SDI ScienceDocs Inc.
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Decision-Making Authority Matrix / RACI Template

A practical tool for clarifying accountability, approvals, and ownership during organizational change.

Use this template to clarify who is responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed for key decisions during a major change initiative. The tool is designed for startups, research-driven companies, commercialization teams, AI implementation projects, operational optimization efforts, and organizations preparing for rapid growth or strategic transition.

1. Purpose of the Matrix

Change efforts often slow down when decision authority is unclear. Teams may know that a change is important, but not who owns the decision, who must approve it, who needs to be consulted before action is taken, or who simply needs to be informed. A Decision-Making Authority Matrix helps reduce ambiguity by making authority visible before implementation begins.

This template can be used for change management planning, commercialization strategy, AI adoption, optimization engineering projects, grant-funded execution, regulatory preparation, operational redesign, and growth planning.

2. RACI Role Definitions

Role	Meaning	How to Use It
R - Responsible	The person or team doing the work.	Use for the individual or group expected to complete the task or prepare the decision.
A - Accountable	The single owner of the final decision or outcome.	Use once per decision whenever possible. This person approves, resolves conflicts, and owns results.
C - Consulted	People who should provide input before the decision is finalized.	Use for subject matter experts, advisors, customers, partners, funders, or legal/regulatory reviewers.
I - Informed	People who need to know the decision or outcome.	Use for stakeholders affected by the decision but not expected to approve it.

3. Change Initiative Overview

Organization / Team	
Change Initiative	
Project Sponsor	
Project Lead	
Date / Version	
Primary Goal of the Change	

4. Key Decision Areas

List the major decisions that must be made during the change effort. These may involve strategy, budget, technology selection, team structure, customer or market direction, compliance, implementation timing, communications, training, or performance measurement.

Decision Area	Decision Needed	Why It Matters	Target Date	Status

5. Decision-Making Authority Matrix

For each decision or workstream, identify the individuals or groups that are Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed. In most cases, assign only one Accountable owner for each row. This reduces confusion and makes escalation easier.

Decision / Workstream	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Notes / Escalation Path
AI tool selection					
Customer discovery plan					
Commercialization roadmap					
Grant milestone execution					
Workflow redesign					
Staff training plan					
Data governance decisions					
Change communication plan					

6. Authority Levels

Use this section to define what each decision owner is authorized to decide independently and what requires escalation. This is especially useful when fast-moving change involves founders, executives, advisors, technical teams, consultants, funders, or board-level stakeholders.

Decision Type	Can Decide Independently	Requires Approval From	Escalation Trigger	Comments
Budget changes				
Timeline changes				
Vendor or consultant selection				
AI or technology use				
Grant or funder commitments				
Regulatory or compliance issues				

7. Stakeholder Input and Approval Checklist

Before finalizing key decisions, use this checklist to confirm that the right stakeholders were involved at the right level. This helps avoid late objections, conflicting expectations, and implementation delays.

Checkpoint	Yes	No	N/A	Notes
Executive sponsor has confirmed the change priority.	☐	☐	☐	
Operational teams affected by the decision have been consulted.	☐	☐	☐	
Technical or AI/data stakeholders have reviewed feasibility.	☐	☐	☐	
Commercialization or customer-facing implications have been considered.	☐	☐	☐	
Grant, funder, investor, or partner implications have been reviewed.	☐	☐	☐	
Legal, regulatory, privacy, or compliance concerns have been assessed.	☐	☐	☐	
Training and documentation needs have been identified.	☐	☐	☐	
Communication responsibilities have been assigned.	☐	☐	☐	

8. Decision Log

Maintain a running log of important decisions. This becomes a useful record for leadership, team communication, implementation reviews, investor or funder updates, and post-implementation learning.

Date	Decision Made	Accountable Owner	Input Received From	Follow-Up Required

9. Common Decision Risks

Use this section to identify decision-making risks before they affect the change effort. Many implementation problems begin as unclear authority, delayed approvals, hidden disagreement, or poor communication across stakeholder groups.

Risk Area	Risk Present?	Action Needed	Owner	Due Date
No single accountable owner for key decisions	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Too many approvers slowing progress	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Key stakeholders consulted too late	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Technical feasibility not reviewed before commitment	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Budget or timeline authority unclear	☐ Yes ☐ No			
AI/data governance responsibilities unclear	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Commercialization or customer impact not considered	☐ Yes ☐ No			

10. Action Plan

Summarize the most important actions required to improve decision clarity and governance before or during implementation.

Priority Action	Related Decision Area	Owner	Due Date	Success Indicator

ScienceDocs Support

ScienceDocs helps startups, research-driven companies, university-linked ventures, and innovation-focused organizations clarify decision authority during commercialization, AI adoption, grant-funded growth, operational redesign, and strategic transitions.

Ready to get started? Contact us HERE.