




Oxentia's Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts for the People and the Economy (SHAPE) Readiness Level(s) (RLs) framework

Based on our experience supporting SHAPE commercialisation and SHAPE ventures, we developed the Oxentia proprietary SHAPE Readiness Levels (RLs) framework, which is aimed for impact and commercialisation professionals, investors and funders, and innovators. It is designed to help them screen opportunities, assess readiness, and plan their development strategy.

-  **Screen opportunities:** Evaluate/triage whether an innovation/service should be prioritised and receive support
-  **Assess readiness:** Is this innovation/service suitable for investment according to your risk profile?
-  **Plan their development strategy:** What does this innovation/service need to increase its readiness/maturity?

This newly developed SHAPE RLs framework takes into consideration the following key categories:

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|  Concept Readiness |  Team Profile |
|  Stakeholder Mapping |  Impact & Sustainability |
|  Business Model & Value Proposition articulation |  Intellectual Property rights & strategy |

While the traditional 1-9 Levels and Research/Development/Deployment TRL structure was maintained, we added an additional level (Scale - 10) to assess the readiness for scaling and internationalising of SHAPE ventures. Note that a project's rating across each category may not align. For example, a project/idea could have a higher IP level than Impact.

Why a new tool?

In an increasingly established SHAPE (Social sciences, humanities and arts for people and the economy) commercialisation landscape, a tailored tool to evaluate the readiness and potential for SHAPE-based research is still missing.

While the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) framework has proven to be instrumental to determine the maturity of research and innovation, its application has been primarily restricted to the field of STEM disciplines, neglecting the specificities and challenges posed by SHAPE research and not well adapting to SHAPE ventures. The latter in fact



Might not be tech-based;



Are more likely to be social enterprises or not-for-profit;



Are less likely to protect their ideas with patents.

Furthermore, traditional TRLs do not inform us about technology market readiness nor its impact(s). For this reason, a variety of new tools/framework has been created to complement or expand the TRL framework. Examples of existing tools are:

- [Market Readiness Levels](#)
- [Societal Readiness Levels](#)
- [Societal Embeddedness Levels](#)
- [KTH Innovation Readiness Levels](#)

Whilst existing frameworks are useful, we think it is important to develop a framework outlining objective criteria for evaluating the readiness and potential of SHAPE ventures. These criteria will help establish a shared language between researchers, universities, investors, and other key stakeholders, and provide a rigorous assessment of SHAPE opportunities.

What next?

We have created this framework with the intention that it will improve as we use it. As such we've published it under the creative commons license. We also welcome feedback and collaborative input; please contact iredalpoz@oxentia.com to share your ideas.

SHAPE Readiness Level Framework



	Readiness Level	Stakeholders	Business Model	Team	IP	Impact	
Scale	10	Service/product available on market and ready for scaling and /or internationalisation	The role of partners, and their ability to scale through testing in adjacent markets /geographies has been validated	Recurring revenues from more than one client/source	Team members that will support internationalization have been identified	The IP strategy covers all international territories, where operations are expected	The impact in all countries, including where product /service is delivered by external partner, can be tracked
	9	Service/product is market ready	Commitment from partners and/or customers to facilitate the delivery of the product /service has been secured	A clear strategy for market entry is in place	A well-rounded, collaborative team covering all the pillars of the business exists	An IP strategy has been developed that describes how the venture will develop beyond the first product /service offering (if applicable)	The impact can be communicated clearly and to different stakeholders / audiences
Deployment	8	Service is standardised and documented (regulatory compliance & certifications)	The role of partners has been validated	Funders /investors have been identified and engaged (if applicable)	You have the right company / team member profile	Evidence of how the solution is adding value to relevant stakeholders can be provided	Evidence of how the solution is adding value to relevant stakeholders can be provided
	7	Concept scaling opportunities considered and evaluated			Any gaps in the team's skillset or roles have been addressed	The brand is protected and recognised	There is a clearly articulated plan to sustain or scale the impact
Development	6	Concept has been piloted in the target audience/community	Stakeholder feedback has been integrated into the business model	Sources of revenue have been identified	A plan for recruitment/ development aligned to market entry strategy is in place	Freedom to operate is ensured	Key metrics and processes to collect data to monitor impact are set
	5	Concept has been tested in a small controlled environment	Beneficiaries and end-users have been identified and engaged with (if applicable)	There is evidence of market traction	The founder is not a single point of failure	Access (e.g. through license or assignee) to the required IPRs has been secured	Risk mitigation plan for potential unintended, negative consequence is in place
	4	Iteration of concept based on initial feedback in (3)	Key partners required to deliver all aspects of the product /service have been engaged (if applicable)	A clear plan to develop the BM/market is in place	Key gaps in the team skillset have been identified	The IP rights (IPRs) required for the product/service have been determined	A clearly articulated impact statement exists
Research	3	Concept development has taken place via preliminary research and stakeholder engagement (Initial data & evidence collected)	Stakeholders on the product /service concept have been identified and consulted	Clear marketing channels and ways of reaching your customers have been established			All relevant stakeholders are prepared to commit and contribute.
	2	Possible fields of use/application have been formulated	Potential stakeholder groups, including; delivery partners, payers, influencers, beneficiaries and end-users, have been shortlisted	A value proposition can be articulated	A team with capacity and experience committed to commercialise the innovation is in place	Innovators and contributors to the innovation, including any external parties, have been identified	The impact you aim to have (social, economic, environmental.) has been clearly identified
	1	Idea statement has been articulated	Profiles of key stakeholder groups have been identified	A problem to solve has been identified, and need for a solution has been validated	Advisors and new team members who can support the commercialisation of your innovation have been identified	External sources that have contributed to the innovation and the nature of their collaboration have been identified	The sustainability challenge you aim to address has been clearly identified

