



INSTITUTE OF COMMISSIONING & ASSURANCE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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Why Complex Infrastructure Needs Credentialed Professionals

Stop Managing Projects. Start Governing Outcomes.

Infrastructure Performance Needs a Steady Hand - and the Right Glove

CEO's Message

By Paul Turner, P.Eng., PMP

At ICxA, we exist to ensure that critical project outcomes are achieved - not assumed, not hoped for, and not full of excuses and finger-pointing after the fact.

Over the past year, much of our work has taken place quietly and deliberately behind the scenes. We have been focused on developing the foundational standards that will define the future of Commissioning & Outcome Assurance as a global discipline.

This is not about adding another process, checklist, or layer of bureaucracy. It is about changing how organizations understand their

own capacity to deliver capital projects - before failure occurs.

Too often, projects progress based on activity rather than evidence. Decisions are made because schedules demand it, not because outcomes are truly ready. Accountability becomes blurred, risks are transferred from one group to the next unknowingly, and failures are normalized as "part of the industry" and "just the way it's always been done".

Commissioning & Outcome Assurance exists to break that pattern.

The standards we are developing establish a clear, outcome-first framework that allows organizations to assess the maturity of their delivery capability, not just the performance of individual projects. They help leaders ask critical

questions:

- Do we have the organizational capacity to authorize outcomes with confidence?
- Are our decision points governed by evidence, or by schedule pressure and false momentum?
- Is accountability for outcome readiness clearly defined and protected?
- How do our delivery practices compare with the rest of the industry?

In this way, the standards serve as a benchmark.

They enable a structured gap analysis of commissioning and outcome assurance maturity - highlighting where current practices fall short of what is required to consistently deliver successful capital projects, and where focused improvement will have the greatest impact.

At its core, the work ICxA is doing is about leadership.

It is about shifting from managing activities to intentionally governing outcomes. It is about giving executives, owners, and boards a clear line of sight into whether their organization is truly ready to commit capital, accept risk, and take assets into operation.

Commissioning & Outcome Assurance is not a downstream function. It is not the final phase of a project. It is an organizational capability - and a leadership discipline - that spans the full lifecycle.

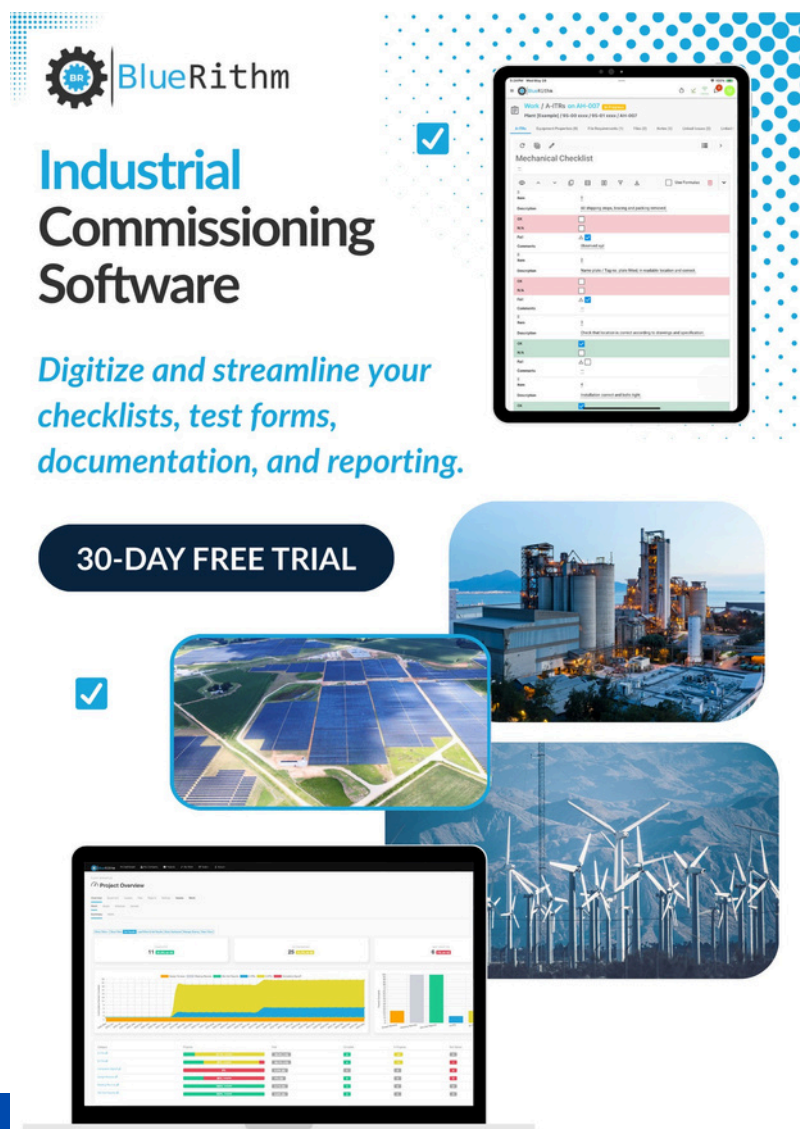
ICxA is building these standards with one clear ambition: to make outcome failure unacceptable, preventable, and no longer excusable.

Organizations interested in understanding their current maturity, and how it compares across the industry, are encouraged to contact ICxA for more information.

Thank you for being part of this movement. The work ICxA is doing matters - and together, we are redefining what success looks like for projects that truly matter.

Paul Turner, P.Eng, PMP

Paul Turner
CEO
Institute of Commissioning & Assurance (ICxA)



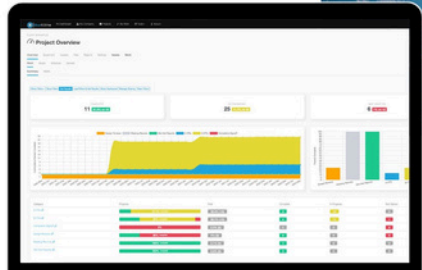



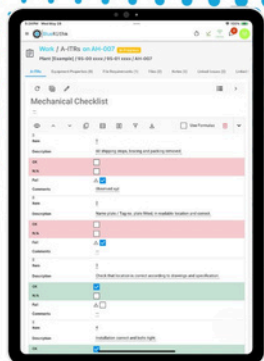
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The advertisement features a blue and white color scheme with a dotted pattern. It includes a smartphone showing a 'Mechanical Checklist' interface, a laptop displaying a 'Project Overview' dashboard with charts and tables, and three circular images: a solar farm, an industrial facility at night, and a wind farm. A '30-DAY FREE TRIAL' badge is prominently displayed.

THE ANALOGY CORNER

Distilling key ICxA themes into clear, concise, and engaging perspectives

by Peter Foxley

ICxA Commissioning Governance & Policy Director



Welcome to ICxA's Analogy Corner - where complex ideas in infrastructure performance are decoded through vivid analogies. Each month, we bridge technical detail with institutional vision, helping practitioners, policymakers, and the public see how governance can evolve into a licensed profession of public trust.

WHY COMPLEX INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS CREDENTIALLED PROFESSIONALS

We instinctively understand why some professions must be regulated. Architects design structures that must not fail. Doctors make decisions that affect life and death. Accountants safeguard financial integrity. Lawyers uphold the rule of law. These roles carry such profound public consequences that voluntary competence is never enough. They require education, experience, licensing, ethics and accountability.

Yet there is one domain, equally consequential, equally complex and equally tied to public safety that has not been granted the same professional status: the planning, integration, commissioning and stewardship of nationally significant infrastructure systems.

That gap is becoming impossible to ignore.

Infrastructure Has Become a System of Systems

Modern infrastructure is no longer a collection of physical assets. It is a deeply interconnected ecosystem where physical, digital and organizational systems interact constantly:

- Transport networks governed by automation and cybersecurity
- Energy systems balancing renewables, storage and grid stability
- Water and wastewater systems driven by sensors and predictive modelling
- Public-realm assets linked through data, analytics and digital twins

A failure in one subsystem can cascade across many.

The complexity now rivals, and often exceeds, that found in clinical governance systems, financial audits or legal cases.

Yet unlike those fields, the professionals responsible for ensuring these systems are safe, integrated and fit for purpose are not universally credentialed.



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THE ANALOGY CORNER CONT'D...

The Public Good Depends on Getting This Right

Infrastructure failures are not technical inconveniences. They are public-interest events:

- A mis-commissioned rail system can halt national mobility
- A poorly integrated energy asset can trigger widespread outages
- A flawed water system can contaminate supplies
- A cybersecurity breach can compromise public safety

If we require credentialed professionals to design a single building, why do we not require equivalent assurance for the systems that keep entire nations functioning?

The Missing Piece: Professionalizing Asset Management and Commissioning

The issue is not simply “more training” or “better skills.” The real gap is structural: the absence of regulated, credentialed professional pathways for the asset-management and commissioning functions that determine whether infrastructure systems perform as intended, and are safe, integrated and resilient.

These asset-lifecycle functions are today’s essential professional connectors. They:

- Verify that the value system is actually delivering its intended outcomes
- ensure systems are safely and correctly integrated
- Identify risks early and put effective mitigations in place
- Confirm that assets are genuinely ready for public use
- Steward infrastructure responsibly across its whole life

These are public-interest responsibilities. And in every other domain where such responsibilities exist, society has concluded that voluntary competence is not enough.

We regulate. We license. We professionalise.

What Happens Without Professionalisation

- Accountability becomes diffuse
- Competence is assumed rather than assured
- Commissioning becomes a procedural milestone instead of a professional duty
- Asset management becomes a budget line rather than a stewardship obligation

What Happens with Professionalization

- Practitioners are bound by enforceable codes of ethics
- Competence is independently verified
- Public safety becomes a non-negotiable

Distilling key ICxA themes into clear, concise, and engaging perspectives

THE ANALOGY CORNER CONT'D...

standard

- Commissioning becomes a formal act of trusted outcome assurance
- Asset management becomes a recognized, accountable profession

This is the transformation the infrastructure sector has yet to make, and the one the public increasingly depends on.

A Call to Action for the Infrastructure Community

As infrastructure becomes more digital, more interconnected and more critical to national resilience, regulated, credentialed professionals are no longer optional.

The ICxA vision: recognising infrastructure professionals as stewards of complex systems is not aspirational. It is necessary.

Professionalising asset management and commissioning is how we:

- protect the public
- ensure competence
- embed accountability
- build trust
- deliver infrastructure that works for decades

Just as society relies on architects, doctors, accountants and lawyers, it must be able to rely

on infrastructure professionals who are trained, accredited and accountable for the systems they commission and steward.

The public good depends on it.









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STOP MANAGING PROJECTS. START GOVERNING OUTCOMES.

by Paul Turner, CEO | ICxA

For many years, leaders have been taught that their main job is to manage projects well. If plans are strong, risks are tracked, and teams are busy, success is expected to follow.

But across many sectors, this belief has not delivered the results people expected. Projects may finish, but outcomes often fall short. Assets may be built, but value is not always realized.

This is because leadership is not only about managing work. It is also about governing outcomes.

Managing Projects Is Not the Same as Governing Outcomes

Project management focuses on how work gets done. It helps teams plan tasks, track progress, control costs, and manage change. This is important work, and it should not be minimized.

Governing outcomes is different. It focuses on what must be true before progress is allowed to continue. It asks whether conditions are ready, risks are understood, and evidence shows that moving forward is safe and justified.

Managing work is about activity. Governing

outcomes is about decisions.

Outcomes Require Clear Authorization

Outcomes do not happen just because work is completed. They depend on clear decisions made at the right time.

Someone must decide:

- Whether an outcome is clearly defined
- Whether the right conditions are in place
- Whether the evidence is strong enough to proceed
- Whether responsibility can be passed to the next stage

These decisions are called authorization. They are not paperwork steps. They are leadership decisions that protect value and public trust.

Without clear authorization, progress can continue even when outcomes are not protected.

Why Oversight Is Not Enough

Many leaders believe they are governing outcomes when they attend meetings, review reports, or approve milestones.

These actions provide oversight, but oversight alone does not protect outcomes.

True governance means having the authority to say “yes,” “no,” or “not yet” based on evidence.

It means being willing to pause progress when conditions are not ready, even when pressure exists to move forward.

Governing outcomes requires more than watching work.

It requires owning the decision to proceed.

Accountability Sits With Those Who Authorize

A common problem in projects is unclear accountability. When outcomes fail, it is often unclear who was responsible.

This happens when those who manage work are also expected to approve outcomes.

Accountability for outcomes should sit with those who have the authority to authorize progress. If a leader has the power to approve a decision, they must also accept responsibility for the result.

This clarity protects delivery teams and strengthens trust in leadership decisions.

Governing Outcomes Means Leading Upstream

Governing outcomes starts before work begins. It requires leaders to be clear about what success means, how it will be tested, and who has the authority to approve progress.

It also requires leaders to stay engaged after delivery, to ensure that outcomes are achieved and sustained.

This type of leadership is upstream of project management. It sets the rules within which projects operate.

What This Shift Means for Leaders

Stopping the focus on managing projects does not mean ignoring delivery. It means recognizing that delivery alone is not enough.

Leaders who govern outcomes:

- Focus on decisions, not just activity

- Require evidence before approving progress
- Keep authority and accountability aligned
- Protect outcomes even when delivery pressure is high

This approach does not slow projects down. It helps prevent problems that are costly, difficult, or impossible to fix later.

The Role of Outcome Assurance

Outcome Assurance supports leaders in this role.

It provides clear rules for outcome decisions, defines what evidence is needed, and clarifies who has the authority to approve progress. It does not manage projects or tell teams how to work.

Instead, it helps leaders govern outcomes with clarity, fairness, and consistency.

A Clear Choice for Project Success

As projects continue to grow in size and impact, the cost of outcome failure continues to rise.

Leaders face a clear choice. They can continue to focus mainly on managing projects, or they can step into their role as outcome governors.

Managing projects keeps work moving. Governing outcomes ensures that progress is worth making.

“Managing work is about activity. Governing outcomes is about decisions.”

INFRASTRUCTURE PERFORMANCE NEEDS A STEADY HAND - AND THE RIGHT GLOVE

by Peter Foxley

ICxA Commissioning Governance & Policy Director

For decades, the infrastructure sector has been trying to meet 21st-century expectations with 20th-century delivery models. We still default to the familiar AECO sequence: Architecture, Engineering, Construction and Operations; a transactional chain that too often measures success by what gets built rather than what gets achieved.

But the world has changed. Public expectations have changed. The risks we face have changed. And the outcomes we must deliver; safety, resilience, decarbonisation, affordability and social value demand a different kind of value system.

To meet these demands, the sector must evolve from AECO to **AECO-Mark II**: Architecture, Engineering, **Commissioning** and Operations - a genuinely outcomes-focused model in which public value becomes the organizing principle.

This shift is not simply a matter of new processes. It requires a new professional architecture; one that brings governance and outcome assurance together in a coherent, disciplined and accountable way.

And that is where the hand-in-glove metaphor becomes powerful.

“Infrastructure performance depends on the hand of governance, and the glove of outcome assurance”

The **hand** is the ISO 55000 family. This growing suite of standards provides the structure, competence, ethics and lifecycle discipline that infrastructure governance has long needed. It defines what good looks like, how decisions should be made, and how public value should be protected from concept to decommissioning and repurposing. It is the steady, capable hand that guides the value system.

The **glove** represents the ICxA Outcome Assurance function, the outcome-focused

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layer of assurance that ensures the value system behaves as intended. It verifies that what is planned is what is designed, that what is designed is what is built, that what is built is safe to integrate, and that what is integrated is ready to serve the public. It is the precision layer that allows the hand to act with confidence.

Together, they form an independent system - governance and assurance, intent and evidence, purpose and performance. One without the other is incomplete. A hand without a glove lacks protection and precision. A glove without a hand has no agency, no strength, no direction.

This integration is what unlocks the next paradigm of infrastructure delivery and lifecycle performance

If we want infrastructure that is safe, reliable, sustainable and fair, we need to professionalise the structure that governs it - the value system that turns societal expectations into engineering reality. If we want infrastructure that delivers outcomes rather than outputs, commissioning and assurance must become core disciplines. And if we want infrastructure that holds public trust, the whole sector must work to a shared, ethical, lifecycle-driven way of practising.

The ISO 55000 family provides the governance. The ICxA provides the outcome assurance. **Together, they provide the pathway.**

The message for the roadmap to 2030 is clear: the future of infrastructure is outcomes-driven - and it will be delivered **hand in glove.**



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Our readers love hearing about real-world experiences and fresh perspective.

Ready to contribute your knowledge? Send us your idea for an article at info@icxa.net and let's inspire and inform together!

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