Customer Readiness Level – CRL
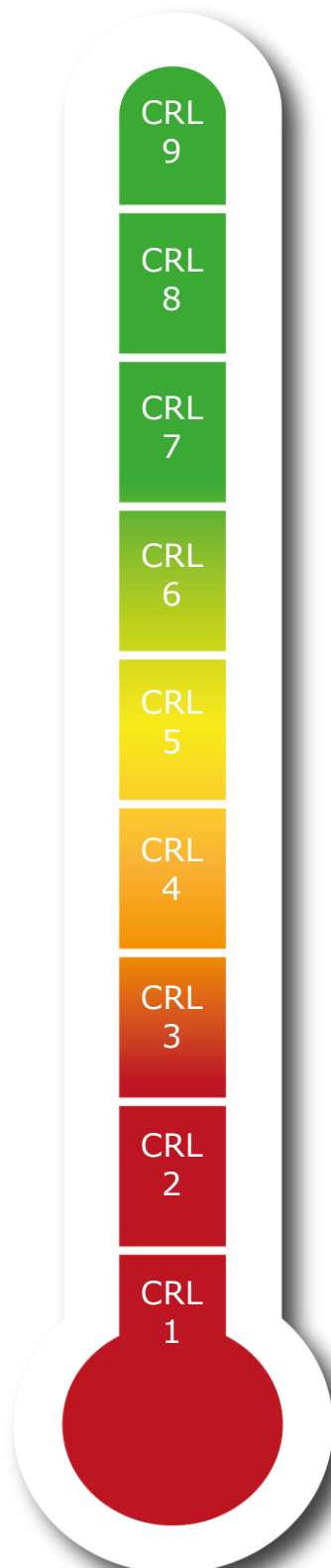
CRL 9	Widespread product sales that scale.
CRL 8	First products sold and increased structured sales efforts.
CRL 7	Customers in extended product testing or first test sales
CRL 6	Benefits of the product confirmed through partnerships or first customer testing.
CRL 5	Established interest for product and relations with target customers.
CRL 4	Confirmed problem/needs from several customers or users
CRL 3	First market feedback established.
CRL 2	Identified specific needs in market.
CRL 1	Hypothesizing on possible needs in market.

Level	Description
9	- Widespread product deployment, sales to several customers in a repeatable and scalable way. - Customer creation- company focuses on execution with growth of sales and efforts to build user/customer demand etc.
8	- Customer qualifications are complete and initial products are sold to a few customers. - Payment willingness confirmed from sufficient % of customers (product-market fit validated). - The real buyers/economic decision makers are identified. - Business development and sales mature and adapt to support larger scale sales efforts (e.g. clear sales process/organization, CRM systems etc)
7	- Customer agreements in place- first sales and/or test sales of product versions take place (customer validation to show initial product-market fit). - Customers and relevant stakeholders engaged in product qualifications/extended testing. - Ramp up of business development and sales efforts according to sales process and roadmap.
6	- Testing of product by customers/users where the value and benefits of the product is confirmed (validated problem-solution fit). - Partnerships formed with key stakeholders in value chain (e.g. partners, pilot customers). - Initiated structured business development/sales activities. First sales process/roadmap defined
5	- General interest from customers/users for the product where the possible product/solution (core features) is confirmed to solve customers' problems (i.e. initial problem-solution fit) - Existing contacts strengthened and/or more contacts established with additional customers. Deeper understanding of the market is achieved. Target customers are identified - Established relationships with potential target customers, users or partners e.g. providing input on requirements and initial prototypes (e.g. resulting in updated product hypothesis). - Defined who the target customers/segments are to be focused on as entry/first customers.
4	- Contacts and feedback are established with several possible customers/users. Numbers are typically limited but depend on B2B/B2C and market structure (e.g. 5-10 in B2B, if market is concentrated 2-5 market leading customers, in B2C higher e.g. 10-20). - The problem and need (and its importance) is confirmed from multiple customers/users - Customer segmentation in place, knowledge of customers/users has increased level of details - A primary product hypothesis is defined, possibly based on feedback.
3	- Initiated customer discovery with feedback from primary market research i.e. direct contacts e.g. a few possible users/customers or persons with industry/market knowledge (experts) - A more developed understanding of possible customers and possible customer segments - A more clear problem hypotheses
2	- Some market research is performed, typically derived from secondary sources. - Brief familiarity with the market, possible customers and their problems/needs. - There is a more clear and more specific problem/need description - Product/solution ideas may exist, but are not clear and typically speculative and unvalidated
1	- Thinking (yourself) that a possible need/problem or opportunity might exist in a market. - No clear hypotheses on who customers are and what problems are etc. If hypothesis exist they are unclear, speculative and there is no proof or analysis to support assumptions. - Limited or non-existing knowledge of the market and customers/users (who they are etc)