

Data Centre Development Risk Assessment

Owner-side risk framework across site, power, permitting, EPC, schedule, and capital. Built for use before capex is committed.

Use this framework at investment committee, at site shortlisting, and at every major capital release point. Each section lists the risks an owner is responsible for — not the contractor, not the EPC, not the OEM.

1. Site & land

- Title, boundaries, and access are clean and defensible.
- Ground conditions are supported by geotechnical, not assumed.
- Climate, flood, and seismic risk is modelled against design life.
- Adjacent land uses do not constrain future expansion.

2. Power & energisation

- Grid connection offer is binding, with dated milestones.
- Energisation date is realistic against the utility's programme.
- Renewables, PPAs, and on-site generation are modelled, not aspirational.
- Resiliency and tier targets are achievable on the offered supply.

3. Permitting & regulation

- Planning consent risk is quantified, with appeal scenarios costed.
- Environmental permits are sequenced against the critical path.
- Local stakeholder positions are mapped and managed.

4. Design & technical definition

- Design intent is owner-defined, not vendor-anchored.
- Capacity envelope reconciles with the commercial pipeline.
- High-density readiness is decided before EPC freeze.

5. EPC & vendor

- RFP criteria are written before bids are received.
- Schedule realism is independently reviewed.
- Change-order pipeline is governed, not reactive.
- Lifecycle cost — not capex alone — drives award.

6. Capital & financing

- Capex draw schedule aligns with energisation and tenant pipeline.
- Cost overrun and schedule slip scenarios are stress-tested.
- Refinancing assumptions are defensible to a cautious lender.

7. Operations & handover

- Commissioning sequence protects the tenant move-in date.
- Handover dossier and runbook are owner-owned.
- Operating model and headcount are planned before energisation.

Next step

- Most failed developments fail in one of the first three sections.
- Engage owner-side advisory before EPC selection: strategizes.pro/datacentre