

## **Contracts for Innovation in drug and alcohol addiction healthcare - Assessor guidance for applicants**

This document contains the guidance and scoring used by the Assessors when reviewing your application. Assessors will review your answers for each scored question and mark each of them between 1 and 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest).

Any questions that are not scored will not be reviewed by the Assessor.

### **Question 1. Sector (not scored)**

Which sector or sectors does your innovation or intervention fit into:

- pharmaceuticals
- MedTech
- digital health tools
- pharmaceutical and MedTech
- MedTech and digital
- pharmaceutical and digital
- pharmaceutical, MedTech and digital

### **Question 2. Animal testing (not scored)**

Will your project involve any trials with animals or animal testing?

You must select one option:

- Yes
- No

We will only support innovation projects conducted to the highest standards of animal welfare.

Further information for proposals involving animal testing is available at the [UKRI Good Research Hub](#) and [NC3R's animal welfare guidance](#).

### **Question 3. Permits and licences (not scored)**

Will you have the correct permits and licences in place to carry out your project?  
We are unable to fund projects which do not have the correct permits or licences in place by your project start date.

You must select one option:

- Yes
- No
- In the process of being applied for
- Not applicable

#### **Question 4. International collaboration (not scored)**

Does your proposed work involve any international collaboration or engagement?

You must provide details of any expected international collaboration or engagement.

You must include a list of the names and the countries, any international project co-leads, project partners, visiting researchers, or other collaborators are based in.

You must also include details of any subcontractors or service providers.

If your proposed work does not involve international collaboration or engagement, your answer must confirm this.

#### **Question 5. Export licence (not scored)**

You must indicate whether an export control license is required for this project under the [academic export control guidance](#).

You must select one option:

- Yes
- No

#### **Question 6. Trusted Research and Innovation (not scored)**

You must explain if your proposed project work relates to [UKRI's Trusted Research and Innovation \(TR&I\) Principles](#), including:

- a list of any dual-use (both military and non-military) applications to your research
- a list of the areas where your project is relevant to one or more of the [17 areas](#) of the UK National Security and Investment (NSI) Act
- whether an export control license is required for this project under the [academic export control guidance](#) and the status of any applications
- a list of any items or substances on the [UK Strategic Export Control List](#)

If your proposed work does not relate to UKRI's TR&I Principles, your answer must confirm this.

We may ask you to provide additional TR&I information at a later date, in line with UKRI TR&I Principles and funding terms and conditions.

### **Question 7. Proposed spend forecast (not scored)**

You must show your intended eligible costs for each financial year of the project. This must be the total amount per year for all partners.

You must download and complete the spend profile template and upload it to this question as a spreadsheet.

### **Question 8. Proposed idea or technology**

Describe how your project and proposed idea or technology meet the challenges set out in the competition scope.

Explain how it aligns with the focuses and national strategic priorities for addiction treatment, recovery and harm prevention listed in specific themes.

Include a description of the current state of development or readiness of the idea, and any novelty, differentiation or meaningful improvement over existing approaches.

You can submit a single appendix as a PDF containing images and diagrams to support your answer. It must be a PDF no larger than 10MB. It can be up to two A4 pages and must be legible at 100% zoom.

This question will be scored against this assessment criterion: How well does the proposal meet the challenge?

### **Question 8. Proposed idea or technology: Assessor guidance and scoring**

#### **Scores 9 - 10**

The application demonstrates an excellent fit with the competition scope and national priorities. The idea is clearly articulated, highly relevant, and shows strong potential to address drug or alcohol addiction related challenges at scale.

A well reasoned explanation of how the innovation addresses challenges such as enhancement of treatment or long term recovery from drug and alcohol addiction, prevention of addiction linked harm or deaths, including from overdose, unmet clinical or service needs, and any associated workforce pressures or system inefficiencies is shown. And strong evidence that the applicant understands the addiction treatment and recovery landscape.

The description of the proposed idea or technology is compelling and there is a clear and detailed description of the innovation. Novelty, differentiation, or meaningful improvement over existing approaches is clearly demonstrated, for example, new capability, method, or insight where applicable.

There is a clear description of the current developmental stage which includes early evidence where available, such as pilot insights, prototype data, user testing, or preliminary outcomes.

If included there is an effective use of relevant, legible diagrams and images, helping to support the narrative while enhancing clarity and understanding.

### **Scores 7 – 8**

The proposal is relevant and well aligned with the challenge but lacks some depth or clarity in one or two areas. The idea clearly fits the competition scope, but the explanation is not fully developed. The technology is described well but lacks detail on mechanisms, differentiation, or user need. The link to national priorities is present but not strongly evidenced. The current development stage is described but without supporting data or examples. Visuals (if used) are helpful but not fully comprehensive.

### **Scores 5 – 6**

The proposal shows some relevance to the challenge, but the explanation is incomplete or unconvincing. The idea appears to fit the scope, but the applicant does not clearly articulate how or why. The technology description is vague or overly high level. Limited or no reference to national strategic priorities. Current development stage is unclear, overstated, or unsupported. Visuals, (if included) do not add clarity.

### **Scores 3 – 4**

The proposal is poorly aligned with the competition scope or national priorities. The idea does not clearly address addiction treatment or recovery challenges. The technology is described in generic terms with no clear mechanism or purpose. No meaningful explanation of relevance to national priorities. Development stage is missing or implausible. Visuals (if included) are confusing or irrelevant.

### **Scores 1 – 2**

Very limited or no information is provided. There are no clear description of the idea or technology, no explanation of relevance to the challenge and no indication of development stage. Response does not address the question.

There are no visuals, or if there are they add no value or are incorrect.

### **Question 9. Technical project summary**

What are the main technical challenges you are addressing?

How will you demonstrate that the innovation is safe, reliable, and appropriate for people experiencing drug and alcohol addiction?

Explain:

- the technical approach, how it works and what makes it novel
- the main technical deliverables
- the technical challenges and why they matter
- how your project will address the challenge
- the research and development methods that will prove the scientific, environmental and commercial merit of the project
- what might be achieved by deploying the innovation to address the selected challenge

This question will be scored against this assessment criterion: How valid is the technical approach?

### **Question 9. Technical project summary: Assessor guidance and scoring**

#### **Scores 9 – 10**

The technical approach is highly valid, clearly articulated and strongly aligned with the challenge. The response gives assessors high confidence that the project's technical deliverables are achievable and that the innovation is safe, reliable and appropriate and has genuine scientific, environmental and commercial merit.

There is clear identification of the main technical challenges, which are specific, realistic and directly linked to the problem, for example, understanding of the clinical or system integration complexities involved.

The main technical deliverables are appropriate. A strong understanding of relevant research and development pathways, for example digital health, Medtech, pharmaceutical is shown.

A compelling description of the innovation, which clearly explains what the innovation is, how it works, why it is technically novel and how it demonstrates meaningful advancement over current practice or state of the art solutions is given, for example, new system designs, workflows or architecture where applicable.

A clear description of how the innovation meets requirements specific to health related technologies, for example, safety, reliability, accuracy, absence of unintended harm and suitability for vulnerable populations is provided.

Potential impact is clearly articulated, explaining what could be achieved if the innovation is deployed at scale and the approach links technical outcomes to improved performance, reduced environmental impact, enhanced user experience or system level benefits.

### **Scores 7 – 8**

The response is strong and credible but lacks depth or clarity in one or two areas. There is a clear description of the technical challenges, though some may be under-explored.

A solid explanation of how technical challenges will be addressed, but with limited detail on methods, assumptions, or dependencies. A good description of the innovation, though mechanisms or differentiation may not be fully articulated.

Technical deliverables are present but may be broad or lack detail. R&D plans are described but without strong supporting evidence or examples.

A description of how the innovation meets requirements specific to health related technologies, although unsupported by evidence is given. The potential impact is plausible but not fully substantiated. The approach is valid overall but not fully developed.

### **Scores 5 – 6**

The response shows partial relevance but is incomplete, vague, or unconvincing in key areas. Technical challenges are mentioned but not clearly defined or prioritised. The plan to address challenges is high level, generic, or lacks methodological detail. The innovation is described superficially, with unclear mechanisms or limited justification of feasibility.

Technical deliverables are vague, missing, or not clearly linked to the challenges. R&D plans are minimal, lack evidence, or appear unrealistic. The potential impact is asserted rather than demonstrated.

The description of how the innovation meets requirements specific to health related technologies is high level, generic or lacks detail. The overall technical approach appears underdeveloped or insufficiently justified.

### **Scores 3 – 4**

The response is poorly aligned with the assessment criterion and lacks technical credibility. Little or no clarity on the technical challenges. No meaningful explanation of how challenges will be addressed.

The innovation is described in generic or non-technical terms.

Technical deliverables are missing or irrelevant. R&D methods are absent, implausible, or scientifically unsound.

There is no clear articulation of how the innovation meets requirements specific to health related technologies and of what deployment could achieve. The technical approach appears incoherent or not viable.

### **Scores 1 – 2**

The response provides very limited or no useful information is provided. There are no clear technical challenges, explanation of the innovation or how it works and no technical deliverables. There is also no explanation of R&D methods or explanation of how the innovation meets requirements specific to health related technologies and of the potential impact. The response does not address the question.

## **Question 10. Current state of the art and intellectual property**

Are similar products currently available in the market?

How is your proposed project differentiated from them?

You must include details of:

- any existing intellectual property (IP) and its significance to your freedom to operate
- novel concepts you develop or employ
- new approaches you will use
- new tools or technologies you will use

You must explain how you would handle any intellectual property (IP) issues which might arise during the project.

You should ensure you can meet the IP clauses set out within the Contracts for Innovation contract.

If you are working with subcontractors, where specialist skills are required, include details of how you will maintain freedom to operate and fulfil the IP requirements detailed in the contract.

This question will be scored against these assessment criteria: How innovative is this project? How much does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies for this area? How well the project demonstrates clear understanding of IP and its significance on the freedom to operate.

### **Question 10. Current state of the art and intellectual property: Assessor guidance and scoring**

#### **Scores 9 - 10**

The application demonstrates excellent understanding of the state of the art, a high level of innovation, and a robust, credible IP strategy. The applicant clearly shows how their project advances the field of addiction treatment and recovery.

There is a clear, well researched description of the state of the art, with relevant existing products, technologies, or interventions identified. An understanding of current digital health, Medtech or pharmaceutical solutions in addiction care is demonstrated and awareness of similar products available on the market and articulation of novel concepts or new technologies is clear.

A comprehensive IP landscape analysis is provided which identifies existing IP, for example, patents, trademarks, copyrights, proprietary algorithms, datasets. Explanation given of how this IP affects freedom to operate and demonstrates understanding of background IP and project generated foreground IP.

A robust plan for managing IP issues is given, providing a clear strategy for handling potential IP conflicts, while demonstrating the ability to comply with standard Contracts for Innovation IP clauses and showing how subcontractor relationships will preserve freedom to operate and ensure appropriate IP ownership.

High credibility and innovation potential is exhibited, and the response gives strong confidence that the project is genuinely innovative and capable of shifting the state of the art.

#### **Scores 7 – 8**

The proposal is innovative and shows awareness of the state of the art but lacks depth or clarity in one or two areas. Identifies similar products but does not fully analyse them.

Differentiation is clear but not strongly evidenced. IP considerations are addressed but the plan for managing IP issues is not fully clear. Novel concepts are described but not deeply explained.

### **Scores 5 – 6**

The proposal shows some awareness of the state of the art and some innovation, but the explanation is incomplete or unconvincing. Mentions similar products but with limited analysis. Differentiation is vague or overstated. IP landscape is only partially addressed.

Novelty claims are generic or unsupported. Freedom to operate is not clearly demonstrated. Subcontractor IP considerations are missing or unclear. Assessors may doubt whether the innovation is genuinely novel or whether the identified IP issues are manageable.

### **Scores 3 – 4**

The proposal shows poor understanding of the state of the art and limited innovation. No meaningful analysis of existing products. Differentiation is unclear or not credible. IP considerations are missing or incorrect. Novelty is not demonstrated. No plan for managing IP issues or subcontractor arrangements is provided. The response does not demonstrate innovation or awareness of IP constraints.

### **Scores 1 – 2**

Very limited or no information is provided with no description of existing products or no differentiation. There is no IP information provided. Response does not address the question.

## **Question 11. Project plan and methodology**

Describe your project plan and identify the main milestones.

Provide evidence that the technology works, can be made into a viable product and can achieve the proposed benefits and meet the needs of the end user.

You must:

- describe the current technology readiness level (TRL) of your innovation or intervention
- show your plan to progress the technology to TRL 6 or 7 by the end of the project
- list the steps needed to reach the target TRL
- outline how you will develop a working prototype, if needed

- describe how your project will identify and prepare for relevant regulatory and certification requirements to develop towards TRL9 and market readiness after the funded project
- explain any regulatory pathway and certification steps you will plan to begin or complete during the project
- describe the main success criteria
- provide a clear plan to ensure technical and commercial viability
- describe the main technical, commercial, and environmental risks and how you will mitigate them.
- identify the project management processes that will ensure you achieve your milestones
- describe the resources required to deliver the project

You must explain how you have involved appropriate service providers or settings and those with lived experience in the development of your innovation.

You must explain how you will engage these groups to guide the delivery of your project and ensure UK end user and UK market fit for your intervention.

You must also include any design principles and co-design that may have been used to establish market fit through engaging these groups, and your plans for further engagement and co-design during this project.

You must upload a project plan or Gantt chart as an appendix in PDF format. It must be a PDF no larger than 10MB. It can be up to two A4 pages and must be legible at 100% zoom.

Your milestones must:

- be clear
- be defined using SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) criteria
- be associated with the appropriate deliverables and payments
- indicate your payment schedule by month

This question will be assessed against these assessment criteria:

- does the proposal show a clear plan for reaching technical and commercial end points aligned to TRL 6 or 7
- is there a clear management plan
- what are the main technical, commercial, and environmental risks to the project's success

- how will identified risks be effectively managed
- are the milestones and evaluation procedures appropriate
- is there a clear explanation of how people with lived experience and relevant service providers and settings have been involved in project design, and will be engaged throughout delivery

Note: information from the finances section will be used to support the assessment of this question. Proposed milestones and associated payments stated in this section must match those entered in the finance summary on your application.

### **Question 11. Project plan and methodology: Assessor guidance and scoring**

#### **Scores 9 – 10**

The project plan is comprehensive, practical and highly credible, giving strong confidence that the team can deliver the proposed outcomes. There is a clear, detailed and well structured project plan showing logical sequencing of activities. If submitted, the Gantt chart is coherent, realistic and aligned with the narrative.

The project plan includes high quality milestones that are SMART, linked to deliverables and payment schedule, and clearly demonstrate progress to TRL6 or 7. Proposed milestones and associated payments match those entered in the application finance summary.

Excellent risk management is demonstrated, including detailed identification of technical, commercial and environmental risks and clear, proportionate mitigation strategies, where risks are realistic and demonstrate understanding of the addiction care context.

Evidence of co-design principles, user centred design, and plans for continued engagement and involvement are provided, with strong co-design and lived experience involvement highlighted. A clear description is given of how service providers, clinicians, and people with lived experience have already, and will throughout the funded project (as applicable), be involved in project design and shaping the innovation.

#### **Scores 7 – 8**

The plan is generally strong and feasible but lacks some detail or clarity in one or two areas. Project plan is logical but may omit some dependencies or resource details. Milestones are mostly SMART but could be more specific or measurable.

Risks are identified but mitigation strategies are not fully developed.

Co-design involvement is described, showing how service providers, clinicians, and people with lived experience have already, and will throughout the funded project (as applicable), be involved in project design, but it is not deeply integrated. Prototype

development plan is credible but not fully elaborated. Proposed milestones and associated payments match those entered in the application finance summary. The plan is credible, but there may be minor concerns about completeness.

### **Scores 5 – 6**

The plan shows some understanding of what is required, but lacks depth, clarity or practicality. Project plan is high level, with limited detail on activities or sequencing.

Milestones are vague, partially SMART, or not clearly linked to deliverables. Resource planning is incomplete or unrealistic.

Risk assessment is superficial or missing key risks. Co-design involvement, relating to engagement of service providers, clinicians and people with lived experience is minimal or tokenistic as is how they will help shape project design.

Prototype development plan is unclear or lacks detail. Either there is a mismatch or it's unclear if the proposed milestones and associated payments match those entered in the application finance summary. May be doubtful whether the applicant can deliver.

### **Scores 3 – 4**

The project plan is poorly developed or not credible. Activities are unclear, missing, or not logically structured. Milestones are not SMART or not linked to deliverables.

There is no meaningful risk assessment.

There is no clear plan for prototype development or feasibility testing. Little or no involvement or engagement of service providers or lived experience contributors to help shape the project design.

The plan does not demonstrate that the applicant can deliver. Proposed milestones and associated payments do not match those entered in the application finance summary. It is highly doubtful that the applicant will deliver.

### **Scores 1 – 2**

Very limited or no information is provided. There is no coherent project plan, no milestones or only generic statements. There is no feasibility plan, no risk management and no co-design or mention of service provider or lived experience engagement or involvement in project design. Response does not address the question.

Payments do not match those entered in the application finance summary. The plan does not demonstrate that the applicant can deliver.

## **Question 12. Technical team and expertise**

Who is in the technical team? What expertise do they offer?

Provide a brief description of your project team, including any subcontractors.

Describe:

- and evidence how each organisation has the team skills, capabilities, experience and understanding of drug and alcohol addiction healthcare to deliver the project and realise the intended benefits
- how much of their time will be spent on the project

This question will be scored against this assessment criterion: Does the applicant have the skills, capabilities and experience to deliver the intended benefits?

### **Question 12. Technical team and expertise: Assessor guidance and scoring**

#### **Scores 9 – 10**

The applicant presents a highly capable, well structured and fully credible project team with all the expertise required to deliver the project successfully.

Demonstrates a clear, detailed description of the project team, identifying all key team members and subcontractors. Provides concise but meaningful descriptions of roles, qualifications, and relevant experience.

Shows strong alignment between expertise and project needs, demonstrating that each organisation or individual brings essential skills, for example, software engineering, data science, clinical addiction expertise, behavioural science, regulatory knowledge, UX design, Medtech development. Collectively shows that the team covers all aspects required for the innovation.

Evidence of capability is provided, for example, highlighting previous relevant projects, publications, deployments, or industry experience, and team members demonstrate familiarity with drug and alcohol addiction healthcare .

Indicates clear time commitments, specifying how much time each team member will dedicate to the project and presenting time allocations that are realistic and proportionate to their responsibilities.

Highlights effective use of subcontractors, if applicable, where they provide specialist skills not available in-house and how they will be managed and integrated.

Providing all the information and detail to support delivery, the team composition gives strong confidence that the project can achieve its intended benefits.

#### **Scores 7 – 8**

The team is capable and relevant, but the response lacks some detail or clarity in one or two areas. Team roles are described but with limited detail on experience or relevance.

Some expertise areas are strong, while others are less clearly covered and not robustly evidenced. Time commitments are provided but not fully justified. Subcontractor roles are mentioned but not deeply explained.

The proposal remains credible, but more detail may be needed to be fully confident.

### **Scores 5 – 6**

The team has some relevant expertise, but the explanation is incomplete or unconvincing.

Team description is high level or generic. Important skills or capabilities appear to be missing. Limited evidence of relevant experience is provided.

Time commitments are vague or unrealistic. Subcontractor involvement is unclear or poorly justified.

There is doubt whether the team can deliver the intended benefit.

### **Scores 3 – 4**

The team is poorly described or lacks essential expertise. Very limited information on team members or subcontractors is provided.

Key technical or clinical skills are missing. There is no evidence of relevant experience.

No clear time commitments. Subcontractor roles are absent or inappropriate.

The response does not demonstrate that the applicant has the capability to deliver the project.

### **Scores 1 – 2**

Very limited or no information is provided. No meaningful team description. No evidenced expertise, roles or time commitments. Response does not address the question.

The response does not demonstrate that the applicant has the capability to deliver the project.

### **Question 13. Costs and value for money**

How much will the project cost? How does it represent value for money for the team and the taxpayer?

Describe:

- the total costs inclusive of VAT (If applicable) you are requesting in terms of the project goals for this competition
- how this project represents value for money for you and the taxpayer

Proposed costs stated in this section must match those entered in the finance summary.

All costs quoted must reflect actual costs at a fair market value and not include profit.

You can submit a single appendix as a spreadsheet in PDF format. It must be a PDF no larger than 10MB. It can be up to two A4 pages and must be legible at 100% zoom.

Note that all payments are made monthly in arrears on submission of an invoice. The invoice must be submitted within 30 days of the end of each monitoring period for all completed milestones.

Full Economic Cost (FEC) calculations are not relevant for Contracts for Innovation competitions. Contracts for Innovation is a competitive process and applications will come from a variety of organisations. Whatever calculation you use to arrive at your total eligible project costs your application will be assessed against applications from other organisations. Bear this in mind when calculating your total eligible project costs. You can include overheads but remember that this is a competitive process.

The assessors are required to judge the application finances in terms of value for money. They will score your finances against this assessment criterion: Are the budget and costs realistic, justified and appropriate for the aims and methods?

Note, the information from the finances section will be used to support the assessment of this question.

The question will be scored against the assessment criterion: Are the budget and costs realistic, justified and appropriate for the aims and methods?

### **Question 13. Costs and value for money: Assessor guidance and scoring**

#### **Scores 9 – 10**

The financial plan is clear, well justified and demonstrates excellent value for money. Costs are realistic, proportionate and tightly aligned with the project's technical and commercial objectives.

Total project costs, including VAT where applicable, are explicitly stated, clear and accurate. Costs match the finance summary exactly and reflect fair market value with no inflated profit margins.

A strong justification of costs is provided with each cost category (staff, subcontractors, materials, overheads, travel, prototype development, data access, testing) are clearly explained. Costs are directly linked to project activities, milestones and deliverables and there are no unnecessary or inflated items.

The project demonstrates excellent value for money, demonstrating how the budget delivers maximum impact for the funding requested and explaining why the proposed approach is cost effective compared to alternatives. An efficient use of resources, including leveraging existing assets and partnerships.

Realistic and competitive subcontractor costs are shown, where subcontractor use is justified and limited to specialist skills. Costs are reasonable and benchmarked against market rates.

Demonstrates a clear understanding of competition rules for example no use of FEC and overheads to be included only where justified and proportionate. Acknowledges monthly payments in arrears and demonstrates ability to manage cash flow.

Supports high confidence in financial credibility as the budget is transparent, logical and aligned with the project plan. It is clear to see how the funding will deliver the intended benefits.

### **Scores 7 – 8**

The budget is generally sound and represents value for money but lacks some detail or clarity in one or two areas. Total cost is stated but some categories lack explanation.

Most costs are justified, but a few appear high or insufficiently explained.

Subcontractor costs are reasonable but not fully detailed.

Value for money is demonstrated but not strongly evidenced. Minor inconsistencies between narrative and finance summary.

The proposal is credible, but more detail is needed to be fully confident.

### **Scores 5 – 6**

The budget is partially justified but lacks clarity, detail or strong value for money arguments.

Costs are listed but with limited explanation. Some items appear inflated, vague or not clearly linked to project activities.

Value for money is asserted but not demonstrated.

Subcontractor costs are unclear or poorly justified.

Overheads may be high or not well explained. Some inconsistencies with the finance summary. It may be doubtful whether the budget is realistic or appropriate.

### **Scores 3 – 4**

The financial plan is poorly developed or not credible.

Total cost is unclear or missing. Costs do not match the finance summary. Little or no justification for major cost items. Budget includes unnecessary, inflated or unrealistic costs and there is no explanation of value for money.

Subcontractor costs are excessive or unjustified. Overheads appear arbitrary or disproportionate.

It is highly unlikely that the budget is realistic or appropriate.

### **Scores 1 – 2**

Very limited or no financial information is provided. No meaningful cost breakdown, justification or value for money explanation.

Response does not address the question. The response does not demonstrate financial credibility.

### **Question 14. Commercial potential**

What is the commercial potential of your project? You must focus on your proposed customer's needs.

Describe your:

- timescales
- projects commercial potential for a marketable product, process or service in the UK
- delivery plan
- expected route to market
- plans to seek market and customer feedback and gather data

Describe the competitive advantage that your project has over existing or alternative technologies that meet market needs.

Describe any existing commercial relationships relevant to the project.

With the focus on your proposed customer's needs, you can also mention the future commercial potential across the public or private sector and international markets.

You must provide an annexe with full financial projections to support your commercial potential as a result of the project. It must be a PDF no larger than 10MB. It can be up to two A4 pages and must be legible at 100% zoom.

**This question will be scored against these assessment criteria:**

- is there a clear commercial potential in the UK for a marketable product, process or service
- is there a clear plan to deliver that and a clear route to the UK market
- primary customers and decision makers have been identified
- how significant is the competitive advantage of this technology over the nearest currently available solutions to the challenge identified
- financial projections

**Question 14. Commercial potential: Assessor guidance and scoring****Scores 9 – 10**

The applicant presents a highly convincing, well evidenced and customer centred commercial strategy. The commercial potential in the UK is clear, the route to UK market is credible, and the competitive advantage is strong.

Strong commercial potential is apparent, with a clear market need grounded in customer insights shown. It's clear how the innovation can become a viable product, process or service. Includes early evidence of demand, willingness to pay, or service level interest.

There is a credible delivery plan which outlines the steps required to commercialise the innovation, for example, product development, validation, regulatory steps, partnerships, procurement processes, and demonstrates organisational readiness and capability to deliver.

The planned route to the UK market is clear and realistic. Identifies the primary customers and decision makers, for example, NHS and Local Authority commissioners, treatment providers, employers. Explains the commercial model, for example, licensing, subscription, procurement, service contracts. Shows understanding of adoption pathways in addiction treatment and recovery services.

Strong customer feedback and a comprehensive data gathering plan is offered, describing how user, clinician and service provider feedback will be collected and used to refine the product. A commitment to evidence based commercialisation is demonstrated.

Shows significant competitive advantage, providing a clear comparison with existing or alternative technologies. Explains how the innovation is superior in cost, performance, usability, outcomes, scalability or integration and demonstrates defensibility, for example, IP, data assets, partnerships, regulatory positioning.

Scopes relevant commercial relationships, identifying existing partnerships, pilots, letters of support, or customer interest and shows how these relationships strengthen commercial potential.

Indicates strong future market potential, clearly showing an understanding of market size and growth potential, and describing opportunities across relevant public sectors in the UK, and where applicable private sector and international markets.

Financial projections include clear, realistic financial forecasts aligned with the commercial plan. Overall, the response gives high confidence that the innovation can reach market and deliver commercial value.

### **Scores 7 – 8**

The commercial strategy is credible and relevant but lacks depth or clarity in one or two areas. Timescales are reasonable but not fully detailed.

Commercial potential is clear but not strongly evidenced.

Route to market is described but could be more specific.

Competitive advantage is stated but not deeply analysed.

Customer feedback plans are present but not comprehensive.

Financial projections are included but lack detail.

The proposal remains credible, but more detail may be needed to be fully confident.

### **Scores 5 – 6**

The commercial potential is partially described but lacks clarity, evidence or strong customer focus.

Timescales are vague or optimistic.

Commercial potential is asserted but not demonstrated.

Route to market is high level or generic.

Competitive advantage is unclear or overstated.

Customer feedback plans are limited or superficial.

Commercial relationships are absent or weak. Financial projections are simplistic or poorly aligned with the narrative.

May be doubtful whether the innovation can realistically reach market.

### **Scores 3 – 4**

The commercial strategy is poorly developed or not credible.

No clear timescales. Commercial potential is unclear or irrelevant.

No meaningful route to market.

No evidence of customer need or demand.

Competitive advantage is not demonstrated.

No commercial relationships.

Financial projections are missing or unusable.

The response does not demonstrate commercial viability. It is highly unlikely whether the innovation can realistically reach market.

**Scores 1 – 2**

Very limited or no commercial information is provided. There is no commercial plan, route to market, competitive advantage or financial projection.

Response does not address the question. The response does not demonstrate commercial viability.