



**Institute of
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AUTHORITY HAS ALWAYS EXISTED, BUT IT WAS NEVER EXPLICIT

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Outcome Assurance is required as a governing layer to protect outcome accountability beyond project delivery.

Projects have never been delivered without authority. Decisions regarding readiness, acceptance, and release into operation have always been made in some form. Assets are energized. Systems are placed into service. Facilities are occupied and used. These actions are not merely administrative or procedural, they constitute authorizations. They represent the point at which responsibility and risk shift from delivery activities to operational use, and where the intended outcome of the project is “assumed” to be achieved.

The central issue is not the absence of authority. The issue is that outcome authority has rarely been made explicit, deliberate, or governed.

On most projects, authority arises informally through custom and habit rather than through defined governance. A senior engineer signs a completion certificate. A project manager confirms that requirements are substantially complete. An owner’s representative accepts handover to meet a planned date. Each of these actions is treated as a routine step in project delivery. Yet each carries outcome-level consequences. Once an asset is authorized into service, it becomes difficult to pause, reverse, or reassess that decision. When performance, safety, or integration issues later emerge, it is often unclear who authorized the outcome, on what grounds, and based on what evidence.

This lack of outcome clarity is systemic rather than incidental. Conventional project management and delivery frameworks were developed to control execution. They are effective at managing scope, cost, schedule, risk, and change. They were not designed to govern the authorization of outcomes. As a result, they do not define who holds authority to declare that an outcome is ready for use, what conditions must be met before that declaration is made, or what evidence is required to support it. In the absence of such definition, outcome decisions default to expediency.

In practice, authority is distributed across roles that were never intended to exercise it in a governing sense. Project managers are expected to reconcile delivery progress with commercial and contractual pressures. Engineers are asked to confirm readiness beyond their disciplinary scope or system boundaries. Contractors certify completion of their own work products. Owners accept assets without a formal framework for determining whether the intended outcome has been achieved. Each participant exercises a portion of authority, yet no single role is clearly accountable for the outcome as an integrated whole.

This diffusion of authority produces predictable and repeatable failure patterns. Decisions are aligned to milestones rather than readiness conditions. Evidence of performance, safety, and integration is fragmented across suppliers, disciplines, and packages, with no governing structure to determine completeness or sufficiency.

Conflicts of interest remain unmanaged because parties responsible for delivery are also implicitly responsible for authorization. When deficiencies become visible during operation, accountability fragments along contractual boundaries, even though the authorization decision was informal, collective, and outcome-defining.

Outcome Assurance addresses this structural gap by treating outcome authorization as a distinct governing act. It makes explicit what projects already rely upon implicitly. Outcome Assurance separates delivery management from outcome authorization and requires that authority be assigned deliberately rather than assumed by default. It defines the scope of that authority, the conditions under which it may be exercised, and the categories of evidence required to support a decision.

Under an Outcome Assurance framework, authority is not personal, informal, or situational. It is role-based, bounded, and evidence-driven. Outcome authorization occurs only when predefined readiness conditions are met and when sufficient, objective evidence demonstrates that the outcome is ready, integrated, and suitable for sustained operation. This provides a clear basis for decision-making and a transparent record of how and why an outcome was authorized.

Making authority explicit does not introduce unnecessary bureaucracy. It formalizes decisions that already occur, but currently lack consistency, transparency, and protection. It reduces ambiguity for owners and operators by clarifying who is responsible for authorizing outcomes and on what basis. It protects delivery teams by establishing clear expectations for evidence and readiness, rather than relying on informal judgment at the end of the project.

Explicit outcome authority also changes project behavior upstream. When the criteria for authorization are known in advance, delivery activities align earlier with outcome requirements. Evidence is planned and structured throughout the project rather than assembled late under pressure. Interfaces between systems and disciplines are addressed before handover. Readiness becomes an objective condition to be demonstrated, not a negotiated position to be agreed.

Authority has always existed within projects. Outcome Assurance brings that authority into the open, where it can be governed deliberately, exercised consistently, and held accountable. By making authority explicit, projects improve not by doing more, but by governing what already matters.