

PRACTICAL TOOL

Decision Rights Mapping Worksheet

A concise guide for defining who decides, who contributes, who implements, and how important decisions are communicated.

THIS RESOURCE HELPS YOU

- Reduce delayed or repeatedly escalated decisions.
- Separate final authority from input and implementation.
- Create a visible path from consultation to action.

The four roles every recurring decision needs

Final decision authority

One role is accountable for making the decision. Input can be broad; final authority should not be ambiguous.

Required contributors

Identify whose expertise, data, or operational perspective must inform the decision before it is made.

Implementation owner

Name the person or role responsible for turning the decision into executed work and coordinating dependencies.

Communication owner and audience

Specify who must know the decision, what they need to understand, and when communication should happen.

Decision information

Make the required inputs, deadline, and decision criteria visible so the process does not restart from scratch each time.

Common decision-rights failure patterns

Everyone is a decider

Consensus becomes a substitute for authority, which slows action and makes accountability unclear.

Hidden vetoes

A person not named in the process can stop or reopen the decision later. Make that authority explicit or remove the veto.

Input is mistaken for approval

Contributors are essential, but contributing expertise is different from holding final authority.

Implementation begins before the decision is closed

Teams start partial work while key choices remain unresolved, creating rework and conflicting instructions.

Decisions are repeatedly reopened

Define what new evidence or changed condition would justify revisiting a closed decision.

Worked example: approving a program launch date

Decision

Approve the date on which a new program moves from preparation into live delivery.

Final authority

The executive accountable for the program outcome makes the final call after required inputs are complete.

Contributors

Operations confirms readiness; finance confirms required resources; program leadership confirms delivery capacity and risk.

Implementation owner

The program lead coordinates launch tasks, owners, and unresolved dependencies after the decision is made.

Communication

The final date, rationale, key conditions, and owner actions are communicated once through the agreed channel to all affected teams.