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

Investor Readiness Checklist

A practical worksheet for evaluating whether a startup, university spinout, SBIR/STTR awardee, commercialization team, or technology venture is ready to approach investors with a credible story, evidence base, funding ask, and diligence package.

Purpose

Use this checklist before investor outreach, pitch deck development, seed fundraising, strategic partner discussions, or Phase II/Phase III commercialization planning. The goal is to identify gaps that could weaken investor confidence and turn them into concrete next steps.

1. Investor Readiness Snapshot

Company / Project Name		**Prepared By**	
Organization / Team		**Date**	
Technology / Solution		**Commercialization Stage**	☐ Idea ☐ Validation ☐ Grant-funded ☐ Pilot ☐ Revenue ☐ Scale
Target Investor Type	☐ Angel ☐ Seed VC ☐ Strategic ☐ Corporate VC ☐ Foundation / impact ☐ Non-dilutive follow-on	**Target Raise**	$
Funding Use	☐ Product development ☐ Validation ☐ Regulatory ☐ Market entry ☐ Sales ☐ Operations ☐ Hiring	**Runway Goal**	____ months
Current Traction Level	☐ Concept ☐ Prototype ☐ Pilot ☐ Paying customer ☐ Letters / LOIs ☐ Strategic partner	**Investor Outreach Timing**	
Readiness Decision Needed	☐ Ready to pitch ☐ Need more evidence ☐ Need materials ☐ Need strategy reset	**Decision Date**	

2. Investor Readiness Scoring Summary

Use 0 = not prepared, 1 = early/incomplete, 2 = mostly prepared, 3 = investor-ready. Add the category totals to identify the strongest and weakest areas.

Readiness Area	Score	Weight	Weighted Score	Priority Action
Problem, customer, and market clarity	0 1 2 3	1 / 2 / 3		
Technology and product evidence	0 1 2 3	1 / 2 / 3		
Business model and commercialization path	0 1 2 3	1 / 2 / 3		
Financial model, raise amount, and use of funds	0 1 2 3	1 / 2 / 3		
Team, advisors, and execution capacity	0 1 2 3	1 / 2 / 3		
Risk, diligence, and legal readiness	0 1 2 3	1 / 2 / 3		
Pitch materials and outreach process	0 1 2 3	1 / 2 / 3		

3. Investor Narrative Checklist

Done?	Investor Readiness Item	Score	Notes / Evidence
☐	The problem is specific, urgent, and tied to a clearly defined customer or stakeholder group.	0 1 2 3	
☐	The team can explain why existing alternatives, workarounds, or incumbent solutions are insufficient.	0 1 2 3	
☐	The value proposition is clear in plain language and does not rely only on technical novelty.	0 1 2 3	

Done?	Investor Readiness Item	Score	Notes / Evidence
☐	The team can describe the market segment, buyer, user, payer, and adoption pathway.	0 1 2 3	
☐	The competitive advantage is credible and connected to data, IP, workflow integration, cost, speed, performance, regulatory position, or another meaningful differentiator.	0 1 2 3	
☐	The commercialization path is plausible for the stage of the company and the amount of funding sought.	0 1 2 3	
☐	The investor story connects technical progress to business milestones rather than presenting science and business as separate tracks.	0 1 2 3	

4. Evidence, Traction, and Market Signals

Done?	Investor Readiness Item	Score	Notes / Evidence
☐	Customer discovery interviews, stakeholder conversations, pilot feedback, or user research have been documented.	0 1 2 3	
☐	The team has evidence that the problem is costly, frequent, risky, inefficient, strategically important, or otherwise worth solving.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Letters of support, LOIs, pilot commitments, partner interest, or customer quotes are organized and current.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Early adoption barriers have been identified, including procurement, workflow change, training, reimbursement, regulatory, data, or integration constraints.	0 1 2 3	
☐	The team has a clear hypothesis for how the first 3-10 customers, pilots, or partners will be obtained.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Claims about market size, TAM/SAM/SOM, or growth opportunity are supported by reasonable assumptions and sources.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Grant outcomes, prototype results, validation studies, publications, or technical milestones have been translated into investor-relevant evidence.	0 1 2 3	

5. Product, Technology, and Diligence Readiness

Done?	Investor Readiness Item	Score	Notes / Evidence
☐	The current product or prototype status is clearly described without overstating maturity.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Technical risks are identified with mitigation plans, owners, and expected timelines.	0 1 2 3	
☐	IP status is summarized, including ownership, licenses, provisional filings, issued patents, trade secrets, or open-source considerations.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Regulatory, data security, privacy, quality, or clinical	0 1 2 3	

Done?	Investor Readiness Item	Score	Notes / Evidence
	requirements have been scoped where relevant.		
☐	The team can explain what must be built, validated, or de-risked with the next round of funding.	0 1 2 3	
☐	A basic diligence folder exists with corporate documents, cap table, IP summary, grants/contracts, financials, key agreements, and technical evidence.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Any university licensing, conflict-of-interest, publication, sponsor, or collaborator constraints have been reviewed.	0 1 2 3	

6. Financial Model and Funding Ask

Funding / Financial Item	Current Answer	Confidence	Follow-Up Needed
Amount to raise	$	☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High	
Primary use of funds		☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High	
Milestones funded by round		☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High	
Expected runway	____ months	☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High	
Revenue / pricing assumptions		☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High	
Burn rate and staffing plan		☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High	
Next financing or exit logic		☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High	

7. Pitch Materials Checklist

Done?	Investor Readiness Item	Score	Notes / Evidence
☐	One-line company description and concise executive summary are ready.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Pitch deck clearly covers problem, solution, market, traction, business model, competition, team, milestones, funding ask, and use of funds.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Financial model is simple, consistent with the story, and tied to assumptions that can be explained.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Technical appendix or evidence appendix is available for deeper review without overloading the main pitch deck.	0 1 2 3	
☐	The team has a short investor email, target investor list, and follow-up process.	0 1 2 3	
☐	The team can answer likely objections about market size, adoption, IP, regulatory path, revenue model, competition, and execution risk.	0 1 2 3	
☐	Materials are internally consistent across deck, website, executive summary, financial model, data room, and founder talking points.	0 1 2 3	

8. Investor Concern and Response Matrix

Likely Investor Concern	Evidence / Response Needed	Owner	Action Step	Due Date
Market too small or poorly defined				
Technology is promising but not productized				
Adoption pathway is unclear				
Weak competitive differentiation				
Regulatory / reimbursement uncertainty				
Team or execution capacity gap				

9. 30-Day Investor Readiness Action Plan

Priority Gap	Action Needed	Owner	Output / Deliverable	Due Date

Priority Gap	Action Needed	Owner	Output / Deliverable	Due Date

10. Final Readiness Decision

Overall Readiness Rating	☐ Not ready ☐ Nearly ready ☐ Ready for selective outreach ☐ Ready for broad investor outreach
Recommended Next Step	☐ Build evidence ☐ Strengthen deck/model ☐ Prepare data room ☐ Start warm outreach ☐ Revise strategy
Decision Rationale	
Internal Approval / Notes	

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