



# Innovate to Grow program: Critical Minerals

Applications are open for a free 10-week program for small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) working on critical minerals and exploring how research and development (R&D) can advance their project or idea.

## Build your R&D idea

SMEs play a key role in growing Australia's critical minerals sector, but taking an R&D idea and turning this into reality can sometimes be a daunting prospect.

Our free self-paced 10-week program will build your skills to help you refine your innovation idea and turn this into a R&D opportunity.

## Apply today

Applications close: 21 April 2024

Program starts: 9 May 2024

**[csiro.au/criticalmineralssector](https://csiro.au/criticalmineralssector)**

## Key program outcomes

**Personalised support to refine your idea:** We'll step you through the process of turning your idea into a viable research project.

**Confidential feedback:** All submissions through the program portal will receive prompt expert feedback.

**Mentor:** You will be paired with a researcher from CSIRO or a university to help connect you with a relevant specialist.

**Build your network:** You will build key contacts in your sector, including researchers and other SMEs.

### Key program outputs include how to:

- Create a strong research question for your idea
- Assess the value of your innovation
- Work out your collaboration options
- Compose a high impact R&D business case
- Prepare a funding application
- Find an R&D solution to your technical problems.

## Commitment and course outline

### Preparing for the program (3–4 hours)

Pre-workshop videos, onboarding, materials and questionnaires.

### Week 1 (Official start date, 9 May)

#### Workshop (4.5 hours)

Guest speakers from CSIRO, sector experts and SMEs who will provide tips and information on topics such as trends and opportunities, innovation experience and funding. You will also meet your fellow participants and mentor.

### Weeks 2–10

#### Self-paced innovation program (2–3 hours per week)

Participants explore opportunities to grow their business through innovation and research.

Fortnightly virtual webinars for participant networking and guest speakers.

A final questionnaire is required at completion.

CSIRO selects businesses based on the strength of the application, and a clear interest and capacity to pursue R&D.

CSIRO Innovate to Grow is delivered using Practera's online ed-tech platform and facilitation services.

## Who can attend

Participants based and operating in Australia who are working on an idea in critical minerals. This can be in any sub-sector including:

- Mining technology
- Ore characterisation and analysis
- Ore suitability for processing
- Mineral sorting and processing
- Sustainable processing
- Minerals to Materials to Market
- Integration of renewable energy to processes
- Recover, reclaim, recycle
- Other

### Selection criteria (essential):

- A business based and operating in Australia
- A business classified as small to medium (<200 employees)
- A business with an R&D idea to work on throughout the program related to critical minerals
- An Australian registered and operating business with an ABN and ACN/ICN  
*Please note: Sole traders, partnerships and Australian subsidiary companies of foreign entities are not eligible. Researchers working at universities can apply as a mentor but not a participant.*

### Other considerations:

- Any other information provided to support your application
- Have a clear need to develop your knowledge and skills in R&D

'The mining industry has big challenges, with lots of elements that need to come together, and the CSIRO are playing a key part for our research and development goals... We would whole-heartedly recommend the *Innovate to Grow* program to other mining companies, especially to help them gain R&D direction for their business opportunities.'

– Dr Alan Ooi, Principal Scientist,  
Product Development, API Management.

For further information on Innovate to Grow | [InnovatetoGrow@csiro.au](mailto:InnovatetoGrow@csiro.au) | [csiro.au/criticalmineralssector](https://csiro.au/criticalmineralssector)

Innovate to Grow: Critical Minerals is supported by the Australian Critical Minerals Research and Development Hub. The hub is a partnership with CSIRO, ANSTO and Geoscience Australia.

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