EDGE5

INDEPENDENT DESIGN AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE BRIEF 01

THE EDGE5 SURVIVAL GATES™

A risk standard for post-handover viability in CSR and community programs — mining and resources.

For CSR managers, ESG leaders, community relations teams and mining executives responsible for long-term community performance.

AT A GLANCE

Four minutes. Five questions. One decision.

THE PROBLEM

Community programs are signed off at delivery. Whether they still function three years later is rarely tested — and by the time it shows, it is a grievance, a social licence issue or a reputational story.

THE TEST

Five constraints decide whether a program survives once company support reduces:

01	02	03	04	05
WATER	SOIL	LABOUR	SKILLS	AUTHORITY

THE DECISION

A program that passes all five protects the relationship the operation depends on. A program that fails even one is a liability waiting for the wrong moment to surface.

Every mining company reports successful community programs. Far fewer know which of those programs will still be functioning three years after support reduces.

Most CSR programs are evaluated at delivery — completion reports, beneficiary counts, photographs of finished infrastructure. The real risk surfaces later, when reduced site visits expose what was never actually built to last.

At that point, it stops being a delivery question. It becomes a risk, a social licence, and a reputational exposure — all at once.

IF SITE VISITS STOPPED TOMORROW, WHICH OF YOUR CURRENT COMMUNITY PROGRAMS WOULD STILL BE FUNCTIONING IN THREE YEARS — AND WHICH WOULD BECOME THE NEXT GRIEVANCE?

The greatest CSR risk is rarely a failed project. It is a project everyone believes succeeded.

The EDGE5 Survival Gates are a diagnostic standard for assessing whether a CSR program will keep functioning after support reduces — before that belief is tested.

WHY EDGE5 DEVELOPED THIS FRAMEWORK

The Survival Gates are derived from more than 30 years of international field experience across mining, government and NGO programs operating in eight countries. They reflect recurring patterns observed where community programs either continued functioning — or quietly failed — after external support reduced.

WHY THIS FRAMEWORK MATTERS

Delivery Does Not Equal Long-Term Success

A program can be photographed, reported and signed off as complete, and still fail the only test that matters: whether it keeps functioning once the visits, the budget and the supervision are gone. The five gates below are where that failure consistently surfaces.

THE EDGE5 FRAMEWORK

THE EDGE5 SURVIVAL GATES™

Five constraints that determine whether a program survives after company support ends.

01 WATER ACCESS
Does it survive the dry season without company logistics?

02 SOIL & LANDSCAPE FUNCTION
Does it improve over time, or quietly degrade once inputs stop?

03 LABOUR CAPACITY
Does it fit real household routines once visits taper off?

04 SKILLS & CONTINUITY
Can the community run, repair and adapt it without us?

05 AUTHORITY & OWNERSHIP
Who decides, who pays and who owns it once support reduces?

ALL FIVE GATES HOLD

The program continues to function, delivering lasting community value and protecting social licence.

ONE OR MORE GATES FAIL

The program quietly stops functioning — and the risk surfaces as a grievance, a reputational issue, or a social licence cost.

WHY PROGRAMS FAIL

The Pattern Behind Post-Handover Failure

Most CSR programs do not fail during delivery. They fail after support reduces. By then the cost is no longer operational — it is organisational.

Projects are handed over once. Their consequences remain for years.

RISK EXPOSURE

An unmanaged grievance. A stalled relationship. A problem that escalates instead of resolving quietly.

SOCIAL LICENCE EXPOSURE

The trust that allows the operation to run without disruption erodes quietly — until tested at the worst moment.

REPUTATIONAL EXPOSURE

A program publicly claimed as a success, visibly failing, is the story that reaches a journalist or an NGO report.

These pressures surface at exactly the moments a company can least afford them: after a CSR budget cut, after a community relations team change, during a licence renewal, or during an external audit.

EDGE5 PRINCIPLE

A CSR program that passes all five gates protects the relationship the operation depends on. A program that fails even one is a liability waiting for the wrong moment to surface.

BEYOND PROJECT DELIVERY

Measuring Long-Term Success

Most CSR evaluation stops at the point of handover. The Survival Gates start there — assessing what conventional measures do not.

CONVENTIONAL MEASURE	THE EDGE5 SURVIVAL GATES
Project delivered	**Program still functioning**
Infrastructure completed	**Community operating independently**
Budget spent	**System survives after support reduces**
Beneficiary numbers	**Long-term operational viability**
Outputs	**Survivability**

THE FRAMEWORK, IN DETAIL

The EDGE5 Survival Gates

Five constraints determine whether a program continues to function once company support reduces. If one or more gates fail, the program is not a delivered success — it is a liability waiting for the wrong moment to surface.

01 WATER ACCESS

Will the water system survive the dry season without company logistics support?

Boreholes and irrigation often perform well while the field team visits — and fail the first dry season it doesn't. The fastest-surfacing failure on the list, and the easiest for a community to point to publicly.

02 SOIL & LANDSCAPE FUNCTION

Do land-based programs improve over time, or quietly degrade once inputs and supervision stop?

Gardens and rehabilitation plantings are photographed at handover as proof of success. Whether they keep improving is rarely checked again — until it's a visible failure on land the community sees daily.

03 LABOUR CAPACITY

Does the program fit inside real household routines, or get quietly abandoned once visits taper off?

Programs are designed against ideal participation, not the daily load households already carry. The gap doesn't show in a delivery report — it shows eighteen months later, on the ground.

04 SKILLS & CONTINUITY

Has the community's own capacity to run and adapt it been built — or does it still sit with rotating field staff?

Training delivered is not capability transferred. If only company or NGO staff can troubleshoot it, survival is tied to a posting, not the community. The single point of failure underneath the other four.

05 AUTHORITY & OWNERSHIP

Who decides, who pays and who owns the running costs once company support reduces?

This is where money sits. If the money isn't committed, or no one owns the running costs once the company steps back, the program doesn't pass. If every decision still routes back through the company or its contractor, the program hasn't really transferred.

THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE FRAMEWORK

Recurring Patterns of Post-Handover Failure

The five gates are not theoretical. They were defined because the same failures recur, independently of sector, country or program design:

> **Water systems fail first.** They are the fastest-surfacing, most visible failure on the list.
>
> **Labour requirements are underestimated.** Programs are designed against ideal participation, not real household load.
>
> **Skills remain with company or NGO staff.** Training delivered is mistaken for capability transferred.
>
> **Authority is rarely transferred.** Decisions still route back to the company long after handover is declared complete.
>
> **Programs appear successful until support reduces.** The gap is invisible at delivery and undeniable later.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Is Your Program Already at Risk?

The following indicators are drawn directly from the patterns behind post-handover failure. They are not a compliance checklist — they are an early-warning signal. Tick the boxes that apply to a program you are responsible for.

EDGE5 WARNING INDICATORS — TICK ANY THAT APPLY

If **three or more** of the following are true, the program's survivability is already in question and warrants independent review.

- ☐ No independent post-handover review has been undertaken since delivery
- ☐ Maintenance or repair still depends on company or contracted NGO staff
- ☐ Field visit frequency has reduced, and participation has not been re-measured since
- ☐ Community ownership of the program remains unclear or undefined
- ☐ Program success is measured by output or activity count, not verified ongoing function
- ☐ No one has asked the community directly whether they consider the program theirs

BOXES TICKED: ____ OF 6

Three or more — request a Survival Gates Review at **greg@edge5.com.au**

PROGRAMS DO NOT FAIL WHEN THEY ARE HANDED OVER.

THEY FAIL WHEN NOBODY RETURNS.

THE EDGE5 SURVIVAL GATES REVIEW

What a Survival Gates Review Delivers

A structured, independent review applies the five gates to your current CSR or community portfolio and converts the diagnostic into a decision-ready output.

01

Independent Assessment

An evidence-based view of which programs will keep functioning after support reduces, and which will not.

02

Gate-by-Gate Risk Profile

Each program scored against all five Survival Gates, showing precisely where viability is at risk.

03

Priority Vulnerabilities

A ranked view of which gaps carry the greatest exposure — so resourcing follows priority, not assumption.

04

Practical Recommendations

Specific, field-tested actions to close the gaps identified — not generic guidance.

05 **Executive Report for Leadership and Board Discussion**

A single, decision-ready report suitable for board and investor scrutiny.

WHEN TO SEEK A FULL REVIEW

A structured review is appropriate where multiple programs have not been independently reassessed since delivery, where CSR spend is under board or investor scrutiny, where a budget or staffing change is approaching, or where a licence renewal, expansion approval, or external audit is on the horizon.

WHY EDGE5

Applied across mining, government and NGO programs over more than three decades in diverse operating environments.

30+

YEARS INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Mining, government and NGO sectors

8

COUNTRIES

Direct field experience across diverse regulatory and community contexts

1

INDEPENDENT DESIGN AUTHORITY

No delivery conflict, no vested interest

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Two Different Questions

TRADITIONAL EVALUATION

Was the project delivered?

Measures completion.

EDGE5 EVALUATION

Will the project still be functioning after support reduces?

Measures long-term viability.

PROJECTS ARE HANDED OVER ONCE. THEIR CONSEQUENCES REMAIN FOR YEARS.

WHAT'S NEXT

Start With a Survival Gates Review

A structured, independent review applies the five gates to your current CSR or community portfolio — producing a gate-by-gate risk profile and a decision-ready report for leadership and board discussion.

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The EDGE5 Survival Gates™ framework was developed by Greg Knibbs, founder of EDGE5.

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