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# NTIA's Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund

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Digital Dialogue Webinar: US Government Financing for  
Telecom Infrastructure Development  
July 17, 2024





# The Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund

## What is the Innovation Fund?

The Innovation Fund is a **ten-year, \$1.5 billion grant program, focused on advancing open wireless network technologies**. Funded through the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, the Innovation Fund will make major wireless investments as part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s “Investing in America” agenda.

## Why Invest in Open Radio Access Networks (RAN)?

The 5G equipment market is static and dominated by a few providers. Open RAN can disrupt this market concentration with its interoperability, which will making it easier for new suppliers to enter the market. **By transitioning to Open RAN, the U.S. and partner countries can help the wireless ecosystem flourish for 5G and beyond.**

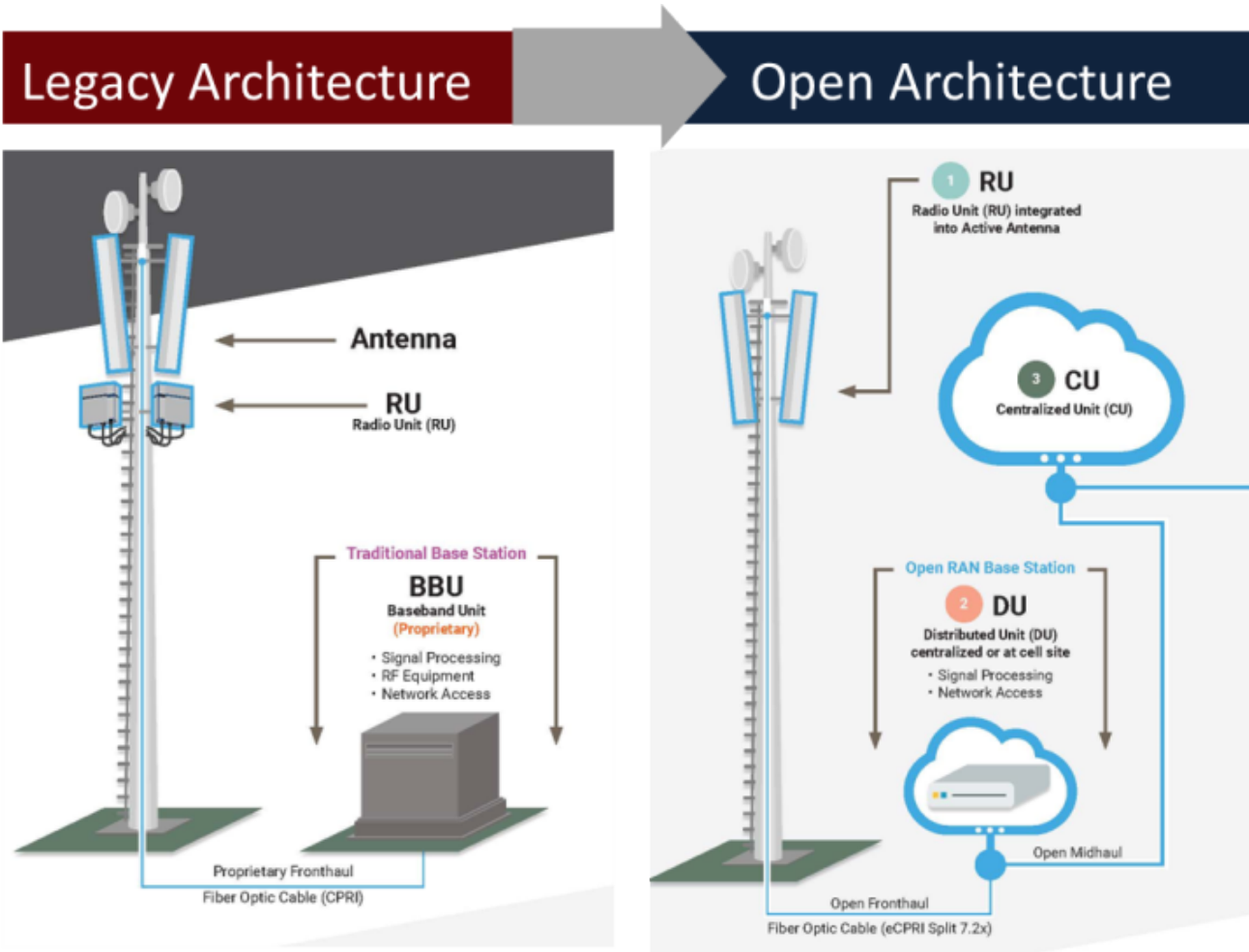
## What will the Innovation Fund Accomplish?

- **Promote** 5G+ technologies that are secure, open, and virtualized.
- **Advance** the deployment of open and interoperable equipment.
- **Support** the integration of networks with multiple brands of equipment.
- **Identify** criteria to decide if equipment follows open standards.





# Open RAN's Potential



Source: Open RAN Policy Coalition

## A shift to Open RAN adoption:

- Enables innovation and competition
- Reduces costs for consumers and operators
- Bolsters security/supply chain resilience

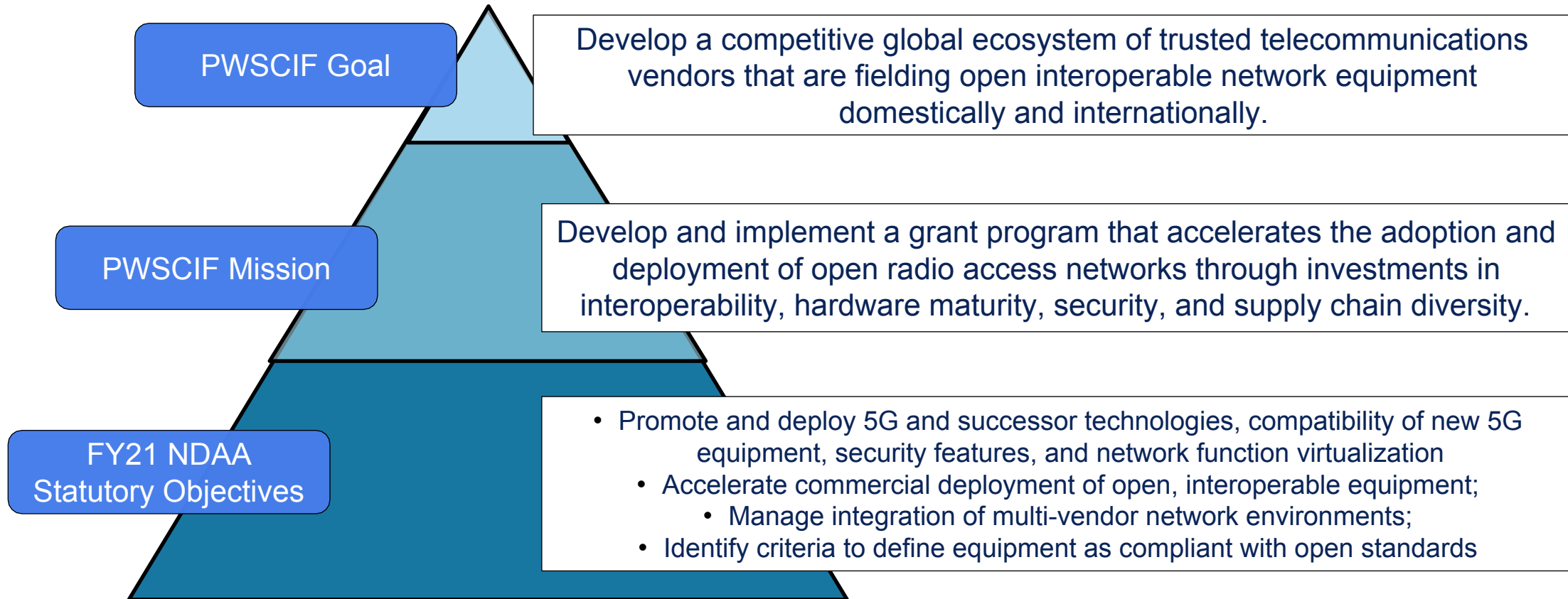
## Open RAN is still relatively new and deployment at scale is challenging. Some of the challenges include:

- Immature standards and specifications
- Limited commercial adoption
- Limited vendor ecosystem/capacity

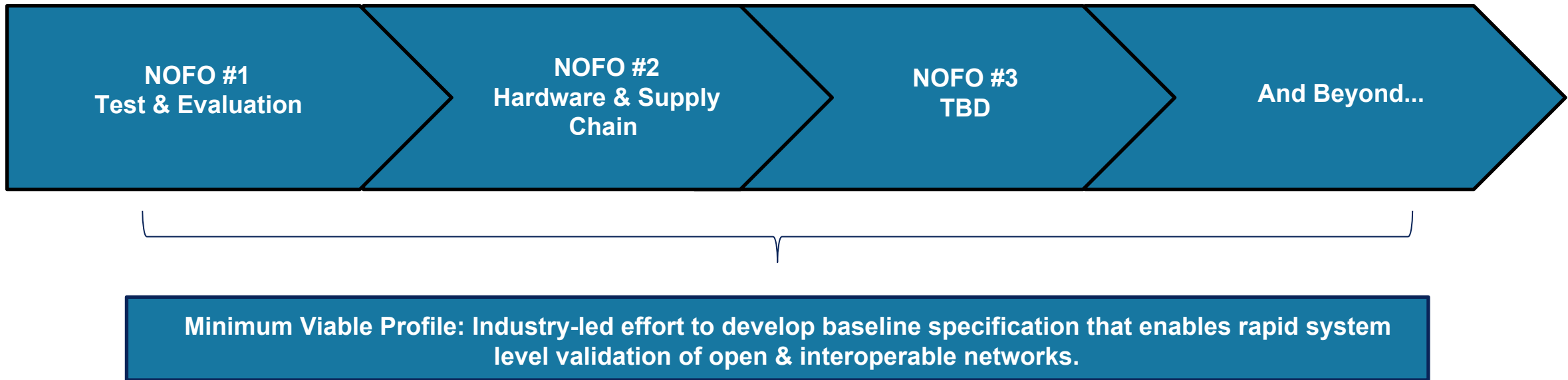




# PWSCIF Program Vision and Goals



# Innovation Fund Approach



We released NOFO 2 on May 7, 2024 and applications are due today, July 17, 2024.



# NOFO #1 Snapshot



## Funding Areas

- **Testing & Evaluation Facilities:** Making industry-accepted testing assessment for open wireless equipment more accessible throughout the United States. Access to affordable T&E is important to make the market more inclusive to new players and competitive.
- **Research & Development:** Promoting the development of new and/or improved testing methodologies, which will ensure that testing better prepares 5G open network technology for real-world deployments.

## The Why

- 76% of respondents to the Fund's request for comment highlighted **interoperability testing as an investment priority.**
- The costs and logistical challenges of testing create real barriers for emerging wireless players. By investing in new testing infrastructure and methods, **the Fund can reduce barriers and increase competition.**

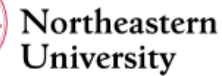




# NOFO #1 Overview



**\$140,443,216**  
INVESTED IN **17** GRANTEES





# NOFO #1 Grantees

Testing & Evaluation					
<b>\$50,000,000</b> DISH Wireless, Fujitsu, Mavenir, and VMware		<b>\$21,714,112</b> VIAVI Solutions		<b>\$42,299,693</b> AT&T, Verizon, NTT Docomo, and Reliance Jio	
Automation				Energy Efficiency	
<b>\$1,989,783</b> Northeastern University	<b>\$1,989,773</b> Northeastern University	<b>\$1,731,182</b> Michigan State University	<b>\$1,996,592</b> Northeastern University	<b>\$1,964,462</b> Open Networking Foundation	<b>\$1,943,101</b> Rice University
Security / Cybersecurity					
<b>\$1,322,825</b> Mississippi State University		<b>\$1,991,300</b> Booz Allen Hamilton		<b>\$2,000,000</b> Virginia Tech	
Improved Testing Methods - Radio		Improved Testing Methods – Equipment/Software		Improved Testing Methods – Network Functions	
<b>\$2,000,000</b> New York University	<b>\$1,492,269</b> DeepSig Inc	<b>\$1,999,984</b> PhasorLab		<b>\$2,000,000</b> Virginia Tech	<b>\$1,999,140</b> Cirrus360







## Overview

- This 2<sup>nd</sup> Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) invests in open **radio unit (RU)** commercialization and innovation. It is comprised of two *specific research focus areas* (“SRFA”):

### SRFA 1 – Open RU Commercialization

- **Funding Range:** \$25,000,000-\$45,000,000.
- **Period of Performance:** 18-24 months.
- **Place of Performance:** RU development **must** be performed in the U.S. Testing for verification, validation, and demonstration may be performed outside of the U.S.
- **10% minimum cost share requirement.** Applications with 16% or more cost share will receive favorable weighting during Programmatic Review.
- **All applicants must** include a Letter of Partnership Intent with a Mobile Network Operator (MNO).
- **U.S. and international entities are eligible**, but either the applicant, an MNO partner, or both must hold Ultimate Beneficial Ownership (UBO) in the U.S., its territories, and possessions.

### SRFA 2 – Open RU Innovation

- **Funding Range:** \$5,000,000-\$10,000,000.
- **Period of Performance:** 3-5 years.
- **Place of Performance:** All activities **must** occur in the U.S., its territories, and possessions.
- **No cost share** requirement.
- **No** partnership requirement.
- **U.S. and international** entities are eligible. Applicants may be based in the U.S. or abroad and are not required to hold UBO in the U.S., but place of performance requirements still apply.

## Key Objectives

**SRFA 1 – Open RU Commercialization:** Accelerate the development of open RU products to the point where they meet carrier needs and are ready for commercial trials.

**SRFA 2 – Open RU Innovation:** Improve the overall performance and capabilities of open RUs through targeted research and development.

*For more detailed information please visit:* <https://www.ntia.gov/program/innovation-fund/grant-programs/round-2-2024>





# Final Thoughts

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- Innovation fund is leveraging investments to energize a global ecosystem of trusted telecommunications suppliers
- Industry involvement and investment is essential to the success of this Initiative
- Significant funding opportunities in the coming months and we encourage your participation
- Question or comments please reach out to **[innovationfund@ntia.gov](mailto:innovationfund@ntia.gov)**





# QUESTIONS?

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**Richard Upchurch**

Policy Director, Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund

