

Premier's Department

Emerging Technology Commercialisation Fund

Program Guidelines

March 2026



Grant Program Details	
Opening date and time	06/03/2026 10:00 AM AEDT
Closing date and time	29/04/2026 10:00 AM AEST
Application outcome date	October - November 2026
Project delivery timeframe (for successful applications)	January 2027 – December 2028
Decision-maker	Minister for Innovation, Science & Technology
NSW Government Agency	Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer, Premier's Department
Type of grant opportunity	Open, competitive
Grant value	A funding pool of up to \$7 million for grants between \$500,000 to \$2 million (excl GST).
Enquiries	grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au

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1

Overview of grant program

1 Overview and purpose

The Emerging Technology Commercialisation Fund (ETCF) is a key action of the NSW Innovation Blueprint,¹ designed to accelerate the growth of the state's innovation ecosystem. Administered by the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer (OCSE) within the Premier's Department, the ETCF supports startups to bridge the gap between early-stage ideas and market-ready solutions – turning world-class research into commercial outcomes that drive economic growth, create high-value jobs and strengthen NSW's global competitiveness.

The ETCF addresses critical gaps in the product development cycle between early-stage research and mature investment opportunities, targeting market failures that prevent NSW businesses from capitalising on innovation. It provides repayable grants to help commercialise highly innovative ideas into new products, processes and services.

The ETCF provides up to \$7 million in funding per round to innovations that support NSW's strategic priorities – including net zero, housing and local manufacturing – as outlined in the NSW Industry Policy,² while also advancing opportunities aligned with the NSW Innovation Blueprint,³ the NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap⁴ and the NSW Trade and Investment Strategy.⁵

1.1 Objectives

The ETCF is an open competitive fund that aims to address market gaps that limit NSW's ability to translate innovation into economic growth. Its objectives are to:

1. **Progress emerging technology innovations to commercial deployment:** ETCF will de-risk emerging technology innovations by progressing them along the TRL pathway towards commercial deployment.
2. **Improve commercial viability and investment readiness:** ETCF will strengthen recipients' commercial viability and investment readiness – so they are better positioned to generate early revenue and attract further private investment.
3. **Generate long-term economic benefits for NSW:** ETCF will scale jobs and capabilities in NSW – strengthening NSW competitive advantages in Government priority areas (for example, local manufacturing, housing and net zero), building a stronger innovation ecosystem and supply-chain capabilities.

The ETCF targets NSW companies with innovative devices, technologies or products within the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) range of 3 – 7 and supports them to move along the TRL scale and commercialise their idea (**Figure 1**).

The ETCF will be administered in accordance with the [NSW Grants Administration Guide](#).

¹ [NSW Innovation Blueprint](#)

² [NSW Industry Policy](#)

³ [NSW Innovation Blueprint](#)

⁴ [NSW 20-year R&D Roadmap](#)

⁵ [NSW Trade and Investment Strategy](#)

Figure 1 – TRL Levels

Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) are used to represent the development of an innovation.

Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Basic principles observed	Technology concept formulated	Experimental proof of concept	Technology validation in lab	Technology valid in relevant environment	Demonstration in relevant environment	Demonstration in operational environment	System complete and qualified	Successful mission operations
Not eligible		Eligible					Not eligible	

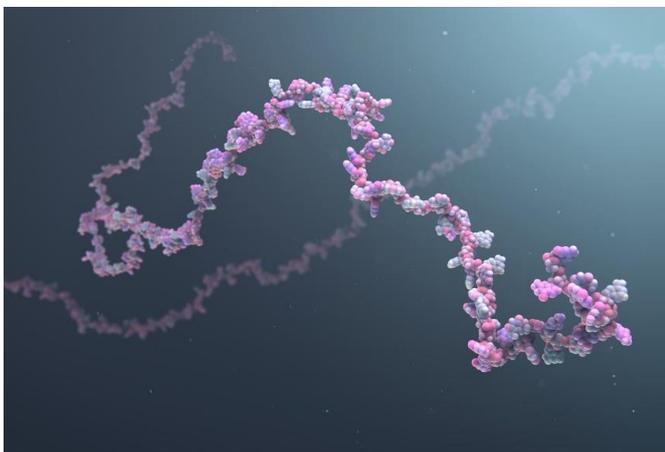
Further details regarding the TRL scale are available in Appendix A.

1.2 Grant value

The ETCF has total funding pool of up to \$7 million per year. Funding will be awarded through an open competitive process. Each grant awarded will be:

- Not less than \$500,000 excl. GST
- Not more than \$2,000,000 excl. GST.

The grant must be repaid in instalments. Repayments will start in the financial year when the recipient’s total EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortisation), calculated from the time the grant was awarded, exceeds \$500,000.



2

Selection criteria

2 Selection criteria

To be considered for funding, applications must first satisfy all eligibility requirements set out in **Eligibility criteria (Section 2.1)**. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be assessed further.

Eligible applications will then be assessed against the criteria set out in **Assessment criteria (Section 2.2)**. The assessment will be led by two separate Expert Panels: one assessing applications in the physical sciences (Stream A), and the other in biological sciences (Stream B):

- **Stream A (Physical Sciences)** – this stream supports the development of new and innovative physical devices and systems.⁶
- **Stream B (Biological Sciences)** – this stream supports innovation across the biological and life sciences, including biotechnology, biomanufacturing, genetic engineering, synthetic biology.

During the eligibility and assessment process, the OCSE may request additional information from applicants or advice from other NSW Government agencies or external experts.

The Department, at its sole discretion, may deem an application ineligible for the ETCF based on publicly available or confidential information.

2.1 Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria comprise:

1. eligible applicants
2. eligible grant activities
3. eligible expenses.

Your application must satisfy all of these to be eligible for funding through the ETCF. At any time during the assessment process, if falsified or incorrect declarations are identified, the application will be deemed ineligible by the Department.

2.1.1 Eligible applicants

Applicants must satisfy **all** eligibility requirements outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 – Eligible ETCF applicants

Eligibility requirements – applicants must:	
1(a)	Be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a company incorporated under the <i>Corporations Act 2001</i> (Cth), or • an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Corporation registered under the <i>Corporations (Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006</i> (Cth)
1(b)	Be a for-profit entity.
1(c)	Not be listed on any public stock exchange.
1(d)	Have an active Australian Business Number (ABN).
1(e)	Be headquartered in NSW.

⁶ Digital-only applications such as software applications, data tools, AI platforms are not considered eligible.

Eligibility requirements – applicants must:	
1(f)	As of 1 January 2026, have more than 65% of their Full Time Equivalent Employees employed in NSW.
1(g)	Have revenue of less than \$2.5 million per year (excluding grant funding) in the last financial year (FY2024/25).
1(h)	Not be a subsidiary of another company.
1(i)	Own the IP or have an exclusive license to commercialise the IP in Australia and globally.

The Department, at its sole discretion, may deem an applicant ineligible for the ETCF on the basis of publicly available or confidential information about an applicant, such as any personnel or business activities that could cause reputational damage or other unacceptable risk to the NSW Government.

The Department reserves the right to assess the applicant's management, its Directors, Officers and entities or individuals that exercise control over an applicant against a fit and proper person's eligibility criterion.

2.1.2 Eligible grant activities

Proposed grant activities must satisfy **all** the eligibility requirements outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 – Eligible ETCF grant activities

Eligibility requirements – projects must:	
2(a)	Be TRL 3-7 on the TRL Scale at the time of applying for the ETCF (Figure 1).
2(b)	Progress along the TRL Scale (Figure 1) an existing physical prototype of a device, technology, or product. or Progress along the TRL Scale (Figure 1) a proof-of-concept of a biological or life sciences innovation.
2(c)	Be completed within two years (unless there are exceptional circumstances).
2(d)	Not have received grant funding for the activities specified in the application.
2(e)	Not be eligible for the Medical Devices Fund (MDF) funded by NSW Health.

2.1.3 Eligible expenses

Grant funding must only be spent on the eligible expenses in **Table 3**.

At least 65% of the grant funding must be spent in NSW.

Table 3 - Eligible expenses for the ETCF

Eligibility requirements – eligible expenses are those for:	
3(a)	prototyping, product development and piloting studies
3(b)	manufacturing and/or scaling
3(c)	conducting market research, testing and trials
3(d)	regulatory approvals and other relevant certifications
3(e)	salaries and access to external expertise that is directly related to delivery of the project

Eligibility requirements – eligible expenses are those for:	
3(f)	commercialisation strategies and commercial feasibility studies
3(g)	project consumables directly related to delivery of project outcomes
3(h)	specialist equipment and/or infrastructure necessary to progress the project
3(i)	intellectual property protection or advice

Table 4 provides a non-exhaustive list of ineligible expenses.

Table 4 – Ineligible expenses for the ETCF

Ineligible expenses include:	
4(a)	The purchase of land or property.
4(b)	Expenses incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation.
4(c)	Expenses incurred prior to an offer of funding made to successful applications (no retrospective funding will be awarded).
4(d)	Expenses that are already the subject of another government grant, subsidy or financial assistance (no overlap of costs for the same project activities).
4(e)	General business expenses including sales, marketing, office rent and travel.
4(f)	Solutions designed to improve internal business processes.

The Department, at its absolute discretion, may deem expenses to be eligible upon request of the applicant.

The Department may ask applicants to verify the project cost and request evidence of costs such as supplier contracts, quotes and invoices. Grantees must demonstrate value for money by ensuring project costs are reasonable and reflective of actual costs incurred and reasonable market rates. The Department may use industry cost benchmarks to assess whether costs are reasonable. The Department will make the final decision on whether a claimed cost is eligible or reasonable (and only pay the reasonable amount). For more information, refer to **Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements (Section 5.4)**.

2.2 Assessment criteria

The ETCF uses a two stage assessment process. **Stage 1 (Preliminary Application)** is a shortlisting screen based on a brief written application and pitch video, to identify proposals with the strongest potential to proceed. **Stage 2 (Full Application)** then assesses shortlisted proposals in more depth using additional evidence, focusing on **Innovation, Commercialisation, Deliverability and Alignment**.

Applications that have met the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the assessment criteria below. The assessment of applications will be led by two independent Expert Panels (Streams A and B), supported by two Subcommittees and the OCSE Grant Delivery Team.



2.2.1 Stage 1. Preliminary Application assessment criteria

The Preliminary Application Stage (Stage 1) selects applications that demonstrate strong potential to progress to the Full Application Stage (Stage 2). At the Preliminary Application Stage, applicants submit a **brief written application and a short pitch video**. Preliminary Applications are assessed against the assessment criteria in **Table 5** with each criterion scored out of 5 and weighted to produce an overall application score.

Table 5 – Assessment Criteria (Stage 1) – Preliminary Application

Criterion	What we look for	How we score (0 to 5 points)	Weight
1. Solution & Value Proposition	<p>Clear articulation of the problem and why it matters.</p> <p>A highly differentiated solution with a credible rationale for novelty.</p> <p>A clear, simple value proposition (who it helps, how, and why it's better).</p> <p>Evidence that the applicant understands the target user/customer and competitive landscape.</p>	<p>1–2: Unclear problem; generic solution; unclear differentiation; vague market claims.</p> <p>3: Clear problem and customer; plausible differentiation; coherent value proposition.</p> <p>4–5: Crisp, compelling narrative; defensible uniqueness; strong evidence of customer understanding.</p>	25%
2. Evidence & Traction	<p>Credible evidence the solution works at the applicant's current maturity level.</p> <p>Evidence of validation (technical and/or customer) that reduces key uncertainties.</p> <p>'Traction' of the solution (this is interpreted broadly and appropriately to the TRL of the solution)</p>	<p>1–2: Little/no evidence; mostly aspirations; validation is missing or anecdotal only.</p> <p>3: Some clear proof points – such as demonstrations or proof-of-concept results, independent testing, pilots, trials, pre-orders, partnerships, regulatory approvals.</p> <p>4–5: Strong, credible validation (technical and/or customer), with clear momentum signals.</p>	15%
3. Business Model & Project Plan	<p>A plausible business model and route-to-market for the target customer.</p> <p>A credible, high-level project plan with milestones and feasibility.</p> <p>Evidence the team understands major risks and has a plan to manage them.</p>	<p>1–2: Unclear model; unrealistic plan; milestones absent; risks ignored.</p> <p>3: Coherent model and feasible plan; milestones and risks identified.</p> <p>4–5: Strong route-to-market logic; well-structured milestones; credible risk management.</p>	25%
4. Project Team	<p>Team commitment to the innovation and company, and clarity of roles.</p> <p>Appropriate technical and commercialisation capability.</p> <p>Evidence the team can execute (for example, track record, relevant experience, or credible partners/advisors).</p>	<p>1–2: Key skills missing; unclear roles/commitment.</p> <p>3: Credible team with some gaps and a practical plan to fill them.</p> <p>4–5: Highly relevant experience; clear execution capacity; strong supporting capability, strong alignment with success of the solution and company.</p>	20%
5. Impact to NSW	<p>Credible potential for economic development and job creation in NSW.</p> <p>Clear alignment with NSW Government priorities and strategies (NSW Innovation Blueprint, NSW Industry Policy, NSW Trade and Investment Strategy, and NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap).</p>	<p>1–2: Generic NSW claims; alignment unclear; limited NSW benefit pathway.</p> <p>3: Credible NSW footprint and alignment narrative.</p> <p>4–5: Strong, specific NSW benefit case with clear alignment and plausible outcomes.</p>	15%

2.2.2 Stage 2. Full Application assessment criteria

Shortlisted applicants are invited to submit a Full Application. The Full Application will comprise an application form and requested attachments. Full Applications are assessed against the assessment criteria in **Table 6**. Applications are rated low, medium or high against each criterion. All criteria are equally weighted.

Table 6 – Assessment Criteria (Stage 2) – Full Application

Criterion	What we look for
1. Innovation	<p>A highly innovative solution with evidence of:</p> <p>Uniqueness and need: Clear rationale for why the solution is novel and needed.</p> <p>Technical viability: Evidence it can work as intended, including feasibility, safety/quality/efficacy considerations (as relevant), cost-effectiveness and scalability.</p> <p>TRL progression: Credible plan to progress from the estimated TRL at commencement to the targeted TRL at completion of the project.</p> <p>IP position: Ownership/licensing position and credibility of IP strategy (e.g., patents/trademarks).</p>
2. Commercialisation	<p>Progression to future commercial outcomes and revenue generation, with evidence of:</p> <p>Market viability: Evidence of customer need and market opportunity (market research, customer engagement, competitor landscape), including regulatory/legal considerations and profitability pathway.</p> <p>Value proposition: Clear differentiation and how the solution addresses the identified problem; competitive advantages of the company and solution; and potential for expansion/export.</p> <p>Pathway to market: Credible route-to-market and business plan.</p>
3. Deliverability	<p>Evidence the project can be delivered successfully, including:</p> <p>Plan and milestones: A detailed and feasible project plan with clear tasks, milestones and deliverables (including TRL milestones where relevant).</p> <p>Team capability: Track record, expertise, capacity, alignment and access to required partners/advisers.</p> <p>Budget and risk: Realistic and prudent cost estimates and resourcing; clear risk identification and mitigations/controls.</p> <p>Financial viability: Company operating and financial model that supports delivery and future scale; organisational sustainability and key financial risks.</p>
4. Alignment	<p>Need: Why sufficient funding cannot be accessed elsewhere; why the project would not proceed at this scale in NSW without ETCF support; and when and how future private investment will be secured.</p> <p>Benefits to NSW: Economic, environmental and/or social benefits and alignment with NSW Government priorities and strategies (NSW Innovation Blueprint, NSW Industry Policy, NSW Trade and Investment Strategy, and NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap).</p>

3

Application process

3 Application process

3.1 How to apply

IMPORTANT NOTE: An applicant can only submit one application each Round of the ETCF.

To apply you must:

1. Complete the Preliminary Application form at <https://chiefscientist.smartygrants.com.au/ETCF2026>
2. Include all requested attachments (**Section 3.1.1**)
3. Submit your application by the timelines outlined in **Key dates (Section 3.1.5)**.

Once you submit your application, the system will send you a confirmation email. You should keep a copy of your application and any attachments.

Applicants who are invited to submit a Full Application will receive instructions on how to do this.

Information on the assessment process is provided in **Selection criteria (Section 2)** and **Assessment process (Section 4)**.

3.1.1 Attachments to applications

Applicants are required to provide additional attachments to their application form.

Preliminary Application (Stage 1)

Applicants are required to provide the following attachments as part of their Preliminary Application (Stage 1):

- A pitch video pitch (no longer than 5 minutes). The pitch video should address the five Preliminary Application assessment criteria in **Table 5**. The pitch video should reflect how you would pitch the solution and company to prospective investors. Guidance on the pitch video is provided at **Section 3.1.2**.
- A table showing ownership structure of the applicant company (Capitalisation Table).
- A chart displaying management structure of the applicant company (Organisation Chart).

Full Application (Stage 2)

Applicants who are invited to submit a Full Application (Stage 2) will receive instructions on how to do this including requested attachments. Applicants will be requested to provide further attachments as part of their Full Application (Stage 2) including, but not limited to:

- Intellectual property documentation
- Financial statements and management accounts
- Copies of capital raising presentations (if applicable)
- Resumes

3.1.2 Pitch video

The pitch video should address the five Preliminary Application assessment criteria in **Table 5**. The pitch video should reflect how you would pitch the innovation and company to prospective investors.

Favourable elements of a pitch video include (non-exhaustive list):

- A video pitch by the founder(s) of the company.

- A clear, investor-style narrative that quickly sets up the problem, the solution, and why it matters in plain English.
- A structure that covers all five Preliminary Application assessment criteria in Table 5 in a balanced way, without over-weighting any one section.
- Specific, credible evidence appropriate to the solution's TRL, rather than broad or purely aspirational claims.
- A short, authentic demonstration of the solution (for example lab results, field activities, prototype or proof-of-concept footage).
- Good basic production quality (audible voice, stable image, readable visuals).

Unfavourable elements of a pitch video include (non-exhaustive list):

- Stock footage or AI-generated videos.
- Content that does not address the assessment criteria.
- Unsubstantiated superlatives ('world-leading', 'best-in-class') without evidence, benchmarks, validation, or credible comparisons.
- Vague claims about traction, market, or impact that are not supported by evidence appropriate to the TRL.
- A video that is difficult to follow or relies on dense jargon without clear explanation.
- A video that does not show the innovation in any form (where a demonstration is feasible and relevant).

3.1.3 Your responsibilities when applying for the grant

The ETCF Program Guidelines contain information about the ETCF, whether you are eligible to apply, and how you can make an application. You must read these Guidelines before applying for the grant.

The Guidelines may be updated at any time prior to applications closing. If this occurs, the revised Guidelines or an addendum will be published on the ETCF website.

It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure:

- Their application form and attachments are complete and submitted through the official system prior to the closing deadline. Applications submitted via email or through any other channel will not be accepted.
- They clearly identify any information in their application form and attachments that they consider confidential.
- Their application is authorised by a representative of their organisation with appropriate authority (for example the CEO or their authorised delegate).
- Their application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is an offence under the *Crimes Act 1900 No 40 (NSW)*. We will investigate any false or misleading information.
- They comply with all applicable laws including the *NSW Lobbyists Code of Conduct*. Applicants must not lobby the NSW Government on an issue related or seen to be related to the ETCF that may be perceived to give an unfair advantage to the applicant.

3.1.4 Accuracy and corrections

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately at grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au. If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask you to provide a clarification or additional information.

Corrections to errors in applications will not be accepted except where the Department is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances that justify the correction and that the integrity, fairness and competitiveness of the ETCF would not be compromised.

An independent probity advisor will be present to provide guidance to the Department and the Expert Panel on integrity, fairness and accountability, and ensure transparency of the Program's administration. Further information about probity controls is at **Conflict of interest management (Section 6.3.1)**.

3.1.5 Key dates

Applications must be completed and submitted before the closing date (**Table 7**). Late submissions will not be considered except where the Department is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances that justify the late submission and that the integrity, fairness and competitiveness of the ETCF would not be compromised. Acceptance of late applications is at the sole discretion of the Department.

Table 7 – ETCF timeline

Activity	Timeframe
Preliminary Applications open	10:00am AEDT 6 March 2026
Preliminary Applications close	10:00 am AEST 29 April 2026
Full Applications invited and unsuccessful applicants notified	July 2026
Full Applications submitted	July 2026
Interviews of applicants (if required)	September 2026
Successful applicants notified	October 2026
Public announcement	November 2026

The Department, at its absolute discretion, may vary these dates.

3.2 Questions

If you have any questions, please contact the OCSE at grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au. This OCSE mailbox is monitored during business hours. The OCSE will aim to respond to enquiries within 3 business days.

To ensure equal access to information, the OCSE may disclose questions and their answers on the ETCF frequently asked questions (FAQ) page which can be found at the ETCF website. The OCSE will not identify the organisation that has asked the question. If your question includes confidential information, you must expressly indicate that when you contact the OCSE. The OCSE accepts no responsibility for the disclosure of information except where the party has expressly indicated that it should be treated as confidential.



4

Assessment process

4 Assessment process

4.1 Assessment of grant applications

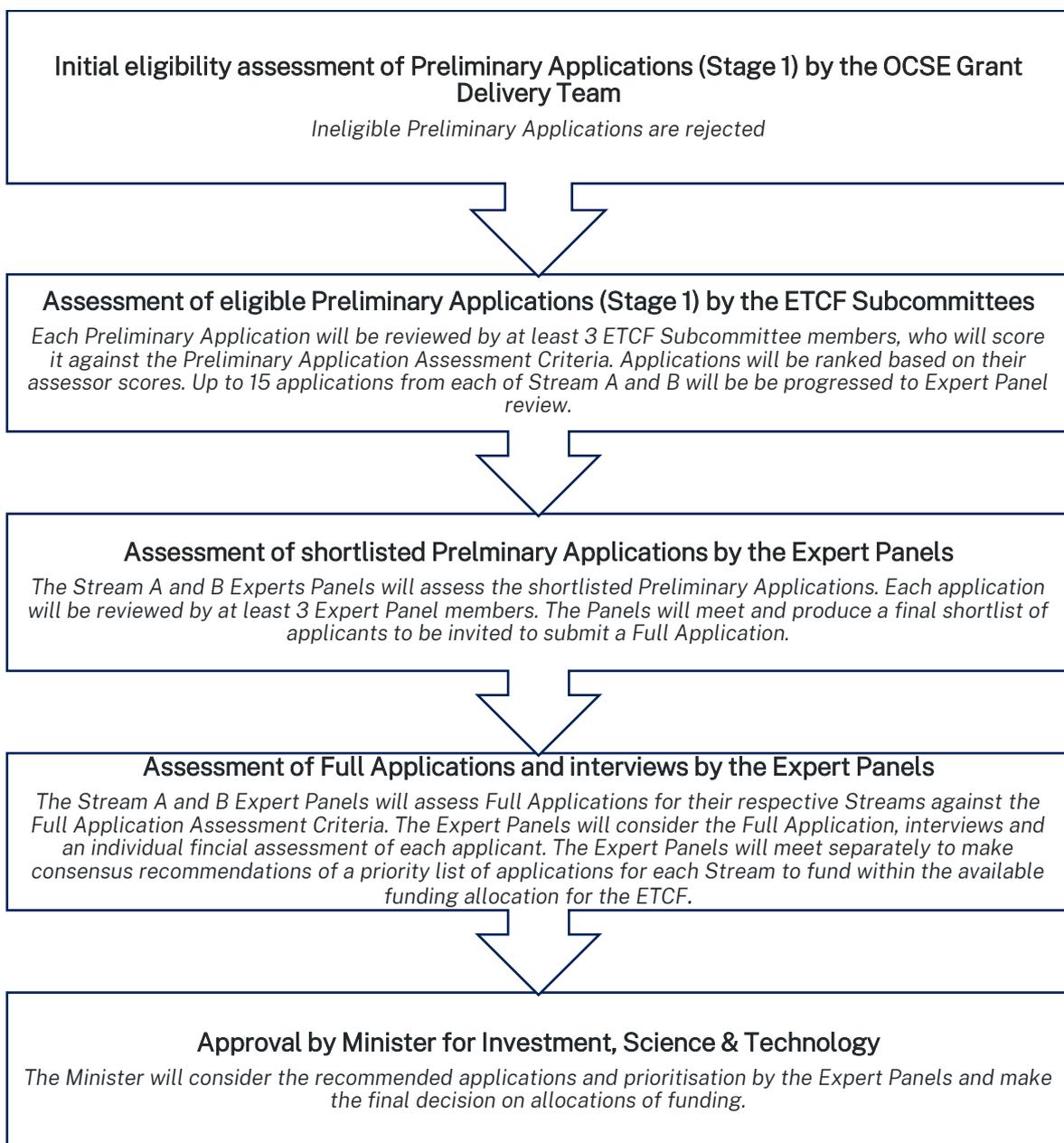
The assessment of applications will be administered by the OCSE through a competitive grant process involving independent experts with expertise in deep tech, commercialisation and venture capital investment.

During the assessment process, the OCSE may ask applicants to provide additional information. Advice may be sought from other NSW Government agencies or other sources to assist in the assessment of projects as required. Applicants may withdraw their application at any time.

4.1.1 Assessment process

The ETCF assessment process is outlined in **Figure 2** below.

Figure 2 – ETCF assessment process



As part of the assessment process, shortlisted applicants may be invited to an interview. The interview will focus on clarifying key aspects of the application against the Full Application Assessment Criteria (Table 5).

4.1.2 Who will assess applications?

Eligible applications will be assessed by the ETCF Subcommittees, and if recommended, by the ETCF Stream A or B Expert Panels. The ETCF Subcommittees will comprise members with research, industry, entrepreneurial and venture capital expertise relevant to delivering the ETCF program purpose.

The ETCF will establish two Expert Panels, for Stream A (Physical Sciences) and Stream B (Biological Sciences) respectively. Each Expert Panel will:

- Be chaired by an independent person with experience in research commercialisation and expertise in the sector and grant programs.
- Comprise members with research, industry, entrepreneurial and venture capital expertise relevant to delivering the ETCF program purpose.
- Draw on external advice or expertise as required. Expertise could include individuals with significant subject-matter expertise specific to the nature of shortlisted projects, but who are not conflicted. These experts will provide advice only, subject to confidentiality obligations, and will not participate in the assessment of applications.

ETCF Subcommittee and Expert Panel members will be required to identify any conflicts of interest and sign a confidentiality agreement. The OCSE will prescribe a management approach for any conflicts of interest – for example by excluding a conflicted assessor from scoring or discussing an application where they have an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

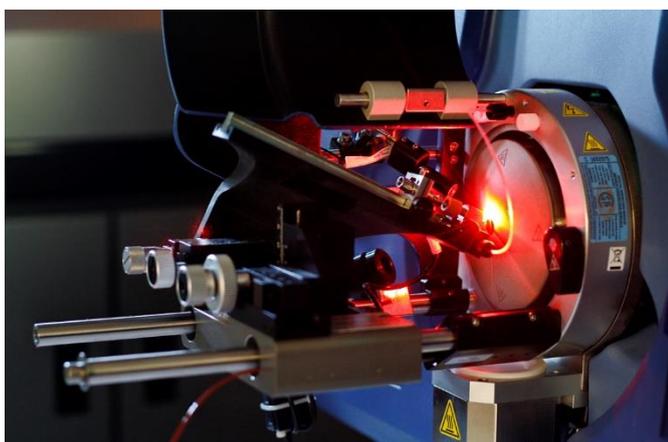
4.1.3 Financial Assessment

As part of Full Application, applicants are required to submit detailed financial reports and other relevant documentation. This financial information will be reviewed by an independent financial advisor, who will provide advice to the Expert Panels on organisational, financial and project-specific risks.

Once successful applicants have been determined, the independent financial advisor will undertake a return-on-investment assessment with each funding recipient to help them understand the reporting and repayment obligations. The independent financial advisor will be engaged to conduct annual financial audits and risk assessments with each funding recipient during the term of the Deed of Agreement as a condition of the Deed.

4.1.4 Who will approve the grant?

The Minister is the final decision-maker on funding decisions for the ETCF based on the recommendations of the Expert Panels.



4.2 Notification of application outcome

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email. Successful applicants will be notified via email within 30 days of the final determination including any specific conditions attached to the grant.

Successful applicants will be required to keep the grant confidential until the NSW Government makes a public announcement of the ETCF outcomes.

The NSW Government will publicly announce funding for individual applications and provide information on the [NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder](#).

4.2.1 Feedback on applications and appeal process

Unsuccessful applicants may request receive feedback on their application. Any enquiries regarding the assessment process or the outcome of an application should be directed to the OCSE Grants Delivery Team at: grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au.

There is no formal appeals process for ETCF. All assessment decisions are final and at the discretion of the NSW Government. However, applicants are encouraged to seek feedback to support future applications and engagement with other programs.

4.3 Publication of grants information

The [Grants Administration Guide \(Guide\)](#) requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide). This information is also open access information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act)*, which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information. In accordance with these requirements, relevant information about the grants awarded will be made available on the [NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder](#). All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*.



5

Successful grant
applications

5 Successful grant applications

5.1 Grant agreement

Successful applicants who accept the offer of a grant will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the NSW Government relating to the grant. The funding agreement will specify the obligations of the grant including the repayment obligations. The NSW Government may revoke the offer of a grant at any time prior to the execution of the funding agreement. Requests for variations or changes to the project may be considered in exceptional cases within the terms and conditions of the funding agreement.

All grant recipients must acknowledge this financial support in accordance with the Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines for Recipients of NSW Government Rebates available at nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines.

All grant recipients must seek written consent of the Department prior to any significant public announcement, marketing, press announcements or events in relation to the grant.

The NSW Government logo must be displayed on all public materials related to the grant. The public materials must also include an acknowledgement of the support of the NSW Government.

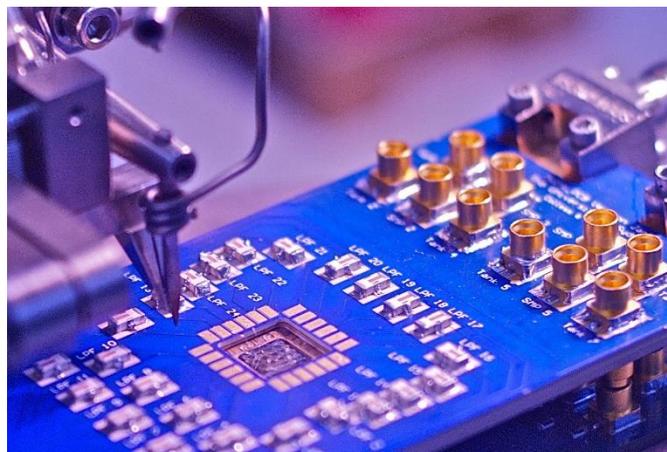
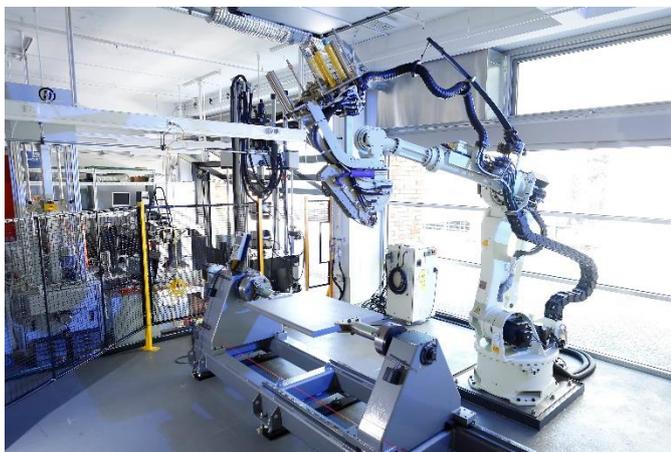
5.2 Grant payment

The grant will be payable upon the execution of the funding agreement and receipt of a valid invoice. Grant recipients are responsible for seeking taxation advice in relation to the grant payment. Applicants must be registered under the GST Law at the time of making any supply under the funding agreement on which GST is imposed.

Successful applicants will be required to provide financial information to an independent financial advisor who will undertake annual financial monitoring of the organisation. This will monitor how the grant is expended against agreed milestones and determine if the repayment obligations have been met. This information will be treated as confidential.

5.3 Unspent funds

You must obtain the Department's prior written consent before any expenditure of the grant funding other than expenditure which has previously been approved by the Department in the funding agreement. Any funds spent in breach of the funding agreement, or any unspent funds remaining upon the completion of the ETCF project, must be returned to the Department.



5.4 Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements

The funding agreement will set out the regular reporting obligations. Templates will be provided for these reports and will require information such as:

- progress against agreed project milestones and outcomes
- project expenses
- contributions of participants directly related to the grant
- performance measures, including, but not limited to:
 - income from sales, other grants or capital raises
 - number of jobs established or supported by the grant
 - research, industry or government engagement
 - intellectual property and regulatory progress.

Activity Progress Reporting

During the term of the Deed of Agreement, successful applicants must provide a written Activity Progress Report to document progress on the Project to date and is to include:

- financial reporting as set out in the Deed of Agreement
- audited accounts for the preceding financial year reporting period
- progress and expenditure against the project plan
- current and prospective partners for collaborations/engagement
- any difficulties impacting the project, or which are anticipated to impact the project
- an updated Project Budget for the following 12 months
- a definitive statement as to whether:
 - the financial information for the project represents the financial transactions fairly and is based on proper accounts and records
 - if the Grant was expended in accordance with the Deed of Agreement
 - the amount of interest earned on the Grant.

Activity Final Reporting

The Final Report is to document completion of the Project and is to include:

- all activities undertaken during the reporting period
- evaluation of the project and how successful the project was in achieving the objectives
- the status of results achieved to date from the project
- the results of research and collaborations with other organisations
- details about any unspent funds which, unless authorisation has been sought, must be returned to the Department
- any other information deemed to be relevant to the project that will assist the promotion of the ETCF
- a complete financial acquittal of how the funds were spent during the grant period and include a definitive statement as to whether:
 - the financial information for the project represents the financial transactions fairly and is based on proper accounts and records
 - if the grant was expended in accordance with the Deed of Agreement.

During the term of the project, the Department, the successful applicant and independent financial advisor will meet to conduct an annual performance review and discuss the annual activity progress report.

The Department reserves the right to undertake an audit of the ETCF support within seven years from date of the Deed of Agreement.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of the funding agreement, you must contact us immediately.

5.5 Evaluation

The Department will evaluate the ETCF to measure the extent to which the Program's objectives have been achieved and may use information, including confidential information, from applicants and reports for this purpose. Successful applicants will be required to participate in program evaluations after the project has commenced and for up to three years following the grant payment. The Department may interview or request information from applicants or related partners. This could include information about revenues, costs, employment, and other matters. Any confidential information included as part of this evaluation process will be treated as confidential and not disclosed outside of the NSW Government.

6

Additional information and
resources

6 Additional information and resources

6.1 Complaint handling

Any enquiry you have about the assessment process or the outcome of your application for this Program should be sent to grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au.

Complaints will, in the first instance, be reviewed by the OCSE. If we cannot resolve the complaint within 30 business days of receipt, we will provide details of a nominated complaints and review officer from the Complaints Team who will advise the next steps.

If you do not agree with the way the OCSE has handled your enquiry or complaint, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman. The NSW Ombudsman will not consider a complaint unless the matter has been first raised directly with the OCSE.

NSW Ombudsman
Level 24
580 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

The applicant must lodge a complaint with the OCSE in writing and submit it to grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au.

6.2 Access to information

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

Note that documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

6.3 Ethical conduct

6.3.1 Conflict of interest management

The OCSE is committed to ensuring the grant opportunity process is conducted fairly, transparently, and in accordance with the published guidelines. Appropriate safeguards will be in place to prevent fraud, unlawful activity, and other inappropriate conduct throughout all stages of the Program.

An independent probity advisor will be engaged to support the integrity, fairness and accountability of the Program. The Probity Advisor will provide expert guidance to the OCSE on any issues that may arise during the application, assessment and decision-making process. They will also review program documentation, observe assessment panel meetings (with a focus on conflict of interest management), review funding recommendations, and provide a final probity report outlining their observations.

All individuals involved in the assessment of applications – whether internal or external to the Department – must complete a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Declaration prior to accessing confidential material or participating in the assessment process. All declared conflicts – whether actual, potential or perceived – will be recorded in the Program’s Conflict-of-Interest Register and reviewed by the Program Probity Advisor.

Should a conflict be identified, the Program Manager will determine, in consultation with the Probity Advisor, the appropriate management action. All assessors are required to actively monitor their participation throughout the process and notify the Program Manager if circumstances change.

This comprehensive approach to conflict of interest and probity management ensures that assessment and funding decisions are made with transparency, rigour and in the public interest.

6.3.2 Confidentiality and Privacy

We are committed to protecting your confidential and personal information in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)* (the Act) and the Premier’s Department Privacy Management Plan, available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/contact-us/privacy>.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the Act and agree to impose the same privacy obligations on any officers, employees, agents or subcontractors engaged to assist with the funded activity. You must not do anything that would cause us to be in breach of the Act.

We will collect personal information to assess your application and manage the grant if you are awarded funding.

Your personal information will only be used or disclosed for the purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies. The OCSE may also use or disclose information about applicants and recipients for program reporting purposes. We may share your information with other NSW Government entities or external reviewers to support government administration, research, assessment, and service delivery, in line with relevant Australian and NSW legislation.

Relevant information about grants awarded will also be published on the [NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder](#) as outlined in **Publication of grants information (Section 4.3)**.

Providing your personal information is voluntary, although we will not be able to assess your application if you do not provide this information.

You agree not to disclose to any person (other than us) any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or funding agreement, without our prior written consent. This obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We will keep any information in connection with the funding agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all the conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of this obligation if information is required or authorised to be disclosed by law or is disclosed to:

- members of the Expert Panel and other NSW Government employees and contractors engaged to manage or evaluate the Program
- our employees, contractors and professional advisers to research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other NSW Government departments or agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery purposes

- Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports or consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the NSW Parliament.

You may also be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement, or ensure that your employees, agents or subcontractors do so, if we request it.

The funding agreement may outline any additional confidentiality or privacy requirements, including for special categories of information collected, created or held under the agreement.

You have the right to access your personal information held by us without excessive delay or expense. You also have the right to request that the information we hold about you is amended, for example, if it is incorrect.

If you have any questions about the application of our privacy policy, would like to request access to the information we hold about you, request a correction or make a privacy complaint, please contact:

Information and Privacy Unit

The Cabinet Office

52 Martin Place Sydney NSW 2000

Email: infoandprivacy@tco.nsw.gov.au.

6.4 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The OCSE is committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across all our initiatives. We recognise that diverse perspectives are crucial to fostering innovation and achieving excellence in scientific research and development.

To actualise this vision, we encourage participants from all backgrounds to apply, particularly those who are historically underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), such as women, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, persons with disabilities, individuals from diverse gender and sexual identities, and people from rural or regional backgrounds.

We encourage applicants to consider how integrating diverse teams and inclusive practices can enhance the creativity, impact and relevance of their projects. The integration of EDI principles strengthens project design and potential for success by ensuring a variety of perspectives that mirror the richness of our society.

In fostering an inclusive research environment, the OCSE aims to:

- encourage innovative problem-solving through diverse teams
- equip projects with a broader range of cultural insights and experiences, enhancing the applicability and impact of research outcomes
- build a more resilient and inclusive scientific community.

We encourage all founders and startups to consider these EDI initiatives to enhance their business's growth and sustainability. Under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, Australian employers with 100 or more employees must annually report their gender equality data to the [Workplace Gender Equality Agency Australia | WGEA](#). By integrating EDI principles early on, startups can better prepare for these requirements and foster a more inclusive and equitable workplace from the outset.

6.5 Copyright

This publication is protected by copyright. With the exception of: (a) any coat of arms, logo, trademark or other branding; (b) any third-party intellectual property; and (c) personal information such as photographs of people, this publication is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence. The license terms are available at the Creative Commons website at: creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode.

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6.6 Disclaimer

The Department does not guarantee or warrant and accepts no legal liability whatsoever arising from or connected to, the accuracy, reliability, currency, or completeness of any material contained in this publication. Information in this publication is provided as general information only and is not intended as a substitute for advice from a qualified professional.

The Department recommends that users exercise care and use their own skill and judgment in using information from this publication and that users carefully evaluate the accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance of such information. Users should take steps to independently verify the information in this publication and, where appropriate, seek professional advice.

The Guidelines are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of the Department.

Appendix A: Technology Readiness Level (TRL)

Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) are a standardised 1–9 scale used to measure how mature a technology is, from early scientific principles (TRL 1) to a fully proven system in operational use (TRL 9).

TRL	TRL definition	TRL description/evidence of achievement
1	Basic Research. Initial scientific research begins.	Basic principles are observed. Focus is on fundamental understanding of a material or process.
2	Applied Research. Initial practical applications are identified. Potential of material or process to satisfy a technology need is confirmed.	Once basic principles are observed, practical applications can be identified. Applications are speculative, and there may be no proof or detailed analysis to support the assumptions. Examples are still limited to analytic studies. Supporting information includes publications or other references that outline the application being considered and that provide analysis to support the concept.
3	Critical Function, i.e., Proof of Concept Established. Applied research continues and early-stage development begins. Includes studies and initial laboratory measurements to validate analytical predictions of separate elements of the technology.	Analytical studies and laboratory-scale studies are designed to physically validate the predictions of separate elements of the technology. At TRL 3 experimental work is intended to verify that the concept works as expected. Components of the technology are validated, but there is no strong attempt to integrate the components into a complete system. Modelling and simulation may be used to complement physical experiments. Examples include research on materials, components, or processes that are not yet integrated.
4	Laboratory Testing/Validation of Alpha Prototype Component/Process. Design, development and lab testing of technological components are performed. Results provide evidence that applicable component/process performance targets may be attainable based on projected or modelled systems.	The basic technological components are integrated to establish that the pieces will work together. This is relatively "low fidelity" compared with the eventual system. Supporting information includes the results of the integrated experiments and estimates of how the experimental components and experimental test results differ from the expected system performance goals. TRL 4-6 represent the bridge from scientific research to engineering, from development to demonstration. TRL 4 is the first step in determining whether the individual components will work together as a system. The goal of TRL 4 should be the narrowing of possible options in the complete system.
5	Testing of Integrated/Semi-Integrated System. Component and/or process validation in relevant environment- (Beta prototype component level)	The basic technological components are integrated so that the system configuration is similar to (matches) the final application in almost all respects. Supporting information includes results from the laboratory scale testing, analysis of the differences between the laboratory and eventual operating system/environment, and analysis of what the experimental results mean for the eventual operating system/environment. The major difference between TRL 4 and 5 is the increase in the fidelity of the system and environment to the actual application. The system tested is almost prototypical. Scientific risk should be retired at the end of TRL 5. Results presented should be statistically relevant.

TRL	TRL definition	TRL description/evidence of achievement
6	<p>Prototype System Verified. System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (Beta prototype system level).</p>	<p>Engineering-scale models or prototypes are tested in a relevant environment. This represents a major step up in a technology's demonstrated readiness. The major difference between TRL 5 and 6 is the step up from laboratory scale to engineering scale and the determination of scaling factors that will enable design of the final system. The operating environment for the testing should closely represent the actual operating environment. Refinement of the cost model is expected at this stage based on new learning from the pilot line. The goal while in TRL 6 is to reduce engineering risk. Results presented should be statistically relevant.</p>
7	<p>Integrated Pilot System Demonstrated. System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (integrated pilot system level).</p>	<p>This represents a major step up from TRL 6, requiring demonstration of an actual system prototype in a relevant environment. Final design is virtually complete. The goal of this stage is to retire engineering and manufacturing risk. To credibly achieve this goal and exit TRL 7, scale is required as many significant engineering and manufacturing issues can surface during the transition between TRL 6 and 7.</p>
8	<p>System Incorporated in Commercial Design. Actual system/process completed and qualified through test and demonstration (pre-commercial demonstration).</p>	<p>The technology has been proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions. In almost all cases, this TRL represents the end of true system development. Examples include full scale volume manufacturing of commercial end product.</p>
9	<p>System Proven and Ready for Full Commercial Deployment.</p>	<p>The actual system is proven through successful operations in operating environment, and ready for full commercial deployment. The technology is in its final form.</p>