

R&D Development Decision Gates – Tracking Progress & Lessons Learned | ReaDI-Watch

05/05/2026 5:39 pm IST

Once an R&D project has passed initial idea evaluation and received investment, the focus shifts to execution. This is where progress must be tracked, uncertainty reduced, and outcomes clearly understood. However, in many organisations, development activity is monitored through output rather than learning, making it difficult to assess whether projects are truly moving toward success.

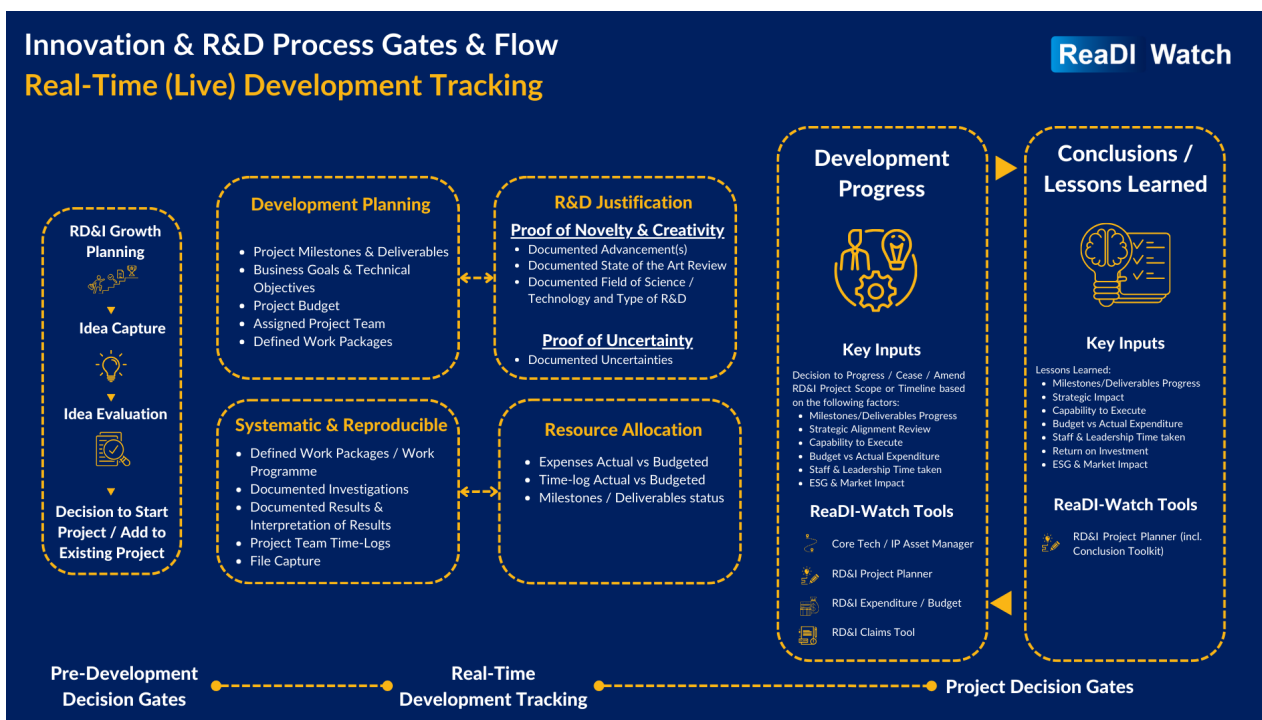
Without structured tracking of progress and lessons learned, decision gates become reactive checkpoints rather than informed decision points, leading to continued investment in projects without clear evidence of value.

Innovation Process and R&D Decision-Gates

Real-Time Development Tracking & Progress Gates

When developments are "live" or RD&I projects are "Active", tracking their progress in "real-time" leads to better outcomes for the business, and a more empowered team.

The key data to be gathered for real-time RD&I projects (or developments), include the following list. If the below information is captured, it can allow teams to make decisions about projects, ensure requirements are met for non-dilutive funding and give everyone a strong sense of purpose & focus.



Real-Time Development Tracking

Development Planning

- Project Milestones & Deliverables
- Business Goals & Technical Objectives
- Project Budget
- Assigned Project Team
- Defined Work Packages

R&D Justification - Why is this needed?

Proof of Novelty & Creativity

- Documented Advancement(s)
- Documented State of the Art Review
- Documented Field of Science / Technology and Type of R&D

Proof of Uncertainty

- Documented Uncertainties

Systematic & Reproducible

- Defined Work Packages / Work Programme
- Documented Investigations
- Documented Results & Interpretation of Results
- Project Team Time-Logs
- File Capture

Resource Allocation

- Expenses Actual vs Budgeted
- Time-log Actual vs Budgeted
- Milestones / Deliverables status

Development Progress Decision-Gate

It is important to note, that unless the team are provided the criteria for a project to be successful, it can be very hard for them to evaluate their progress. This is due to the vantage point of different members of the team, where they might not understand the importance of certain criteria. Everyone's emphasis and focus is different, which is part of the magic of bringing a team together.

Decision to Progress / Cease / Amend RD&I Project Scope or Timeline based on the following factors:

- Milestones/Deliverables Progress
- Strategic Alignment Review
- Capability to Execute
- Budget vs Actual Expenditure
- Staff & Leadership Time taken
- ESG & Market Impact

Scoring Criteria typically used to evaluate Development progress:

- Alignment to RD&I Strategy Canvas
- Alignment to Strategic Objectives
- Team Knowledge / Resource Gaps
- Expenditure / Budget Needs
- ESG Impact

Tools used in ReaDI-Watch to undertake Real-Time Project Tracking & Progress Evaluation:

To help streamline the process of real-time RD&I project management, ReaDI-Watch has rolled out a number of tools such as:

- **RD&I Project Manager:** this toolkit allows users to track their developments in accordance with the criteria as set out above
- **RD&I Project Decision-Gate:** this toolkit allows users to make decisions about their development progress (and record decisions) for collaboration & shared progress

Development Conclusions & Lessons Learned

Lessons learned & conclusions is a critical step missed by many organisations when projects are completed or developments are stopped.

Lessons Learned can include considerations such as:

- Milestones/Deliverables Progress
- Strategic Impact
- Capability to Execute
- Budget vs Actual Expenditure
- Staff & Leadership Time taken
- Return on Investment
- ESG & Market Impact

Tools used in ReaDI-Watch to undertake RD&I Project / Development Conclusions & Lessons Learned:

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