



INSTITUTE OF COMMISSIONING & ASSURANCE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

INSIDE

IN THIS ISSUE

Crossrail Project Governance – Why we must Reframe Commissioning as Outcome Assurance

From Quality to Outcome Legitimacy

Systematic Completion in Practice: Building a National Reference for Norway's Water Sector

AI-Generated Work Slop

PRESIDENT MESSAGE

By Paul Turner, P.Eng., PMP

At ICxA, we regularly get feedback from people working on projects that the state of the industry is at an all-time low.

As projects become more complex, project groups are more siloed than ever, deliverables from one group to the other are disorganized, incomplete, and misaligned, and while individuals want to do great work, they are more frustrated than ever.

This all points to one thing – leadership. Project governance has not evolved over time to keep up with the changes taking place in the industry. No longer is it sufficient to only focus on

managing cost and schedule.

Project governance must focus on governing outcomes.

No longer is it sufficient to only implement Quality Management Systems; project governance must also institute Outcome Management Systems.

In the same way that projects manage construction deliverables for quality assurance and quality control, the necessary Outcome Assurance and Outcome Control processes must also be in place to govern project outcomes.

Projects are complex, there are lots of groups working on projects, and they're all doing great work.

Project Managers are keeping track of cost and schedule. Procurement groups are getting equipment purchased and delivered to site.

Contractors are ensuring installations meet quality requirements. But who is defining and governing the outcome of your projects? Who is ensuring right from the start that everyone understands the true reason why the project was started in the first place, and who is ensuring that systems and teams are aligned so that the project is operational on Day One? Too often this outcome is left to chance, and only discovered at the end that significant mistakes were made much earlier in the project that could have been prevented. This is when projects that were broken a long time ago become expensive to fix, and in-service dates are delayed as critical errors are addressed.

Project governance must evolve to lead these complex efforts to successful outcomes. The individuals with the trans-disciplinary leadership skillsets to lead complex projects can only come from people that have done this before.

Experience matters when so much time and money are on the line.

Projects are risky initiatives, and the people that truly understand the risks of getting a project across the finish line at the end are the ones in the best position to lead and manage these risks from the start.

The groups most impacted by late and over-budget projects are project owners, project financiers, and project insurers.

These groups are demanding Outcome Assurance on projects to protect their investment and mitigate the risks they are exposed to.

No longer is it acceptable for projects to just be expected to be 20-30% over-budget.

No longer is it acceptable for all project groups to not be working towards the outcome rather than their individual task; these groups will be

excluded from future project participation.

Outcome Assurance is the new reality for the industry and the only way to solve the root-cause issues that have plagued the industry for decades.

As more and more projects demand outcome-focused delivery with Outcome Assurance embedded in project governance, project participants must adapt if they want to stay relevant in a fast-changing world.

In the same way that LEED became prominent in the mid-2000s to achieve sustainability as a global standard, Outcome Assurance is becoming the global standard to achieve project outcomes.

LEED became prominent when governments began mandating LEED certification. Outcome Assurance will follow the same trajectory as more governments, financiers, and insurers demand Outcome Assurance as a condition of project financing.



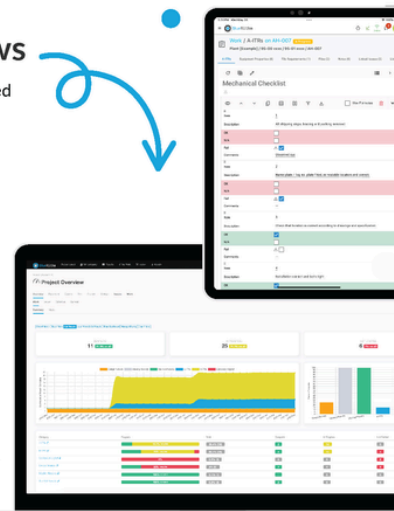
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The project groups that adapt will thrive in this new environment, while those that don't will get left behind.

In reality, what do you think is the root cause of the problem for projects to miss objectives? Is it a lack of technological advancement? Is it a lack of skilled personnel? Is it a lack of time and resources? Or is it the human element of projects, the ability of people to work together and accomplish great things together?

Some projects do succeed, but what distinguishes these successful projects from those that fail?

The answer?

Leadership that governs across all project groups and across all phases of projects. The projects that succeed are the ones with clear objectives of the outcome and the strong leadership to lead through complexity, manage and mitigate risks to protect the outcome, and ensure systems and teams are aligned to achieve the desired outcome. The skillsets to do this come from commissioning leadership, the Outcome Authorities that set the objectives at the beginning, and protect the outcome through all phases.

Why are commissioning leaders best suited for project governance?

The reason is simple: because commissioning leaders care the most.

That's not to say others on projects don't care, lots do. But the commissioning leaders that have risen to this level of trans-disciplinary leadership are the ones that truly value the project outcome and want to do the right things for the right reasons, even if it is hard. When it comes to project governance, you want the ones that care the most to be the ones to lead teams to success.

As mentioned earlier, experience matters.

Commissioning leadership understands the challenges of getting a project across the finish line and is in the best position to form commissioning-led governance from the start to guide projects to success.

These are your Outcome Authorities that can deliver results.

Without Commissioning-Led Governance, project teams are leaving the project outcome to chance, which rarely works out well in the end.

President, ICxA

Paul Turner, P.Eng, PMP

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THE ANALOGY CORNER

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

by Peter Foxley

*ICxA Commissioning Government
Policy Director*



CROSSRAIL PROJECT GOVERNANCE – WHY WE MUST REFRAME COMMISSIONING AS OUTCOME ASSURANCE

Introduction

Crossrail's eventual success is undeniable. Yet the journey to completion exposed systemic governance weaknesses that have been documented in detail by independent reviews. This paper does not diminish the achievement; rather, it seeks to honour it by ensuring the lessons are embedded in future practice.

Our perspective is grounded in a wide body of authoritative reports - including those from the National Audit Office, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, and the Department for Transport - which together provide a comprehensive record of the programme's governance challenges and delivery risks.

For ICxA, these findings underscore a central lesson: **commissioning-led governance and**

outcome assurance must be embedded at the sponsor and governance level, not delegated to construction groups, programme partners, or delivery contractors.

Crossrail - Governance Observation

While the **Joint Sponsor Team (JST)** and the Project Representative (PRep), were tasked with providing independent oversight, their ability to manage risk was fundamentally constrained. Key risks - from requirements traceability to operational readiness - were not consistently defined, validated, tracked, or evidenced. Instead, construction-led, schedule-driven narratives dominated reporting. Lacking a reliable evidentiary base, oversight became reactive rather than preventative, allowing systemic risks to remain hidden until they crystallised into delivery crises.

Governance and Requirements on Crossrail

The Intended Model

- **Joint Sponsors (DfT and TfL)** set the strategic intent and funding envelope.
- **Joint Sponsor Team (JST)** and the **Project Representative (P-Rep, Jacobs)** provided independent oversight on behalf of the Sponsors.
- **Crossrail Ltd (CRL)** acted as the delivery body, responsible for authoring the System



THE ANALOGY CORNER CONT'D...

- Requirements Specification (SyRS) and managing requirements traceability through the DOORS database.
- **Programme and Delivery Partners** supported CRL in execution:
 - **Transcend JV (CH2M, AECOM, Nichols, Turner & Townsend)** – programme management, integration, and controls. Supported by First Class Partnerships (FCP) as specialist rail operations advisor.
 - **Bechtel-led Project Delivery Partner (Bechtel, Halcrow, Systra)** – responsible for delivery of the central section.
 - **Network Rail** – responsible for overground works, aligned to CRL's SyRS.

The Reality

- CRL did produce a comprehensive SyRS and maintained traceability from sponsor intent → system requirements → contract specifications → verification and validation evidence.
- However, governance forums often failed to interrogate this data effectively. The **tools existed, but the culture of governance did not leverage them for decision-making.**

Governance Failure Modes

Traceability Without Accountability - Although DOORS, a proprietary requirements

management tool owned and licensed by IBM, provided full requirements traceability, governance leaders failed to demand and act on evidence-based assurance. The data existed, but it was locked within a specialist environment requiring significant training and typically accessed only by siloed technical experts. This created a barrier between the information and the governance forums that needed it most. Instead of enabling accountable decision-making, DOORS became a compliance repository - reinforcing the gap between delivery data and sponsor-level assurance.

Optimism Bias and Deadline Fixation - The IPA's Crossrail Review identified how the drive to meet the December 2018 opening date fostered a culture of optimism bias and deadline fixation. This created conditions of groupthink - where the desire for alignment and "can-do" positivity overrode critical challenges:

- Requirements traceability evidence was sidelined in favour of construction-led, schedule-driven narratives.
- Systemic readiness risks were masked, as dissenting voices and assurance signals were downplayed.
- Independent oversight (including P-Rep reporting) struggled to cut through the prevailing consensus, limiting the Sponsors' ability to intervene effectively.

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



THE ANALOGY CORNER CONT'D...

Fragmented Interfaces and Siloed Assurance -

While CRL's SyRS covered the whole railway, integration with Network Rail's surface works and contractors' requirements was inconsistent. Governance forums often reviewed siloed progress rather than system-level readiness.

Systems Completions as a Structural

Governance Gap - Completions were relegated to a late-stage technical exercise instead of being treated as a core governance responsibility. This structural gap meant operational readiness was consistently underrepresented in sponsor-level decision-making across all phases of the project.

Lessons Learned

1. Change Must Be Driven from the Top –

Commissioning-led governance cannot be solved at the delivery tier. Sponsors and governance leaders must set the lifecycle conditions for success.

2. Systems-Based Completions Are a

Governance Responsibility - Outcome assurance depends on system-based planning from the outset, embedded in governance structures and stage-gates, not left to late-stage technical activity.

3. Information Integration Is the Weak Link -

Commissioning start-up and operational readiness were under-resourced in structured data and deliverables, leaving -long-term- operators without the tools to sustain

performance.

4. Tools Don't Replace Governance - DOORS enabled requirements traceability, but without governance leaders demanding and acting on the evidence, it became a compliance exercise rather than a decision-making instrument. The deeper lesson is that sponsors must treat requirements and assurance data as their **sovereign knowledge system**. Reliance on proprietary, delivery-side tools risks locking critical intelligence in silos. Sponsors should mandate **open, non-proprietary platforms** that guarantee transparency, interoperability, and long-term stewardship of the knowledge base on which strategic decisions depend.

Our Recommendations

To ensure the lessons from Crossrail are not lost — and that future megaprojects deliver better outcomes for society — we propose that commissioning-led governance be established from the outset. This approach reinforces legitimacy, enhances accountability, and secures enduring public value.

Positioning

Establishing commissioning-led governance is critical to shaping and setting standards. By equipping sponsors, funders, and project directors with the frameworks, toolkits, and credential pathways to embed it, we can ensure

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



THE ANALOGY CORNER CONT'D...

infrastructure is delivered with transparency, consistency, and measurable outcomes.

Owner-Operator Stewardship

The project owner/operator must retain ownership of the information and knowledge system that underpins decision-making. Without this evidentiary backbone - where requirements, risks, and readiness are transparently defined, validated, and tracked - governance bodies cannot exercise effective oversight. Decision-grade evidence must remain sovereign to the sponsor, not dispersed across delivery partners, ensuring accountability and protecting the public interest.

Sovereign Benefit

Elevating commissioning to a trans-disciplinary practice safeguards national and institutional interests. By embedding requirements traceability as a governance-driven assurance mechanism - rather than a narrow technical exercise. This will ensure that sponsor intent is transparently translated into demonstrable public value. This closes the gap between political mandate and delivery reality, protecting legitimacy, accountability, and long-term societal outcomes.

Global Relevance

By reframing commissioning as outcome assurance, this enables sovereign agencies and institutional funders to avoid the governance breakdowns that undermined Crossrail. In doing so, this will set a new global benchmark for transparency, legitimacy, and performance - ensuring that infrastructure investment consistently delivers sustainable benefits for communities and economies worldwide.

Conclusion

Crossrail demonstrates that **tools alone are not enough**. Governance failure did not stem from the absence of requirements traceability, but from the inability of governance leaders to use it as the backbone of decision-making, from the outset.

For ICxA, the lesson is clear: **commissioning-led governance must be embedded at the sponsor level**. Systems-based completions, robust information integration, and evidence-based assurance are non-negotiable. Only by embedding these trans-disciplinary principles can major projects deliver outcomes that are **affordable, sustainable, transparent, tracked and aligned with long-term public value**.

FROM QUALITY TO OUTCOME LEGITIMACY

Why Outcome Assurance - and Outcome Control - Must Lead the Governance Conversation

*by Peter Foxley, Global Director | ICxA
Governance and Policy Integration*

Introduction

The UK Government's release of Functional Standard **GovS 002 for Project Delivery** and the **Teal Bookmarks** a turning point in infrastructure governance. Yet outdated project management models still dominate the discourse - prioritizing activity over purpose, structure over value, and outputs over outcomes.

Tools like WBS, CBS, and work package management offer scaffolding, but they remain disconnected from systems-based logic and outcome traceability. They organise activity - but not accountability. The result? Fragmented governance, reactive oversight, and repeated missed opportunities to deliver infrastructure that truly serves society.

To move forward, governance must evolve - from managing quality to **assuring outcomes**. That shift begins with commissioning-led systems thinking and ends with outcomes that matter, aligned with original project intentions.

From QA/QC to OA/OC: A Project Governance Innovation

Let's start with a familiar analogy:

Three professionals walk into a project room...

- One checks the blueprint to ensure the process is sound.
- Another inspects the final product to confirm it meets the specs.
- The third asks, "Does this actually deliver what people need?"

Outcome Assurance and Outcome Control (OA/OC) is the evolution from the **Quality Assurance (QA)** to **Quality Control (QC)** from the first ISO 19000 standard released in 1987. While QA/QC validates that construction activities conform to requirements, OA/OC validates that projects deliver intended outcomes. You can't have one without the other.

Role	Focus	Question
QA	Quality Process Conformance	"Are we doing things the right way?"
QC	Quality Output Verification	"Did we get the right result?"
OA	Aligning to the Outcome	"Are we governing to the outcome?"
OC	Executing to the Outcome	"Are we executing delivery in real time to protect the outcome?"

Outcome Assurance sets the strategic intent and governance mindset. **Outcome Control** delivers the discipline and structure to make it real - through systems-based commissioning, adaptive feedback loops, and stakeholder alignment. Outcome Assurance sets the project direction; Outcome Control ensures the project does not drift from the intended result.

Together, OA and OC mirror the QA/QC dynamic - but for project outcomes, not just task outputs.

- **QA/QC ensures construction deliverables meet requirements.**
- **OA/OC ensures project outcome**

deliverables meet initial intentions.

If you only have QA/QC functions, you may have high-quality installations, but you'll never achieve outcome objectives. Design reviews ensure that proposed solutions meet functional and performance requirements. QA/QC confirms construction deliverables. **OA/OC is the missing piece that confirms project outcomes.**

Why Lean Six Sigma Isn't Enough

Lean Six Sigma blends QA and QC to optimise performance and reduce waste. It's powerful - but largely operational and inward-facing. It sharpens how things are done, but rarely asks whether they should be done at all.

Dimension	Lean Six Sigma	QA	QC	ICxA OA/OC
Primary Focus	Process efficiency	Process reliability	Output verification	Stakeholder alignment + delivery discipline
Orientation	Operational	Proactive	Reactive	Strategic + real-time
Methodology	DMAIC, value stream mapping	Standards, training	Inspection, conformance	Commissioning-led governance
Scope	Manufacturing, service delivery	Repeatable processes	Final outputs	Infrastructure systems, public programmes
Tools	Control charts, Six Sigma belts	Audits, documentation	Sampling, defect logs	CxOA, CxPM, CxOR, CxOAA ICxA Certified Methodologies
Success Criteria	Reduced variation	Consistent execution	Conformance to specs	Delivery of intended outcomes and impact
Stakeholder Engagement	Operational teams	Internal process owners	Inspectors, technical teams	Investors, users, regulators, communities
Governance Role	Operational improvement	Process oversight	Output validation	Trans-disciplinary leadership and outcome legitimacy

From Compliance to Sovereignty

OA/OC comprised of Commissioning-led governance, reframes delivery - from procedural compliance to **outcome legitimacy**. OA/OC anchors infrastructure in purpose, adaptability, and enduring public value.

In a world shaped by geopolitical pressures, fragile supply chains, and volatile markets, governance must evolve - not incrementally, but structurally. That evolution is embodied in the OA/OC pairing.

- **OA** provides the strategic lens.
- **OC** provides the operational grip.

Together, they offer a complete governance architecture - one that is measurable, teachable, and scalable.

Conclusion: From Delivery to Outcome Legitimacy

ICxA's OA/OC model doesn't just improve infrastructure delivery - it professionalises it. It elevates commissioning from a technical function to a sovereign leadership discipline, capable of shaping outcomes, stewarding complexity, and restoring public trust.

To embed this shift within UK policy corridors, we need more than frameworks - we need visible sponsorship, institutional accountability, and a shared commitment to outcome legitimacy.

OA/OC with Commissioning-led governance isn't a refinement. It's a redefinition. It's time to move beyond quality control and embrace a new standard - **Outcome Assurance and Outcome Control (OA/OC)** - as the backbone of credible, adaptive, and value-driven infrastructure.

Let's make OA/OC the new language of legitimacy. Let's make it policy.



“Outcome Assurance sets the project direction; Outcome Control ensures the project does not drift from the intended result.”

SYSTEMATIC COMPLETION IN PRACTICE: BUILDING A NATIONAL REFERENCE FOR NORWAY'S WATER SECTOR

*by James Tuller
Project Leader for System Completion,
Advansia*

Redefining project success: What does Systematic Completion mean?

Across the project world, there is a visible shifting mindset in how projects should be

navigated. Success is no longer defined by the day a project is handed over, but by the day operational success is achieved; where operations begin safely and reliably, as intended.

How do we get there? It requires more than ticking off construction milestones, it requires clear recognition that the common goal must be operational success, with outcome assurance embedded right at the beginning. Operational readiness becomes the key driving force, with progress managed throughout the project lifecycle.

This is where Advansia's approach to Systematic Completion comes in. Advansia (part of AFRY) is Norway's largest project management consultancy firm, recognized for its expertise in executing complex projects and leading many of the country's most high-



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profile developments.

Drawing on our project delivery framework, combined with international best practice, such as the Institute of Commissioning and Assurance (ICxA) standards, we see Systematic Completion not just as a checklist, but as a governance mechanism and an assurance framework. It's about structuring projects so that operational readiness is always in focus, with quality and risk control seamlessly integrated into the strategy.

That mindset changes how projects unfold. It means bringing the commissioning team and operations to the table early, asking questions like "Are we designing with testability in mind"? It means breaking projects down into clear maturity stages, creating a transparent path that strengthens quality assurance and reduces risk. The result is confidence for both the owners and their operators that their facility will perform as intended on day one.

Closing the gap: Systematic Completion as a framework for Norway's Process Industry

In Norway, established frameworks set the requirements for systematic completion for buildings and their technical systems, providing clear roadmaps for contractors and owners.



In the process industry, however, in sectors such as water treatment and aquaculture, there is no equivalent Norwegian standard or national framework for systematic completion and commissioning.

Projects in this field face the added challenge of integrating biology with complex technology, an area which is not addressed by existing frameworks.

While initiatives such as "Vannstandard" provide valuable guidance on digitalization and procurement for water sector projects, they do not address systematic completion or commissioning, leaving a significant gap. As a result, suppliers often develop their own strategies, borrowing from other industries with very different conditions, whose standards rarely align with the biological needs of the water sector.

Without a structured completion methodology, projects run the risk of inconsistent project outcomes, conflicts at discipline interfaces, and operational uncertainty at handover.

The question is then, how do we close the gap?

International standards in systematic completion and commissioning are shaped by decades of experience and lessons learned across industries.



By adapting these principles to Norwegian conditions and utilizing Advansia's experience in systematic completion, there is an opportunity to develop a shared reference framework and guidance tool that is robust, scalable, and relevant to the industry. This approach is now being applied in the municipal water treatment plant, the NRVA (Nedre Romerike Vann –og Avløpsselskap) RA2 project; a project where this systematic completion model is being put into practice with the ambition of creating a model for national reference in future projects.

From Theory to Practice: A Dual Track Approach to Systematic Completion at NRVA's RA2 Project

The NRVA's upgraded wastewater treatment plant is currently under construction and is set to become one of the most important environmental infrastructure projects in the region. As the client, NRVA has placed strong emphasis on operational readiness, making systematic completion a central part of the delivery strategy.

Advansia serves as Project Leader for Systematic Completion, representing NRVA to ensure that the strategy is established early and clearly prior to the final contracts, and that it continues to guide the project throughout execution. This creates a consistent line of sight from project definition through to operations.

From the outset, the project is structured around a dual-track systematic completion framework. The building and its technical systems delivered in alignment with the Norwegian standards, covering HVAC, electrical and structural completion. The process track has been built on Advansia's internal systematic completion model with



ICxA integration to ensure international best practice is applied to the project strategy.

By implementing this dual track approach, the project has developed a structured methodology that not only addresses the absence of a national industry framework but also sets a model for future projects. Importantly, sustainability initiatives central to NRVA's mission have been integrated into this strategy, ensuring the plant will meet both technical and environmental objectives.

The purpose of this structure is to bring contractors together under a shared understanding of how the project will be defined, tested and delivered. With operational readiness requirements embedded from the beginning, the transition to operations can take place smoothly with confidence.

Why Every Project Needs a Framework for Reference

Every project faces the same questions: How do we know we are on track? How do we ensure everyone, from the design team to the operations team, is working toward the same outcome? Without a common framework, the answers often vary widely, leading to confusion, inefficiency and sometimes costly

mistakes.

This is why a framework of reference is so critical. It brings transparency across all project phases, allowing everyone to see what readiness looks like and how it will be measured. It strengthens reliability in outcomes, as systems are not left to chance but tested and verified against agreed milestones. It brings confidence to both the client and the project team, knowing there is a structured path to operational readiness. And it reduces variation, so instead of every project reinventing its own approach, there is consistency.

At the same time, introducing a new framework into practice is not without its challenges.

It requires early alignment and training; otherwise, its value risks being misunderstood or diluted.

The NRVA project demonstrates that this challenge can be overcome. By combining international best practice with Norwegian project practice, a framework has been created that is both internationally robust and locally relevant. This balance shows that systematic completion is not just a theory, but a practical approach that delivers measurable value on the ground.

In the photo: James Tuller



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AI-GENERATED WORK SLOP

*By Paul Turner, P.Eng., PMP
President & Chair, ICxA*

I'm sure you've come across this emerging problem in your workplace – AI work slop. It's becoming more prevalent as AI tools become more accessible.

I was listening to the AI Daily Brief, which inspired this article, which highlighted the problem of AI work slop, and how organizations are dealing with this new trend. You can listen to the episode [at this link](#). It made me realize that projects are not immune to AI work slop. In fact, these new tools are going to reveal and amplify a lot of the things that are currently wrong with project delivery that cause projects to be late and over-budget.

AI work slop is outputs that look impressive on the surface, but lack substance. When you encounter AI work slop, you can tell it's hollow and doesn't say much. For a complex topic such as megaprojects, it's pretty easy to identify. AI can produce endless slide decks, mountains of reports, and surface-level information at the push of a button, but much of it is not actually helpful in completing projects since it has little substance. What these work outputs create is the "illusion" of progress while creating no real value for projects. For complex work tasks that take place on projects, the dangers are clear. Commissioning and startup are complex and dangerous activities, and are at the essence of requiring human ingenuity to plan complex tasks while keeping everyone safe. We don't

need more meetings and slide presentations, we need more smart humans that can work together and solve problems together.

However, work slop is not fundamentally an AI problem. Work slop has existed in project delivery long before AI algorithms could generate it at scale. These long-standing problems lie in how organizations structure incentives, measure project performance, and reward outputs over outcomes. Project teams are often judged by how much they produce – how much was spent, how many cables were terminated, how many checklists were completed - rather than whether these efforts actually reduce risks, advance readiness, or move the project closer to the ultimate outcome of operating facilities on Day One. When new or emerging AI tools are applied incorrectly (really, any technology for that matter), they may optimize tasks, rather than optimizing outcomes, and simply expose the flaw of making it easier than ever to generate massive amounts of worthless output. The danger is that leaders that do not understand the true outcome of projects, overwhelmed by the volume, will mistake quantity for quality and become further fixated on outputs rather than outcomes.

Projects are already failing due to misaligned priorities, even with the current use of technology. There still remains a lack of clarity on outcomes, and project governance is typically not focused on the real outcome the project needs to achieve. If project teams adopt AI with the current conditions that exist in the industry, AI will amplify more of the same late and over-budget projects, and the result will be a flood of fake work masquerading as meaningful progress. In this environment, project performance will degrade even further – projects will be later than they already are, and projects will suffer

from even bigger cost overruns than they already do, and AI tools will not help project efficiency, but instead hinder progress towards the outcome even further.

Despite this, the answer is not to reject AI. These tools can, in fact, be transformative for projects when used responsibly. Before this can happen though, the fundamental root-cause of why projects fail must be addressed. Otherwise, new AI tools will only amplify the problems – you can't scale a project system. The value AI offers will only be realized when project leaders set clear minimum standards that are accepted on projects, they focus all project groups squarely on the intended outcome right from the start, and ensure these tools are used to accelerate systems and teams that are already aligned with the real objectives and outcomes of the project.

Outcome-focused project governance and leadership are the only antidotes to prevent work slop from creeping into projects – project leadership with commissioning-led Outcome Assurance embedded right from the start. Leaders must clearly set the vision and strategy of what quality outcomes looks like, set the minimum standards that will be accepted for each stage of the projects, and redesign incentive structures so that project success is measured not by the daily busy-ness of project-pace, but by measuring every decision made on projects of whether it moves the project closer to the real project outcome, or further away from it. Project leaders must help their teams think differently about their roles to change their mindset – so they are not simply task executors, but are outcome-focused professionals who leverage AI as a partner to reach project goals and outcomes faster and better.

The transition from pre-AI to post-AI project

delivery will hinge on whether project governance leaders embrace Outcome Assurance to protect projects from AI-generated work slop. Project delivery has been on a downward slope for the last several decades as projects have become more complex, and the ease of AI tools has the potential to continue this downward trend. AI can become a powerful force for advancing project success, but only if these tools are governed in a responsible manner to move project teams closer to project outcomes rather than away from intended objectives. It is a slippery slope, and these AI tools risk amplifying all the reasons projects are already failing. Work slop is not just an inconvenience; it is a symptom of deeper flaws in how project teams organize, measure, and lead project teams towards outcomes. And unless those flaws are addressed through commissioning-led governance, AI will only make them worse.









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