

Technology readiness levels

These are the 9 technology readiness levels, with 1 being the least ready and 9 being already used in real-life conditions.

Level 1: Basic principles of concept are observed and reported

Scientific research begins to be translated into applied research and development. Activities might include paper studies of a technology's basic properties.

Level 2: Technology concept and/or application formulated

Invention begins. Once basic principles are observed, practical applications can be invented. Activities are limited to analytic studies.

Level 3: Analytical and experimental critical function and/or proof of concept

Active research and development is initiated. This includes analytical studies and/or laboratory studies. Activities might include components that are not yet integrated or representative.

Level 4: Component and/or validation in a laboratory environment

Basic technological components are integrated to establish that they will work together. Activities include integration of "ad hoc" hardware in the laboratory.

Level 5: Component and/or validation in a simulated environment

The basic technological components are integrated for testing in a simulated environment. Activities include laboratory integration of components.

Level 6: System/subsystem model or prototype demonstration in a simulated environment

A model or prototype that represents a near desired configuration. Activities include testing in a simulated operational environment or laboratory.

Levels 7 through 9 represent the pre-commercialization gap for innovations.

Level 7: Prototype ready for demonstration in an appropriate operational environment

Prototype at planned operational level and is ready for demonstration in an operational environment. Activities include prototype field testing.

Level 8: Actual technology completed and qualified through tests and demonstrations

Technology has been proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions. Activities include developmental testing and evaluation of whether it will meet operational requirements.

Level 9: Actual technology proven through successful deployment in an operational setting

Actual application of the technology in its final form and under real-life conditions, such as those encountered in operational tests and evaluations. Activities include using the innovation under operational conditions.