



Emil Runge
Director of Programs
First Flight Venture Center

Emil Runge has the phenomenal pleasure of getting to work with entrepreneurs and ecosystem partners on an array of efforts to improve the probability of success of early-stage science startups. He leads the First Flight BARDA DRIVE

Accelerator focused on national health security, facilitates Propeller Ideation Trainings, manages the North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NCMEP) with Hangar6, works with our awesome Navigators and lines up our great companies to present at Itineraries (our nerdvana sessions where our companies can geek out on their science). He also led the effort to launch Test Flight Pitch Practices to help our companies better prepare themselves to pitch to investors.

In 2022, Emil helped launch the Wheels UP Accelerator, comprehensive 12-week, cohort-based, sector-focused accelerator for science/technology startups. Working in collaboration with BARDA, the first Wheels UP cohort in summer-fall 2022 accelerated the ability of entrepreneurs to scale disruptive biotechnology and health security/pandemic preparedness solutions. BARDA provided \$100,000 in prize money as well as technical expertise for this first cohort, which had its Demo Day (accelerator graduate presentations to potential investors and industry/government experts) on November 3, 2022.

For over three decades, Emil has consulted, advised and assisted elected and appointed officials in capacities at the federal, state and local level as well as academia. Since 2001, he focused primarily on improving his region, state and nation through innovative public policy solutions and strategic initiatives in the political, governmental, innovation and entrepreneurial arenas. For over a dozen years, he has focused on growing Startup Communities and improving Innovation & Entrepreneurial Ecosystems.