SDI ScienceDocs Inc.
Research • Funding • AI Strategy • Est. 2004

Invention Disclosure Checklist

A practical ScienceDocs worksheet for documenting inventions, identifying disclosure risks, and preparing materials for patent, licensing, spinout, or commercialization review.

How to Use This Checklist

Use this tool before submitting an invention to a technology transfer office, patent counsel, licensing partner, accelerator, grant program, or commercialization team. The goal is not to decide whether the invention is patentable. The goal is to organize the facts, evidence, dates, contributors, obligations, and market assumptions that make a professional review possible.

1. Invention Snapshot

Invention / technology name	
Organization / lab / company	
Primary contact	
Date checklist started	
Short description in one sentence	
Primary field or application area	
Current stage	Concept / Prototype / Bench validation / Pilot / Product-ready / Other:
Intended disclosure pathway	University TTO / Patent counsel / Company IP review / SBIR/STTR / Licensing partner / Other:

2. Core Disclosure Package Checklist

	Checklist item	Status	Notes
[ ]	Clear non-confidential title and short summary prepared.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Full technical description drafted with enough detail for review.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Inventive step or technical advance described in plain language.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Problem being solved and limitations of current solutions documented.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Diagrams, figures, schematics, data tables, photos, screenshots, or workflow maps collected.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Experimental results, prototype tests, simulations, or performance evidence summarized.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Known limitations, failure modes, and remaining development questions listed.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Potential applications and use cases identified.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Commercialization or licensing hypothesis written in simple business terms.	Not started / In progress / Complete	

3. Inventorship, Ownership, and Obligation Review

This section helps identify who contributed to the inventive concept and whether institutional, employer, sponsor, or collaborator obligations may apply.

	Checklist item	Status	Notes
[ ]	All potential inventors and technical contributors listed.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Each contributor's employer, institution, department, or affiliation identified.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Student, postdoc, consultant, contractor, collaborator, or	Not started / In progress / Complete	

	visiting researcher roles documented.		
[ ]	Employment agreements, consulting agreements, invention assignment agreements, or IP policies identified.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Sponsored research, federal funding, foundation funding, industry funding, or material transfer obligations reviewed.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Government funding sources and award numbers listed where applicable.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Use of third-party datasets, software, materials, devices, or biological materials documented.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Ownership questions that require legal or tech transfer review flagged.	Not started / In progress / Complete	

4. Public Disclosure and Confidentiality Risk

Record any activity that may have publicly disclosed the invention. When uncertain, list the event and date for review.

Disclosure event	Date	Audience / venue	Confidential?	Action needed

5. Novelty, Differentiation, and Prior Art Prompts

	Prompt	Priority	Notes
[ ]	What is new, unexpected, faster, cheaper, safer, more accurate, easier to use, or more scalable about the invention?	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	What existing products, publications, patents, open-source tools, clinical workflows, or workarounds appear closest?	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	What specific technical feature or method would be difficult for others to copy or design around?	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	What evidence shows the invention performs better than existing alternatives?	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	What aspects are not yet differentiated enough and require further testing or refinement?	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	What keywords, patent classes, product categories, and publication terms should be searched next?	Not started / In progress / Complete	

6. Commercialization and Market Relevance

	Checklist item	Status	Notes
[ ]	Primary user or beneficiary identified.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Economic buyer, decision-maker, adopter, or licensing target identified.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Pain point or unmet need stated clearly.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Current alternatives, manual workarounds, or competing technologies listed.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Potential market segments or	Not started / In progress /	

	early beachhead market identified.	Complete	
[ ]	Stakeholder evidence collected: interviews, letters, pilot interest, customer discovery notes, or partner feedback.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Potential value proposition written for users, buyers, and partners.	Not started / In progress / Complete	
[ ]	Regulatory, reimbursement, procurement, security, data, or implementation constraints identified where relevant.	Not started / In progress / Complete	

7. Invention Readiness Scorecard

Score each area from 1 to 5. Use low scores to define the next workplan rather than as a reason to stop exploring the invention.

Readiness area	1 = weak/unknown	3 = partially supported	5 = strong/ready	Score	Evidence / gap
Ownership and inventorship	Inventors, assignments, or obligations unclear	Most contributors identified; some obligations need review	Inventors, employers, sponsors, and obligations clearly documented		
Novelty and differentiation	No clear difference from existing approaches	Potential distinction but needs prior art/market comparison	Clear technical or practical distinction supported by evidence		
Technical enablement	Concept only; no reproducible detail	Prototype, data, or method partially documented	Reproducible description, data, figures, and examples available		
Disclosure timing risk	Public disclosures already occurred or dates uncertain	Some upcoming disclosures; confidentiality needs management	All disclosure dates tracked; confidentiality protections in place		
Commercial relevance	Use case or buyer unclear	Possible market need but stakeholder evidence limited	Strong problem, user, buyer, and value hypothesis documented		
Development pathway	Next experiments and milestones unclear	General next steps known but not sequenced	Clear technical, IP, funding, and commercialization next steps		

8. Supporting Evidence and Documentation Tracker

Document / evidence item	Owner	Location / link	Complete?	Notes
Technical description				
Figures / diagrams				
Experimental data				
Prototype photos or screenshots				
Prior art notes				
Funding / sponsor records				
Contributor list				
Commercial evidence				
Draft claims or key features				

9. Key Assumptions to Validate

Assumption	Why it matters	Evidence needed	Owner	Due date

10. Next-Step Action Plan

Action	Category	Owner	Priority	Target date	Done
Submit disclosure package for	IP		High / Med / Low		[ ]

internal/TTO review					
Schedule discussion with patent counsel or licensing office	IP		High / Med / Low		[ ]
Complete early prior art and competitive scan	Market/IP		High / Med / Low		[ ]
Collect missing technical evidence or reproducibility details	Technical		High / Med / Low		[ ]
Interview target users, buyers, or potential licensees	Market		High / Med / Low		[ ]
Map funding pathway: SBIR/STTR, translational grant, investor, industry partner	Funding		High / Med / Low		[ ]
Define 30-60-90 day commercialization workplan	Execution		High / Med / Low		[ ]

11. Reviewer Notes

Need help applying this tool? ScienceDocs supports commercialization, change management, AI adoption, grant strategy, and operational optimization.