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MINING • ENERGY • INFRASTRUCTURE

BUSINESS GUIDE

Execution Readiness

The Hidden Success Factor Behind Every Major Project

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In capital-intensive sectors such as mining, energy, and infrastructure, there is a widespread misconception that project success hinges on what happens during execution. While execution performance is undeniably critical, most failures can be traced back to something much earlier: a lack of readiness before fieldwork commences.

Organizations often assume that once a feasibility study is complete and funding is approved, the project is ready to go. Procurement is underway, contractors are lined up, and the plan looks solid on paper. But this is where cracks begin to form. If procurement isn't aligned, if staffing is incomplete, if risk hasn't been adequately assessed, or if the decision-making structure isn't clearly defined, the entire effort can unravel before it starts.

Execution readiness is not just a checkpoint—it is a foundational discipline that transforms a static plan into a living, deliverable project. When readiness is prioritized, it sets the conditions for success. When it's skipped, organizations risk triggering avoidable delays, costly overruns, and long-term reputational damage.



Why Execution Readiness Is Non-Negotiable

Across thousands of project post-mortems, a typical pattern emerges: readiness failures are at the heart of cost and schedule blowouts. According to a Construction Industry Institute (CII) study, more than 70% of underperforming capital projects skipped or inadequately completed a readiness review. By contrast, projects that underwent structured execution readiness assessments were significantly more likely to hit their targets.

Execution readiness doesn't guarantee perfection. But it ensures your team isn't walking into execution with preventable blind spots. It connects scope to schedule, links procurement to field realities, and ties strategy to governance. Without it, projects are essentially hoping for the best—and that's not a viable management strategy.

Execution Doesn't Start in the Field

Most project leaders think execution begins when equipment rolls on site or the first shovel hits the ground. In reality, execution begins the moment capital is approved. From that point forward, every assumption, timeline, and resource needs to be validated against reality.

That means confirming that procurement timelines match the schedule. That teams are hired, trained, and ready to mobilize. The risks identified during the study phase have mitigation plans in place. And that leadership understands not just what's being delivered, but how it's being offered, by whom, and when.

Without these validations, execution becomes reactive. Problems emerge in the field that could have been addressed months earlier. The cost of correcting them mid-project can be five to ten times higher than addressing them during planning.

The Core Components of Execution Readiness

Execution readiness encompasses several key areas, all of which must be aligned before commencing fieldwork. While every project has unique considerations, the fundamentals remain constant.



Procurement Alignment

Procurement is often where readiness gaps become visible, and the costs are immediate. Projects frequently enter execution assuming materials are available, suppliers are on schedule, and equipment will arrive on time. But lead times shift. Orders stall. Supplier capacity evaporates.

A true readiness review doesn't just ask whether items are ordered. It verifies whether procurement is synchronized with the execution schedule. That includes checking contract terms, delivery milestones, and logistics plans—not just ticking off purchase orders. If critical items haven't been ordered or don't have confirmed delivery windows, execution is at risk before it begins.

Team Capacity and Organizational Readiness

No project can succeed without the right people in the right roles. Too often, schedules assume that teams will come together organically or that key personnel can be hired at the last minute. However, in today's labor market, especially for skilled trades and technical experts, availability is far from guaranteed.

Execution readiness validates not only headcounts but also the actual status of staffing. Are your site supervisors experienced and confirmed in this type of project? Do you have redundancy in case of illness, attrition, or burnout? Has every team member been briefed on their role, reporting line, and responsibilities?

It's not enough to have names on an org chart. Readiness means those individuals are committed, available, trained, and briefed before they ever set foot on site.

Risk Assessment and Control

Risk is inherent in every capital project. But risk that isn't actively managed becomes a threat.

During the study phase, most projects create a risk register. But by the time execution approaches, that register is often outdated. Market conditions change. Weather patterns shift. Supply chains tighten. If the risk profile hasn't been refreshed and translated into a real mitigation strategy, the project team is operating in the dark.

A readiness review should assess whether current conditions—financial, regulatory, operational—have introduced new threats. Just as importantly, it should ensure that mitigation plans are not theoretical. They must be tied to actual trigger points, with assigned ownership and an absolute decision-making path when conditions deteriorate.



Financial Controls and Decision Governance

Execution moves fast. Decisions are made daily that impact costs, performance, and safety. If the financial controls are lagging or unclear, problems snowball quickly.

Being financially ready means more than having an approved budget. It means the project team has real-time visibility into spend, contingency drawdowns, and change orders. It means that when a problem arises, there's clarity about who approves what, under what conditions, and with what constraints.

Weak governance leads to stalled decisions and disputes. Strong readiness creates clarity—internally and with contractors—on how the project will be managed in real-time.

The Cost of Not Being Ready

The costs of poor execution readiness are rarely contained. What starts as a missed delivery or a late-stage scope clarification can quickly lead to work stoppages, contractor disputes, and remobilization costs. That, in turn, affects production schedules, investor confidence, and even the license to operate in regulated industries.

One mining project, valued at \$180 million, began execution before its long-lead compressors were secured. The procurement assumption was based on outdated supplier timelines from a year-old feasibility study. When it became clear that delivery would be delayed by six months, the site was already mobilized, crews had been hired, and contractors were incurring daily overhead expenses. The result was over \$20 million in avoidable costs, simply because readiness was assumed rather than verified.

Signs You're Not Ready

Project leaders often push forward under pressure, whether internal, financial, or political. But there are telltale signs that readiness is lacking.

- If procurement is “on track” but dates are based on verbal confirmations rather than contracts, you're not ready.
- If your org chart has multiple TBDs... you're not ready.
- If the risk register hasn't been reviewed in over 30 days... you're not ready.
- If contractors are still being onboarded within 90 days of mobilization... you're not ready.
- If your schedule hasn't been resource loaded and baselined...you're not ready.
- If you don't have a control budget loaded into your ERP system...you're not ready.
- If your Management Plans are limited to the information contained in the Feasibility Study...you're not ready.

Readiness isn't about perfection. But it is about transparency. If you can't verify your plan against real-world constraints, you're operating on faith, not facts.

Readiness Is a Phase—Not a Meeting

Actual execution readiness isn't a checklist or a one-day workshop. It's a structured, repeatable process that includes cross-functional input, staged assessments, and a final go/no-go decision based on objective criteria.

Leading organizations conduct multiple readiness reviews—often 90, 60, and 30 days before execution. These reviews involve not only project managers but also procurement, finance, legal, operations, and contractor representatives. They include schedule-to-procurement mapping, contract validation, resource modeling, and risk stress tests.

This isn't about slowing down execution. It's about accelerating success by removing obstacles before they appear in the field.

TMG Helps You Deliver Without Surprises

At TMG, we work with capital project owners to bring structure, clarity, and confidence to the readiness process. Our execution readiness framework goes beyond traditional checklists and study handovers. We challenge assumptions, validate data, test resourcing, and pressure-test schedules—so you're not blindsided after mobilization.

We support you in developing contingency strategies, aligning stakeholders, and ensuring governance structures are in place before day one. Our goal is straightforward: to ensure that when you say you're ready to execute, you truly are.

Whether you're preparing for a major shutdown, greenfield construction, or infrastructure upgrade, we bring the discipline needed to convert plans into performance.



Ready Means Ready

Before you mobilize contractors. Before you commit capital. Before the countdown begins. Make sure you're not just planning for execution—make sure you're ready to execute. Contact a TMG expert today at www.tmgcorporation.com to schedule your execution readiness consultation. Let's remove the guesswork, so you can move forward with confidence.

Engage with a TMG Professional Today

Don't let talent shortages hold your mining operations back. Connect with a TMG professional today to discover how our tailored solutions can address your unique challenges and propel your projects toward success. Reach out now and secure the expertise you need to stay ahead in the mining industry.

SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT



TMG specializes in executive and management consulting for the mining and oil and gas sectors, offering tailored oversight and strategic guidance across all project stages to ensure optimal outcomes from conception to execution.