

WHAT “READY TO GREENLIGHT” ACTUALLY MEANS IN DISCOVERY & THESIS PHASE

Preventing Premature Commitment

WHERE THIS IS USED

- Venture Studio programs
- Corporate Incubators
- Accelerators (corporate or government-backed)
- CVC pre-investment escalation
- AI Studio agent approval
- Foundry-as-a-Service engagements

AUDIENCE

- CEOs
- CFOs
- Chiefs of Strategy
- Heads of Innovation
- Executive sponsors approving escalation

PHASE

Discovery & Thesis Phase (Phase One): Pre-build / Pre-funding / Pre-team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many ventures fail not because they were weak, but because they were greenlit too early. In Phase One, “ready to greenlight” does not mean proven, de-risked, or optimized. It means that the **right unknowns have been tested**, the downside is controlled, and escalation is justified.

This guide defines what TURN8 means by greenlight readiness in Discovery & Thesis Phase (Phase One) and how to avoid confusing momentum, polish, or confidence with real readiness.



THE CORE PROBLEM

In most organizations, greenlight decisions drift toward one of two extremes:

Overconfidence

- Strong narratives substitute for evidence
- Early signals are extrapolated too far
- Build begins before adoption is understood

Overcaution

- Escalation is delayed until certainty appears
- Teams keep validating diminishing risks
- Opportunities lose momentum or relevance

In GCC organizations, this tension is amplified by:



Visibility of
greenlight decisions



Perceived irreversibility
of commitment

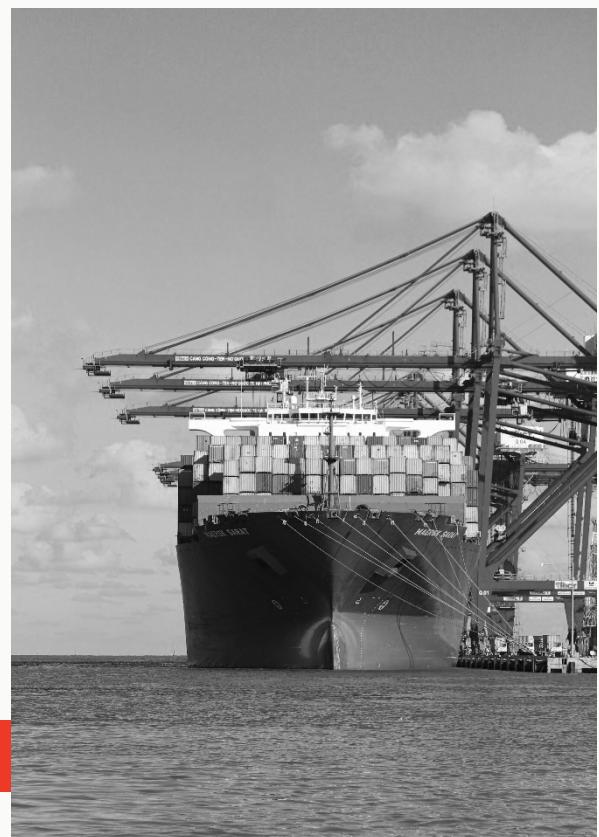


Fear of reputational
impact

The real issue is this:

**Greenlight readiness is
about risk shape, not
risk elimination.**

Phase One should end when the **right
risks** remain, not when all risks are gone.



PREREQUISITES

WHAT MUST BE IN PLACE?

- Clear venture challenge statement
- Defined opportunity area
- Completed Phase-One validation
- Go / hold / stop decision discipline

ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS INDICATORS

- Shared understanding of Phase-One vs Phase-Two risk
- Willingness to commit small, staged resources
- Acceptance that greenlights is not a final verdict

RED FLAGS (DO NOT PROCEED IF PRESENT)

- Greenlight framed as “full approval”
- Business cases required at Phase One
- Delivery timelines locked in advance



If these exist, greenlight will become a **political commitment** instead of a learning milestone.



STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

STEP 1

CONFIRM THE RIGHT UNKNOWNs WERE TESTED

⌚ ACTION

Review what was actually tested during Phase One.

The focus should be on:

- Customer behavior
- Willingness to pay or adopt
- Critical adoption constraints

⌚ WHY IT MATTERS

Testing secondary risks gives false comfort.

⌚ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Did Phase One materially reduce the most important uncertainty?

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Over-testing technical feasibility
- Avoiding uncomfortable customer truths

⌚ TIME ESTIMATE

30 minutes

STEP 2

ASSESS EVIDENCE STRENGTH, NOT VOLUME

⌚ ACTION

Evaluate whether the evidence is:

- Direct (observed behavior)
- Repeatable
- Decision-shaping

Ignore volume, polish, and presentation quality.

⌚ WHY IT MATTERS

More data does not equal better data.

⌚ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Would this evidence change a skeptical decision-maker's mind?

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Overweighting anecdotal enthusiasm
- Confusing engagement with commitment

⌚ TIME ESTIMATE

30 minutes

STEP 3

ENSURE DOWNSIDE IS STILL CONTROLLED

⌚ ACTION

Confirm that escalation:

- Is staged
- Is reversible
- Has clear stop points

Greenlight should not lock the organization into long-term commitments.

👁 WHY IT MATTERS

Controlled downside preserves strategic optionality.

☑ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Can we still stop cheaply if we are wrong?

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Committing teams or capital too early
- Treating greenlight as irreversible

📅 TIME ESTIMATE

15 minutes

STEP 4

VERIFY ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS FOR PHASE TWO

⌚ ACTION

Confirm that the organization is ready for:

- Execution uncertainty
- Cross-functional involvement
- Increased visibility

Phase Two requires different skills and expectations.

👁 WHY IT MATTERS

Premature escalation overwhelms fragile initiatives.

☑ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Do we have the right conditions to support execution?

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Assuming Phase-One operators can execute
- Underestimating delivery complexity

📅 TIME ESTIMATE

30 minutes



STEP 5

GREENLIGHT WITH EXPLICIT CONDITIONS

⌚ ACTION

Approve escalation with:

- Clear scope
- Defined success criteria
- Explicit next decision point

Greenlight is conditional by design.

👁 WHY IT MATTERS

Conditions preserve discipline beyond Phase One.

⌚ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Are the conditions documented and enforced?

⚠ COMMON MISTAKES

- Issuing open-ended approvals
- Failing to name remaining risks

📅 TIME ESTIMATE

15 minutes



DECISION FRAMEWORKS

PHASE-ONE GREENLIGHT TEST

Proceed only if:

1.

The dominant uncertainty has been tested

2.

Evidence meaningfully reduces risk

3.

Downside remains controlled

4.

Next-phase risks are explicit

If any condition fails,
hold or stop.



RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS



PEOPLE

- Executive sponsor approving escalation
- Venture operator presenting evidence
- Delivery lead identified (not yet staffed)



BUDGET

- Small, staged allocation only
- No long-term commitments



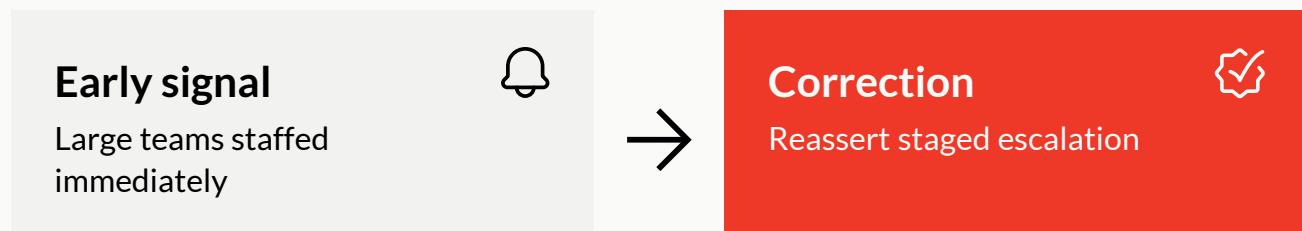
TOOLS

- Evidence summaries
- Escalation conditions log
- AI may assist synthesis, not approval

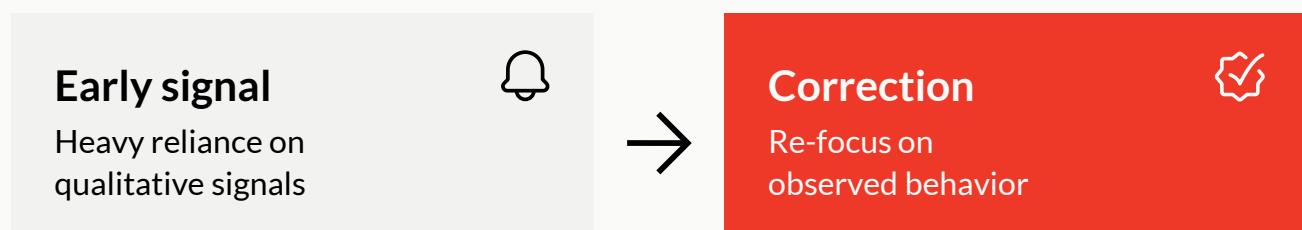


COMMON FAILURE MODES

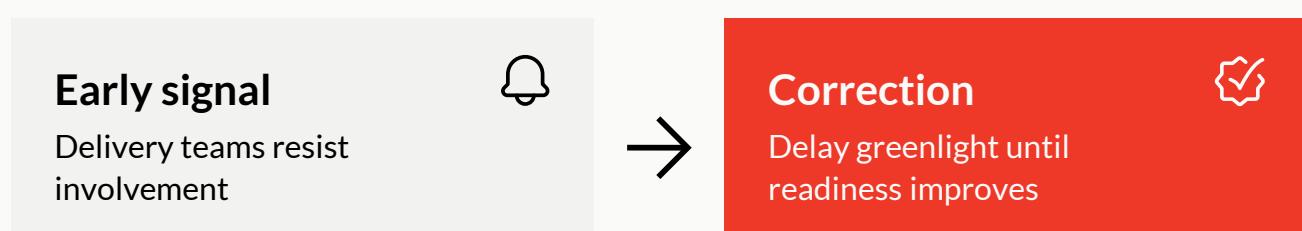
FAILURE MODE: GREENLIGHT EQUALS FULL APPROVAL



FAILURE MODE: EVIDENCE INFLATION



FAILURE MODE: EXECUTION SHOCK



SUCCESS METRICS



LEADING INDICATORS

- Clear greenlight conditions
- Staged resource commitments
- Explicit next decision point



LAGGING INDICATORS

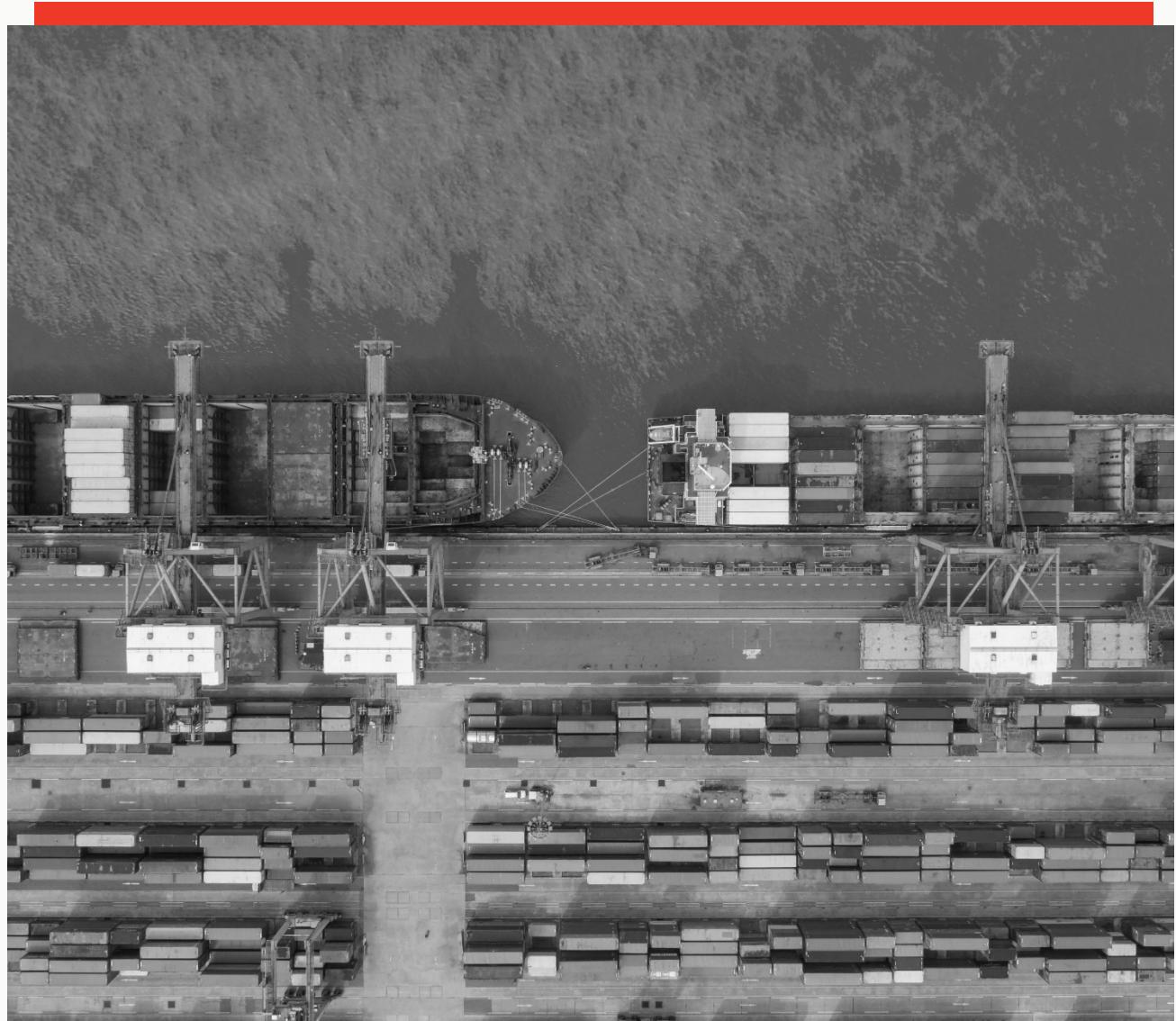
- Fewer post-greenlight resets
- Faster Phase-Two starts
- Higher confidence at later investment stages



EXAMPLE USE CASES

This approach is typically used when:

- Ventures transition from exploration to build
- CVC teams escalate from screening to diligence
- AI agents move from concept to development
- Accelerators approve pilots with real users
- Corporate sponsors approve funding tranches



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WHAT "READY TO GREENLIGHT" ACTUALLY
MEANS IN DISCOVERY & THESIS PHASE

TURN 8

NEXT STEPS

After greenlight:

1.

Transition governance
to Phase Two

2.

Bring in delivery roles
deliberately

3.

Preserve stop discipline

**Greenlight is a permission
to proceed—not a promise
of success.**



CHECKLIST (CHEAT SHEET)

A. EVIDENCE READINESS

- Dominant uncertainty was tested
- Evidence is direct and decision-shaping

B. RISK SHAPE

- Downside remains controlled
- Escalation is staged and reversible

C. ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

- Execution conditions are understood
- Phase-Two roles are identified

D. GREENLIGHT DISCIPLINE

- Approval includes explicit conditions
- Next decision point is defined

FINAL CHECK

- Greenlight does not lock in long-term commitments
- Remaining risks are explicit

If greenlight feels final → It is too early

