

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

Preventing Premature Commitment

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## 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

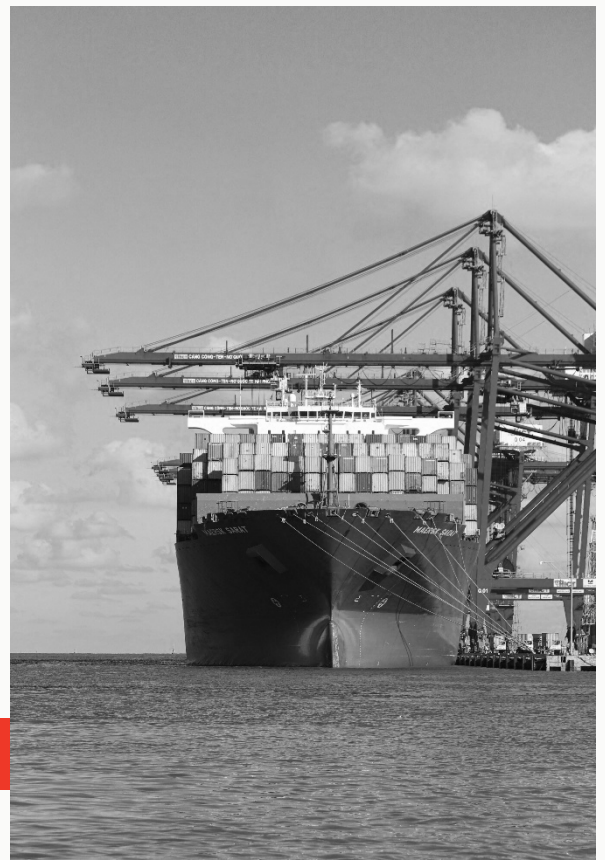


Fear of reputational  
impact

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 UNKNOWNNS 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

#### COMMON MISTAKES

- Over-testing technical feasibility
- Avoiding uncomfortable customer truths

#### WHY IT MATTERS

Testing secondary risks gives false comfort.

#### DECISION CHECKPOINT

Did Phase One materially reduce the most important uncertainty?

#### 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.

#### COMMON MISTAKES

- Overweighting anecdotal enthusiasm
- Confusing engagement with commitment

#### WHY IT MATTERS

More data does not equal better data.

#### DECISION CHECKPOINT

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

#### 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.

#### ⚠️ COMMON MISTAKES

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

#### 📺 WHY IT MATTERS

Controlled downside preserves strategic optionality.

#### ✅ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Can we still stop cheaply if we are wrong?

#### 📅 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.

#### ⚠️ COMMON MISTAKES

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

#### 📺 WHY IT MATTERS

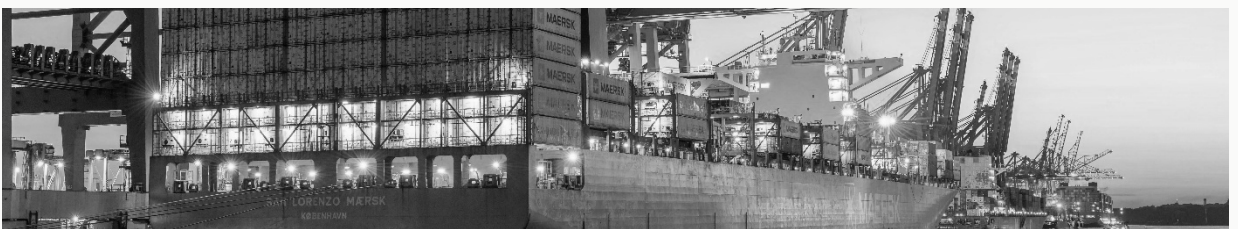
Premature escalation overwhelms fragile initiatives.

#### ✅ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Do we have the right conditions to support execution?

#### 📅 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.

### ⚠️ COMMON MISTAKES

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

### 📺 WHY IT MATTERS

Conditions preserve discipline beyond Phase One.

### ✅ DECISION CHECKPOINT

Are the conditions documented and enforced?

### 📅 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



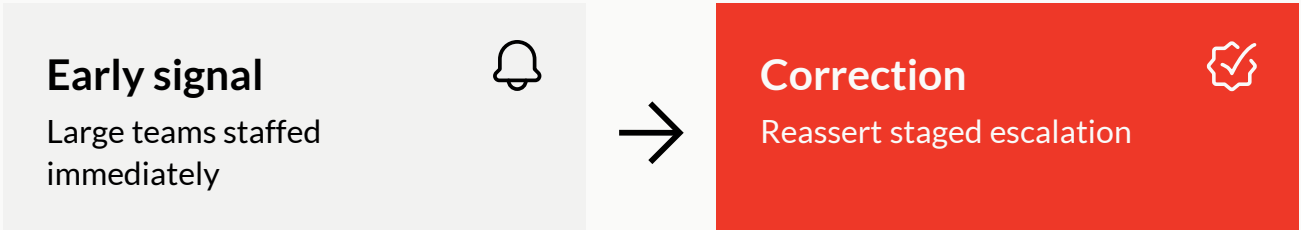
## TOOLS

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

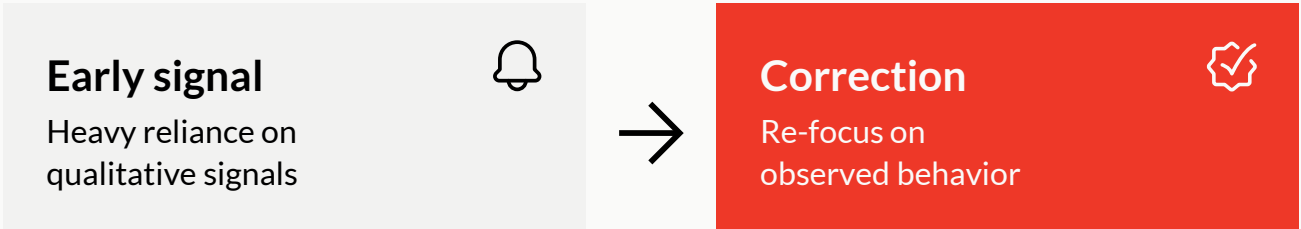


# COMMON FAILURE MODES

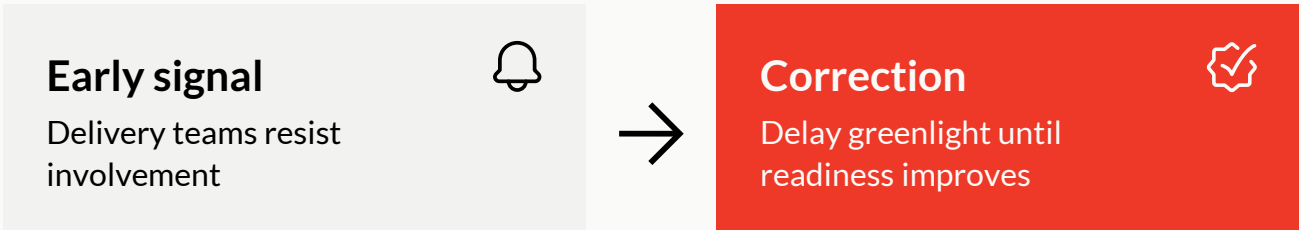
**FAILURE MODE: GREENLIGHT EQUALS FULL APPROVAL**



**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





# NEXT STEPS

## After greenlight:

1.

Transition governance  
to Phase Two

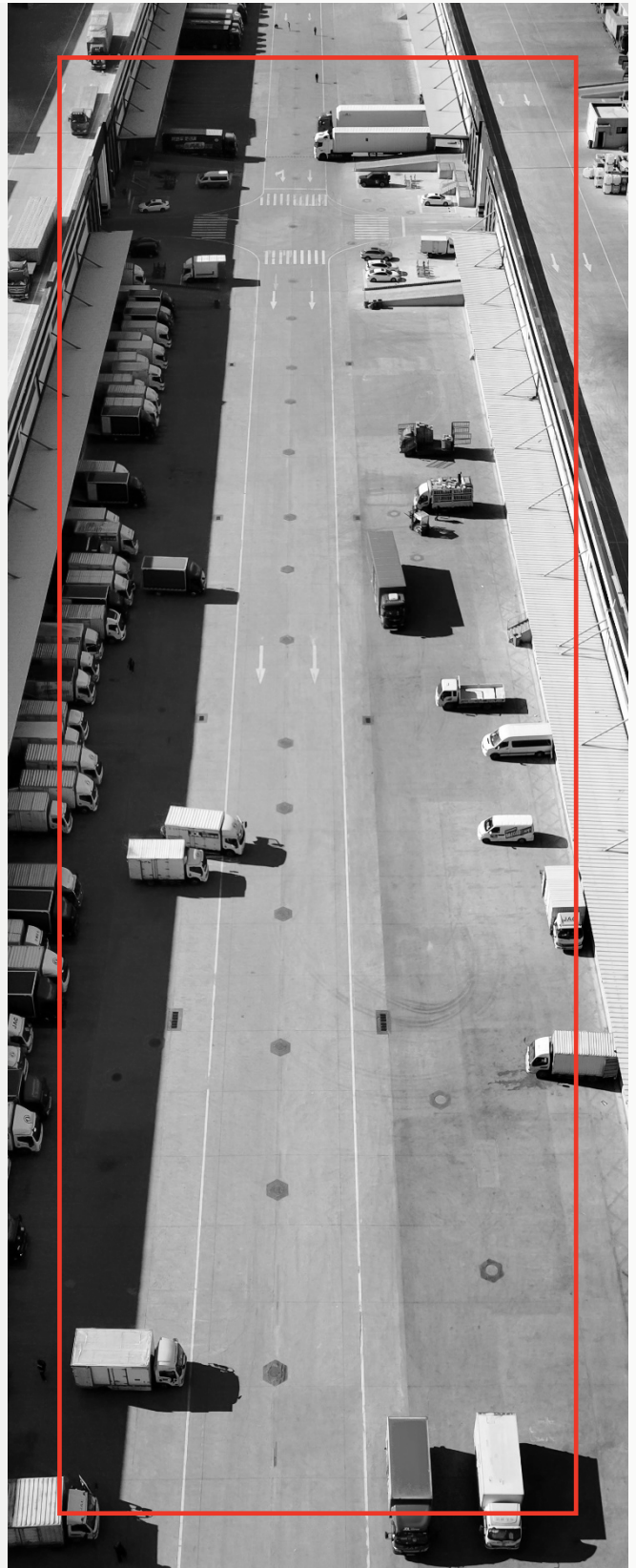
2.

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

