

Time Tracking and R&D-Readiness Are Not the Same Thing

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A company can diligently record R&D time and still be poorly prepared for review. This idea can be surprising, as surely good logging is the goal? It is necessary, but answers a slightly different question than an auditor actually asks.

Two separate questions, often collapsed into one

Time tracking answers who worked, when, and for how long. What it doesn't answer is whether that time was dedicated to systematic work at resolving a real technological uncertainty. Was it just standard professional work that happened to be technically demanding? This question is related to how time is captured, but they aren't interchangeable.

For R&D leaders, this distinction affects the entire data model. Whether a planning meeting counts as R&D depends on whether it's truly part of resolving a technological uncertainty, not on how well it was logged. Two R&D experts can look at the same logged meeting and reach different conclusions about whether it qualifies, which is exactly why qualification needs a defined process.

Where qualification judgment actually belongs

Qualification decisions are most defensible when they happen at a consistent point in the hierarchy, typically at the work package or investigation level, rather than at the level of individually logged hours. Trying to flag every single time entry as qualifying or not creates enormous overhead and inconsistency, because the same activity can shift in classification depending on who's making the call that day. A structured review at the work-package level, applied consistently and revisited periodically, tends to produce a far more defensible record than entry-by-entry judgment calls.

What this means in practice

Good time tracking is the raw material that qualification judgment works with. In ReaDI-Watch, after logged time accumulates against a work package, a defined review step determines what portion of the work qualifies. In this way, reasoning is captured alongside qualifications to gain the most funding and knowledge from your R&D work.
