



**Institute of
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WHY GOVERNANCE MUST PRECEDE DELIVERY

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

Projects frequently fail to deliver their approved outcomes not because delivery teams underperform, but because outcome governance is introduced too late. When decisions about outcomes, readiness, and authority are deferred until work is already underway, the conditions required to correct misalignment no longer exist.

This is not a question of effort, competence, or intent. It is a matter of sequencing.

Governance is the function that defines the outcome to be achieved, the stage-gates at which readiness will be assessed, the evidence required to support authorization, and the authority responsible for making those decisions. Delivery is the execution of work within those governing conditions. The two functions are related but distinct. Delivery cannot substitute for governance, and governance cannot be recreated once delivery has begun.

When governance precedes delivery, outcome expectations are explicit. Readiness criteria are defined in advance. Authority is assigned and understood. Delivery teams operate within clear boundaries and can plan, sequence, and execute work knowing how success will be judged.

When governance follows delivery, those same teams are forced to proceed without defined outcome boundaries. Decisions that should have been made deliberately become implicit. Authorization is assumed rather than exercised. Accountability becomes distributed rather than assigned.

Once construction, installation, or configuration begins, critical constraints rapidly harden. System architectures are fixed. Interfaces are defined. Design assumptions are embedded in equipment, software, and operating procedures. Procurement and installation decisions lock in capabilities and limitations. At this point, delivery teams retain the ability to manage progress, cost, risk, and change - but they no longer retain the ability to redefine outcomes or establish governing authority.

This is why fixing projects late is structurally constrained. Late-stage intervention operates inside a system that was not governed for the outcome now being demanded.

Projects commonly respond to emerging issues by increasing delivery controls. Additional reporting, reviews, coordination meetings, testing, and sign-offs are introduced in an effort to regain control. While these measures may improve visibility, they do not replace missing governance. They manage downstream effects rather than upstream decisions.

Outcome gaps most often surface during system integration, commissioning, or early operations. This timing is not accidental. These phases represent the first point at which the project is required to demonstrate that a complete, integrated, and operable capability exists. At that moment, the absence of predefined readiness criteria and explicit outcome authority becomes visible.

If no one was clearly authorized to determine readiness at the governing stage-gates, disagreements cannot be resolved by delivery effort alone. Authority cannot be improvised after execution has begun. Accountability cannot be reassigned once risk has already been transferred.

Outcome Assurance exists to make this governing structure explicit. It defines outcome-based stage-gates that precede and govern delivery. It specifies the evidence required to demonstrate readiness at each gate. It assigns clear outcome authority responsible for authorizing progression and acceptance.

This governing layer does not replace project management or delivery controls. It sits above them. It ensures that delivery is always aligned to an authorized outcome, rather than relying on completion or schedule milestones as proxies for readiness.

Establishing governance upfront does not slow projects down. It prevents acceleration in the wrong direction. It reduces late-stage rework, limits unmanaged risk transfer, and supports accountable decision-making when options are still available.

Once delivery is underway, it is too late to decide what outcome is being authorized, how readiness will be judged, or who has the authority to say no. Those decisions must be made before work begins.

That is why governance must precede delivery.