

The “No Charter. No Starter™” Governance Model

Organizations rarely fail because they lack intelligence.
They fail because discipline erodes over time.

The **No Charter. No Starter™** framework exists to prevent that erosion before projects ever begin. It establishes a simple but powerful rule: no initiative enters the portfolio until it has been properly authorized.

This model moves governance upstream, placing discipline at the point of intake rather than attempting to repair problems later through reporting and oversight.

Why the Process Matters

In many organizations, projects begin informally:

- A good idea gains momentum
- A sponsor gives a verbal approval
- A team begins work “just to get started”
- Funding, scope, and ownership are clarified later

By the time governance catches up, time and resources have already been committed.

The **No Charter. No Starter™** model prevents this drift by establishing a clear authorization chain before execution begins.

The Authorization Chain

Every initiative must pass through five checkpoints before it enters the portfolio.

1. Idea

Every initiative begins with an idea. Ideas are valuable—but ideas alone are not authorization.

2. Charter

A documented charter establishes the problem, objectives, ownership, and expected outcomes.

3. Sponsor Approval

A responsible executive sponsor formally authorizes the initiative and assumes accountability for its success.

4. Funding Confirmation

Resources must be identified and confirmed. If funding is unclear, the project is not ready to proceed.

5. Portfolio Entry

Only after these steps are complete does the initiative enter the official portfolio for execution.

If any link in the chain is missing, the process stops.

Any break in the chain = STOP.

Portfolio Authorization Scoring

Before entry into the portfolio, initiatives can also be evaluated using the Portfolio Authorization Scoring Matrix shown in the graphic.

Each initiative is evaluated across key readiness indicators:

- Strategic alignment
- Sponsor strength
- Funding clarity
- Resource availability
- Risk awareness
- Impact value
- Readiness

This scoring ensures that the organization is not only approving projects—but approving the right projects at the right time.

This allows leadership teams to make transparent and defensible portfolio decisions.

Governance Begins at Intake

Too many governance programs focus on dashboards, status reports, and late-stage oversight.

The **No Charter. No Starter™** model recognizes a simple truth:

Governance begins at intake — not reporting.

When discipline exists at the beginning of the process, the entire portfolio operates with greater clarity, accountability, and strategic alignment.

NO CHARTER. NO STARTER.

PORTFOLIO AUTHORIZATION BEFORE PORTFOLIO EXECUTION



PORTFOLIO AUTHORIZATION SCORING MATRIX

CATEGORY	SCORE GUIDANCE
STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT	1-2 WEAK 4-5 STRONG
SPONSOR STRENGTH	1-2 WEAK 3 STRONG
FUNDING CLARITY	1-2 UNCLEAR 3 CONFIRMED
RESOURCE AVAILABILITY	1-2 LIMITED 4-5 AVAILABLE
RISK AWARENESS	1-2 LOW 4-5 WELL UNDERSTOOD
IMPACT VALUE	1-2 MINIMAL 4-5 SIGNIFICANT
READINESS	1-2 EARLY 4-5 READY

SCORING GUIDANCE

30 - 35 PORTFOLIO READY	20 - 29 CONDITIONAL APPROVAL	BELOW 20 DEFER / RE-SCOPE
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GOVERNANCE BEGINS AT INTAKE — NOT REPORTING.