, or hospital need?** Strategic interest areas include:

- Innovative device designs
- Surgical and endoscopy tools
- Implantable devices
- Safety mechanisms
- Tissue grafts and adhesives (a key focus of the ASPS track)
- Interventional tools
- Consumer healthcare
- Workflow optimization for hospital systems and providers
- Imaging technologies
- Patient monitoring
- Patient-facing diagnostics
- Biometric measurements

A regulated product is **not** required. Each year, Class I, exempt, and consumer wellness companies participate. The best way to gauge fit is to browse the alumni portfolio on the MTI website for similar companies.

2027 Timeline

- **December 1:** Applications due
- **December – April:** Diligence phase. Roughly the top 10% of applicants are invited to pitch.
- **April 6–8 – Radar Forum (Washington, D.C.):** All-in-one in-person pitch event with ~150 startups, plus keynotes and panels on investment, hospital systems and more (last year featured a keynote from FDA CDRH Director Michelle Tarver). Virtual pitch options are available for companies outside the U.S. or with conflicts, but in-person attendance is strongly encouraged.
- **May:** Final selection of 65 companies

- **June 15–17 – Innovator Summit (Los Angeles):** Joint kickoff for both programs
- **June – October:** Accelerator program
- **October 4–6 – The MedTech Conference (San Francisco):** Finals and showcase for all 65 companies, including the early-stage grand prize competition

Partners & Support

Every early-stage company is supported by a Founding or Platinum partner, a Specialty Track partner, or the Vantage hub. Gold, Silver, Bronze and Ecosystem partners (including service providers) round out support based on each company's needs.

- **Founding sponsors:** Johnson & Johnson MedTech and RCT Ventures
- **Platinum sponsors:** Asahi Intecc, BD, Dexcom, Edwards Lifesciences, LivaNova, Olympus, Samsung, Solventum and Zimmer Biomet
- **Specialty tracks:** American Heart Association (AHA Ventures and Studio Red) and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons
- **Vantage hub:** ASPR and BARDA
- After acceptance in May, each company has a goals call to define milestones for the next five months (e.g., product design, manufacturing scale-up, regulatory pathway, reimbursement such as a new CPT code).
- Mentors are assigned based on those milestones.
- Touchpoints run from the pitch event through Innovator Summit, Ask the Experts, expert chats, SPARK workshops and more.

Requirements

- **Early to mid-stage companies.** A dedicated mid-stage cohort serves companies that have raised more than $15M; past participants have raised as much as $150M–$200M. About 20% of each cohort already generates more than $1M in revenue. Early-stage companies have typically raised $2–3M and are often entering clinical trials.
- **Incorporation** is required by the program start (~May 2027), but not to apply.
- **Runway to execute on current milestones**, ideally through the end of the program in October. This is less about a specific dollar amount and more about demonstrating a committed team; MTI helps with fundraising along the way.
- **A prototype or proof-of-concept evidence**, such as bench testing, preclinical animal studies or early human usability studies. A full MVP is not required, but "back-of-the-napkin" concepts are not a fit.
- **Leadership commitment** from a co-founder, CEO or senior team member: roughly 10 hours per week from June to October (mentorship, deliverables, workshops). This can be split across team members.
- **Funding stage:** Generally pre-seed through Series C and beyond, including commercial-stage companies not actively fundraising.

BioTools Innovator

Who It's For

A community for life science tools companies building the "back end" of life science, where a life science company (e.g., pharma) is the primary customer. Strategic interest areas include:

- Research products and instruments
- R&D and manufacturing services
- Diagnostics and enabling technologies
- Drug discovery and development
- Enabling technologies for food and agriculture
- Improving preparedness for medical countermeasures

Jim also highlighted lab automation, software, biomanufacturing, cell and gene therapy, and omics technologies as examples. Therapeutics companies are generally limited unless there is a tools component. Companies developing a treatment that will go through clinical trials are typically not a fit. The list of examples is not exhaustive, so reach out to the team if you are unsure.

2027 Timeline

- **December 1:** Applications due
- **December – April:** Diligence phase
- **March – April – Road Tour:** BTI's equivalent of Radar Forum, run as one-day pitch events: East Coast (Boston), West Coast (San Diego) and virtual, with a possible fourth event to be announced
- **May:** Selection
- **June 15–17 – Innovator Summit (Los Angeles):** Joint kickoff with MedTech Innovator
- **June – November:** Accelerator program
- **November 18 – BTI Capstone & Finals (San Diego):** Held in conjunction with the BARDA Accelerator Network showcase

Sponsors

- **Founding:** BroadOak Capital Partners and Research Corporation Technologies
- **Acceleration:** Ecolab, Nissan Chemical America Corporation and Thermo Fisher Scientific
- **Innovation:** i5 BioPartners, JBC Associates and PA Consulting
- **Vanguard hub:** ASPR and BARDA
- **Perks:** PubGrade

Requirements

- **Early to mid-stage startups, pre-seed to Series C funding.** Most BTI companies are pre-seed through Series A or B, and BTI is also interested in mid-stage companies with recurring revenue looking at fundraising, market access and strategic connections.
- **Incorporation** required at program start, but not to apply

- **Runway** to execute on current milestones
- **Prototype and proof-of-concept evidence** showing the technology works and there is a business to build around it (definition is flexible)
- **Leadership commitment:** accepted companies must commit a co-founder, CEO or senior member of their leadership team

Specialty Tracks, Hubs & Alumni Perspectives

Room 1: American Heart Association Track (Heart & Brain)

Ida Garakani Good, CEO & Co-founder, Cerevia Neurosciences (MTI '26)

- Cerevia is building an integrated MedTech system combining functional MRI and neurostimulation to treat dementia.
- The AHA track recently expanded to cover both heart and brain, and AHA just launched its Center for the Brain at its Scientific Sessions.
- Why they applied: AHA's depth and breadth of KOLs, researchers and contacts, plus access to four AHA-affiliated funds for feedback. Cerevia applied at a very early stage.
- Even with 25+ years in MedTech and life sciences, Ida found the cohort incredibly valuable. The program meets companies where they are.

Room 2: American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) Track

Joe Beggs, Co-founder & CEO, GenAssist Inc. (MTI '26)

- GenAssist builds biomaterials to regenerate skeletal muscle after trauma and reconstructive surgery. This was Joe's second time through MTI (previously with Hive Medical).
- He described the track as "an accelerator within an accelerator": participants complete all general cohort activities plus work directly with plastic surgeon leaders, including past ASPS presidents, division chairs at Mayo Clinic, and an AMA trustee involved in setting new codes.

Room 3: General MedTech Innovator Cohort

Manios Dimitrakakis, CEO, Panda Surgical (MTI '26), with Nicole Black

- Panda Surgical is a London-based spin-out developing robotics for confined-space surgery, starting with neurosurgery.
- Roughly 75% of MTI companies are in the general cohort, which is tailored to each company with strategic mentors (Zimmer Biomet in Panda Surgical's case).
- Manios said the company left the program different from how it entered. Before MTI, they had not seen Zimmer Biomet as a potential strategic; now they have a much clearer strategy.
- Manios won a Star Mentee Award this year.

Room 4: BARDA Hubs (Vantage for MTI, Vanguard for BTI)

Heather Lukas, Senior Program Manager, MedTech Innovator

- BARDA (Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority) sits within the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Both domestic and international companies are eligible.
- Focus: technologies that strengthen health security infrastructure, including those with dual-use applications or relevance to specific health security threats.
- Participants learn about opportunities with BARDA and HHS and about joining the BARDA Accelerator Network. Vantage is brand new this year.

Room 5: General BioTools Innovator Cohort

Surekha Karudapuram, Chief Product Officer, QuantumCyte (BTI '26)

- QuantumCyte addresses the ~20% of tumor biopsy samples that fail to produce a sequencing result due to insufficient tumor content, which can cost patients access to targeted therapy.
- Its platform uses printing technology adapted from the high-tech industry to mask non-target tissue on biopsy slides, enriching for tumor regions and improving signal-to-noise.
- QuantumCyte joined with a validated product and strong market interest, and used BTI's webinars, mentors and network to build a full commercial strategy: go-to-market, pricing and deal structuring. The team is now using that strategy to close deals with pharma companies and clinical testing labs.

How to Apply to Specialty Tracks & Hubs

- **MTI application:** In the Program Fit section, check any or all of American Heart Association, American Society of Plastic Surgeons, and Vantage, then write one paragraph on why you are a fit for each. The team triages with partners.
- **BTI application:** Check the Vanguard option and provide an explanation.
- MTI and BTI applications are similar. A handful of companies apply to both programs each year; if invited to pitch for both, the team helps decide which program will best propel your milestones.