As the first phase of the Airports of the Future Project (AoTF) draws to a close, it presents an ideal opportunity to reflect on the process of research, co-innovation and conversion to commercially viable outcomes.

In his recent talk at the AoTF Showcase in Brisbane, BAC Chair of Airport Innovation, Alex Dreiling, provided insights into the process of turning research into innovation and commercially viable products. A key takeaway from Alex’s talk was the distinction between ideas, innovations and their subsequent implementation in an operational context.

**Why begin with research?**
Research creates a melting pot of ideas in order to test them out. Research at QUT is inquiry driven (based on a question or problem), evidence based, and grounded in theory. It is a filter process for ideas, testing which will be viable options for innovation. Not all research will result in successful innovation (see figure 1).

**Why innovation?**
Innovation is about using ideas to make or save money. It could be a product or a way of doing things (see figure 1).

To transition from research to innovation requires certain conditions, including:

- Understand that research success does not mean successful innovation
- Co-Innovate through collaboration
- Define and manage the artefacts of research
- Shared understanding developed
- Joint ownership of innovation process and its artefacts
- People are key

The first phase of the Airports of the Future project has delivered numerous ideas and innovations. These outcomes are progressing through to the next phases: we have created prototypes and products which can be trialled by partners in an operational environment.

A snapshot of the various AoTF projects, and their location in the innovation life cycle, is provided over page.
The next phase of the AoTF project will require researchers and partners to progress identified projects into the next phases; taking the strongest aspects of research forward into innovation and beyond.

**Want more info?**
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**Airports of the Future Project**

**Snapshot of three project outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
<th>Example 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDEAS, CONCEPT, DESIGN</td>
<td>Options to improve security at international departures</td>
<td>Performance framework network prototype</td>
<td>Security screening via ASNC combined with biometrics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Data collection, surveys, analysis, Recommendations developed.</th>
<th>Model built and tested.</th>
<th>Investigation reveals legislative hurdles are prohibitive.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRACTICAL TESTING &amp; COINNOVATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Invested to roll out recommendations (redesign of security process).</th>
<th>Seeking sponsorship/commercial partners.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 4</th>
<th>55% saved through improved efficiency.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPERATION/RESULT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As you can see, each idea falls somewhere within these phases.

Some are already implemented with success.

Some have been found unfeasible.

The most exciting ideas going forward are those that have been tested, proved valid, and are ready to be taken into implementation, operation and commercialisation (figure 2).