

## EDGE5 / INDEPENDENT ADVISORY

# WHEN THE PROJECT ENDS, WILL THE BENEFITS CONTINUE?

**Why mining community development projects can struggle after handover**

## **PROJECT COMPLETION IS NOT THE SAME AS LONG-TERM PERFORMANCE.**

Mining companies invest in water systems, agricultural development, training, livelihoods and community facilities. The infrastructure may be built, the training delivered and the project formally closed.

### **But what happens when the external funding, technical support and supervision end?**

Can local people operate the system, meet its costs, maintain equipment, solve problems and make decisions independently? These are different questions from whether the project was delivered on time.

#### **THREE DIFFERENT TESTS**

01 COMPLETION — Were the agreed activities and assets delivered?

02 HANDOVER — Was responsibility formally transferred?

03 VIABILITY — Does the system keep working under normal local conditions?

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**THE EVIDENCE**

## What research tells us

Mine-closure guidance and research on extractive-industry community development identify recurring risks: limited local decision-making, weak maintenance arrangements, uncertain financing, reliance on mine-linked demand and insufficient planning for the period after support ends.

These risks are well documented. They do not establish a single reliable global percentage of mining CSR projects that fail after handover.

### Ownership and authority

Consultation does not necessarily give local operators the authority, budget or processes needed to act.

### Maintenance and financing

Assets may be completed without affordable plans for spare parts, repairs and replacement.

### Enterprise dependence

Businesses reliant on mine purchasing may struggle when contracts and local spending decline.

### Evidence after withdrawal

Completion reports are more common than comparable, long-term assessments of performance after sponsors leave.

**EVIDENCE BOUNDARY**

These are documented risk patterns, not proof that every mining-supported project will fail. Outcomes vary by project, community, institution and time horizon.

THE EDGE5 FRAMEWORK

Five conditions that must keep working

For land-based livelihoods, water systems and agricultural projects, EDGE5 uses five Survival Gates to identify operating dependencies before investment, during implementation and after handover.

|    |                                                                                           |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01 | WATER<br>Is reliable water available, affordable and manageable through seasonal changes? |
| 02 | SOIL<br>Can the productive resource base be maintained without unsustainable inputs?      |
| 03 | LABOUR<br>Can the required work fit the time and capacity of the people responsible?      |
| 04 | SKILLS<br>Can local operators diagnose, maintain, adapt and train replacements?           |
| 05 | AUTHORITY<br>Who can decide, allocate resources, approve spending and resolve disputes?   |

A weak gate can undermine the whole system. The five gates are an EDGE5 field-assessment framework; they are not presented as a separately scientifically validated prediction model.

**FROM DELIVERY TO INDEPENDENT PERFORMANCE**

## What mining and CSR teams can do differently

**BEFORE INVESTMENT**

Define the intended outcome; establish seasonal costs and operating limits; identify asset ownership and decision rights; screen critical dependencies.

**DURING IMPLEMENTATION**

Observe local people doing the work independently; record real maintenance costs, failures and repair times; test decisions through supervised handover exercises.

**AFTER HANDOVER**

Check performance at approximately 6, 12 and 24 months, with longer follow-up where risk warrants it. Measure actual service, use, costs, governance and unresolved dependence.

**EDGE5 DESIGN SEQUENCE**

01 Baseline Intelligence → 02 Operating Limits → 03 Household Hub Stabilisation → 04 Hub Establishment → 05 Collective Systems → 06 Succession Assurance

**PROGRESSION RULE**

**Do not scale because construction or training is complete.  
Scale when operating requirements can be met.**

**SUGGESTED DECISIONS**

Record each Survival Gate as Pass, Conditional or Fail, supported by local evidence. A critical failure should prevent unconditional handover or expansion until corrective action is demonstrated.

**INDEPENDENT ADVISORY**

## How EDGE5 can assist

EDGE5 helps mining companies, governments, NGOs and delivery partners assess whether community investments have a credible pathway to continued operation after external support reduces.

### 01 PORTFOLIO SCREENING

Identify planned or existing projects with the greatest post-handover exposure.

### 02 FIELD ASSESSMENT

Interview users and operators, inspect systems, test the five gates and document practical corrective actions.

### 03 CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Strengthen local design, operation, maintenance, monitoring and troubleshooting.

### 04 SUCCESSION ASSURANCE

Verify local readiness, remaining dependencies and arrangements for follow-up.

### 05 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Practical field courses and train-the-trainer programs for community members, local staff and delivery partners, drawing on training delivered across Australia, Africa and Asia.

**POTENTIAL DELIVERABLES**

Gate scorecards • Dependency registers • Risk-ranked action plans • Local capability plans • Training programs and field guides • Post-handover verification reports

**THE CENTRAL QUESTION**

**Can the people and institutions expected to inherit the project sustain its intended benefits?**

## Discuss your project

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## REFERENCES AND EVIDENCE NOTES

### Selected sources

#### **World Bank (2021)**

Mine Closure: A Toolbox for Governments. Guidance on mine closure, social transition and institutional responsibilities.

#### **ICMM (2019)**

Integrated Mine Closure: Good Practice Guide, 2nd edition. Guidance on closure planning, participation and responsibilities.

#### **Devenin, V. & Bianchi, C. (2018)**

Research on effectiveness of mining corporate social responsibility. Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management. DOI: 10.1002/csr.1503.

#### **Bainton, N. A. & Jackson, R. T. (2020)**

Adding and sustaining benefits: Large-scale mining and landowner business development in Papua New Guinea. The Extractive Industries and Society, 7, 366–375. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2019.10.005.

#### **Macdonald, C. (2017)**

The role of participation in sustainable community development programmes in the extractives industries. WIDER Working Paper 2017/28. Helsinki: UNU-WIDER.

## PUBLICATION NOTE

This is an EDGE5 discussion and position paper. The sources above establish relevant risk patterns and guidance, not a universal post-handover failure rate.

The five Survival Gates are an EDGE5 assessment framework, intended to support practical decision-making alongside financial, institutional, social and sector-specific due diligence.