

HOW **DISCOVERY & THESIS PHASE SHOULD END** (AND WHAT COMES NEXT)

Closing the Loop Without Losing Momentum

WHERE THIS IS USED

- Venture Studio programs
- Corporate Incubators
- Accelerators (corporate or government-backed)
- CVC pre-investment transitions
- AI Studio agent escalation
- Foundry-as-a-Service engagements

AUDIENCE

- CEOs
- CFOs
- Chiefs of Strategy
- Heads of Innovation
- Executive sponsors responsible for escalation

PHASE

Discovery & Thesis Phase (Phase One): Pre-build / Pre-funding / Pre-team
→ Transition to Validation and Design (Phase Two)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Phase One does not end when a venture feels exciting. It ends when decisions are made, learning is consolidated, and next steps are explicit. Many organizations either linger too long in exploration or rush prematurely into build.

This guide defines how TURN8 intentionally **closes Discovery & Thesis Phase (Phase One)**, preserves learning, and transitions cleanly into Validation and Design (Phase Two) without carrying forward ambiguity, false confidence, or unresolved governance gaps.



THE CORE PROBLEM

Organizations rarely design the *end* of Phase One.

Instead

- Exploration fades into execution
- Decisions blur into momentum
- Teams carry unresolved assumptions forward

Common failure patterns include:

- “Soft” greenlights without conditions
- Paused initiatives that quietly persist
- Learning scattered across decks and conversations

In GCC organizations, this is reinforced by:



Desire to maintain optionality



Reluctance to formally stop work



Pressure to show continuity

The real issue is this:

If Phase One does not end deliberately, Phase Two starts weak.

Closure is not bureaucracy.
It is what protects momentum and credibility.



PREREQUISITES

WHAT MUST BE IN PLACE?

- Go / hold / stop decisions completed
- Greenlight conditions defined where applicable
- Clear ownership for Phase Two (or stop)

ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS INDICATORS

- Comfort formalizing outcomes
- Willingness to close loops explicitly
- Acceptance that not all work continues

RED FLAGS (DO NOT PROCEED IF PRESENT)

- Outcomes are undocumented
- Paused initiatives lack conditions
- Phase Two begins before Phase One is formally closed



If these exist, **confusion will compound in later phases.**



STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

STEP 1

EXPLICITLY CLOSE ALL PHASE-ONE INITIATIVES

⌚ ACTION

For every initiative, record one outcome:

- Go
- Hold
- Stop

No initiative should remain unclassified.

⌚ WHY IT MATTERS

Unclosed work continues to consume attention and credibility.

⌚ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Can every initiative be clearly categorized?

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Leaving initiatives “in progress”
- Avoiding formal stop language

⌚ TIME ESTIMATE

30 minutes

STEP 2

CONSOLIDATE PHASE-ONE LEARNING

⌚ ACTION

Capture what was learned in a concise, reusable format:

- What was tested
- What was validated or disproven
- What assumptions remain

Avoid narrative summaries.

⌚ WHY IT MATTERS

Learning that isn’t consolidated gets lost or repeated.

⌚ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Could a new team understand the key learnings in minutes?

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Long retrospectives
- Lessons buried in decks

⌚ TIME ESTIMATE

1 session

STEP 3

RESET GOVERNANCE FOR PHASE TWO

⌚ ACTION

Transition governance deliberately:

- Update decision ownership
- Adjust cadence and forums
- Introduce delivery oversight where needed

Phase-One governance should not simply scale.

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Carrying Phase-One governance forward unchanged
- Overcorrecting with heavy process

👁 WHY IT MATTERS

Exploration and execution require different controls.

⌚ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Is governance fit for execution uncertainty?

📅 TIME ESTIMATE

30–60 minutes

STEP 4

STAFF PHASE TWO DELIBERATELY

⌚ ACTION

Bring in delivery roles only after Phase-One closure.

Phase Two typically requires:

- Product leadership
- Engineering or operational capacity
- Cross-functional support

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Rolling Phase-One operators directly into delivery
- Staffing based on availability rather than fit

👁 WHY IT MATTERS

Premature staffing increases sunk cost and bias.

⌚ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Are Phase-Two roles defined and justified?

📅 TIME ESTIMATE

1–2 weeks (planning)



STEP 5

COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES CLEARLY

⌚ ACTION

Communicate:

- What progressed
- What stopped
- Why decisions were made

Visibility matters more than spin.

👁 WHY IT MATTERS

Clear communication prevents rumor-driven momentum.

⌚ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Do stakeholders understand what changed and why?

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Over-celebrating greenlights
- Quietly shelving stops

📅 TIME ESTIMATE

Ongoing



DECISION FRAMEWORKS

PHASE-ONE CLOSURE TEST

Phase One is properly closed if:

1.

All initiatives
have outcomes

2.

Learning is
consolidated

3.

Governance and
staffing are reset

4.

No unresolved work
carries forward

If any condition fails,
closure is incomplete.

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS



PEOPLE

- Executive sponsor overseeing transition
- Venture operator consolidating learning
- Phase-Two owner identified (if applicable)



BUDGET

- Minimal
- No execution spend until closure is complete



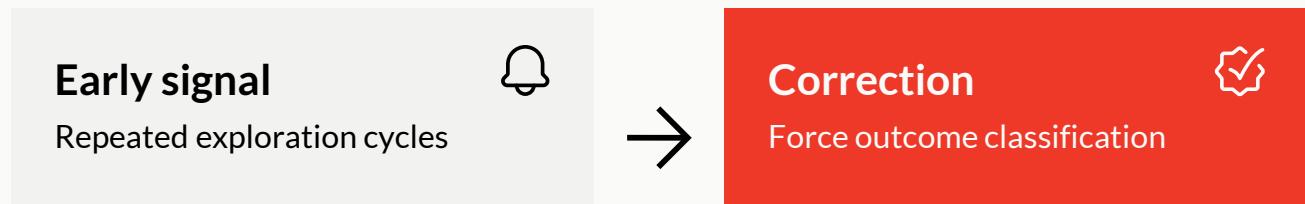
TOOLS

- Outcome log
- Learning summaries
- Transition checklist
- AI may assist synthesis, not decisions

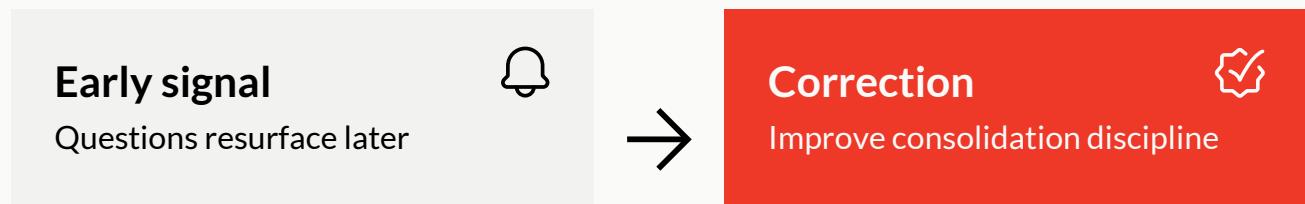


COMMON FAILURE MODES

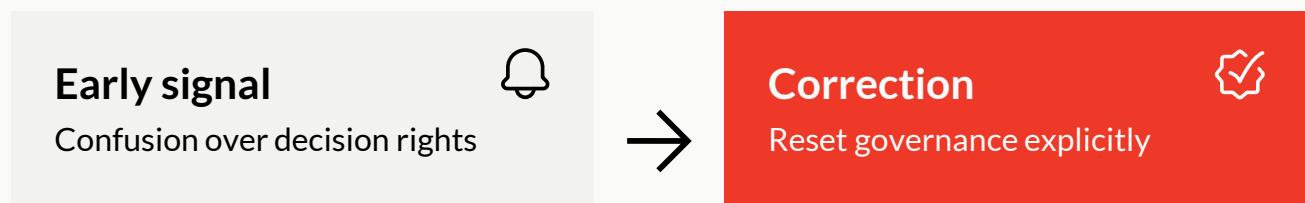
FAILURE MODE: ENDLESS PHASE ONE



FAILURE MODE: LEARNING LOSS



FAILURE MODE: GOVERNANCE DRIFT



SUCCESS METRICS



LEADING INDICATORS

- Clean go / hold / stop outcomes
- Clear transition plans
- Minimal unresolved work



LAGGING INDICATORS

- Faster Phase-Two ramp-up
- Fewer execution resets
- Higher confidence among sponsors



EXAMPLE USE CASES

This approach is typically applied when:

- Venture studios transition to build
- CVC teams move from screening to diligence
- AI agents move from validation to development
- Accelerators close cohorts
- Corporate sponsors review Phase-One portfolios



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HOW DISCOVERY & THESIS PHASE
SHOULD END (AND WHAT COMES NEXT)

TURN 8

NEXT STEPS

After Phase One:

GO

initiatives enter Phase Two
with staged commitment

HOLD

initiatives are paused with
explicit re-entry conditions

STOP

initiatives are closed and
archived

**Phase Two should feel
different.**

**If it doesn't, Phase One
did not end properly.**



CHECKLIST (CHEAT SHEET)

A. OUTCOME CLOSURE

- Every initiative is go / hold / stop
- No work remains unclassified

B. LEARNING CAPTURE

- Key learnings are documented
- Remaining uncertainties are explicit

C. TRANSITION DISCIPLINE

- Governance is reset
- Phase-Two ownership is clear

D. STAFFING CONTROL

- Delivery roles are added only after closure
- Staffing matches Phase-Two needs

E. COMMUNICATION

- Outcomes are communicated clearly
- Stops are visible and accepted

FINAL CHECK

- Phase One feels complete
- Phase Two starts deliberately

If Phase Two feels rushed → Phase One did not end

