Unpacking the Label:
Rethinking Project Delivery Models as Owner Governance Choices

Sebastian Kussl, PhD | Head of Corporate Governance

CONCEPT SYMPOSIUM 2026
Session 1 · Choices and Challenges in Project Delivery

NyeVeier

Unpacking the Label: Rethinking Project Delivery Models as Owner Governance Choices

PDMs should be understood as owner-side governance configurations, not as fixed contractual models.

Their design is shaped by:

- Organisational capabilities
- Institutional constraints
- Accumulated experience

...and not only by project demands or “trends”

PROJECT DELIVERY MODEL LANDSCAPE

Kussl, S., Haaskjold, H., Klakegg, O. J., & Lædre, O. (2026). *Unpacking the label: Rethinking project delivery models as owner governance choices.* EURAM 2026 Annual Conference, Kristiansand, Norway.

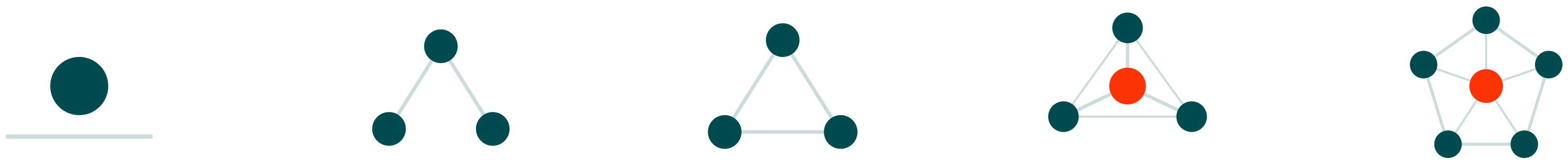
Delivery models: sole to shared ownership

Old
Operating system:
Sole Proprietorship

Existing
Operating system:
Separate Ownership

New
Operating system:
Shared Ownership

One organisation	Transactions based		Relations based	Community
Monolithic organisation	Delivery contracts	Total contracts	Alliance contracts	Community contracts

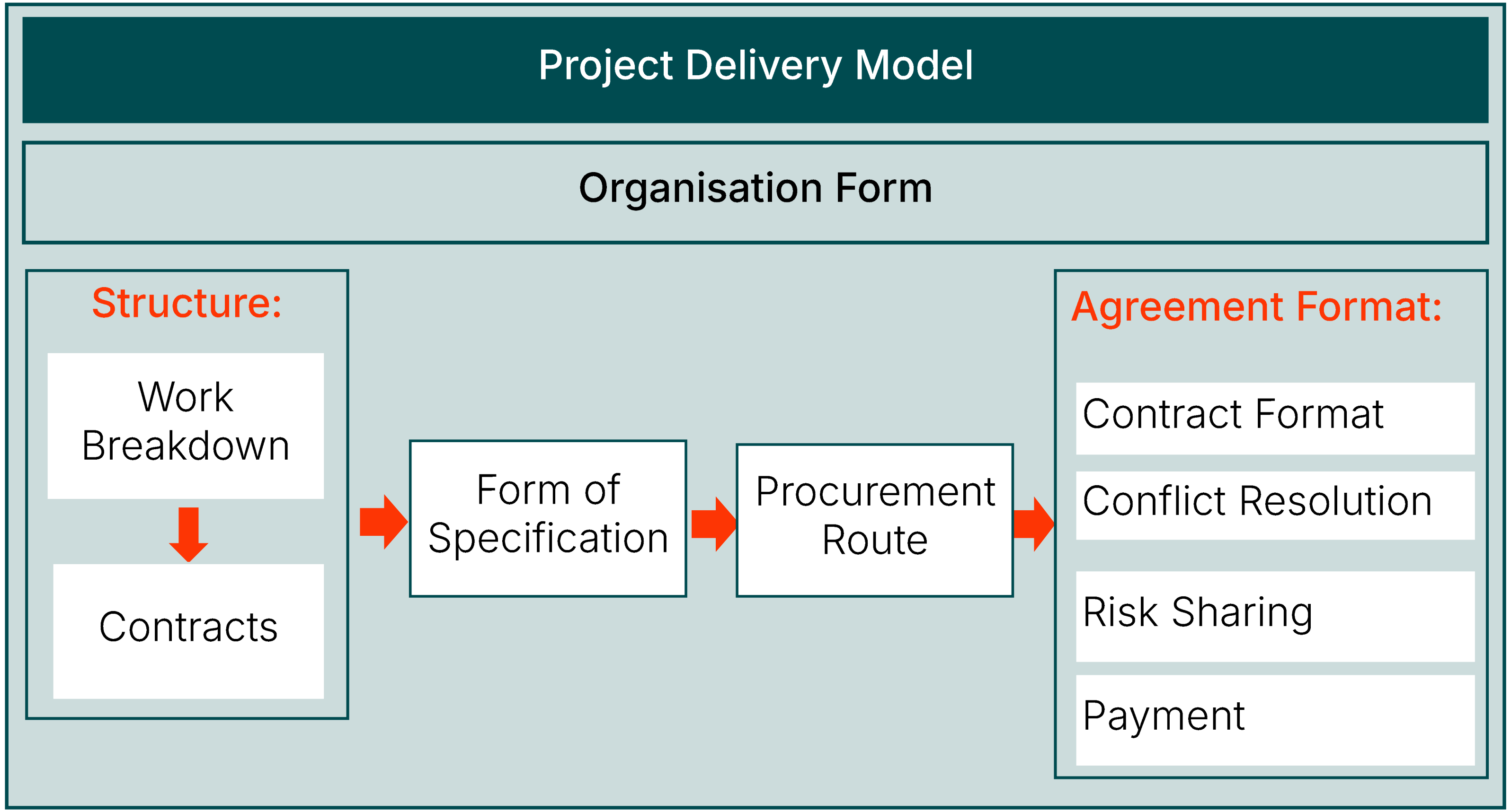


No contracts

Specialized contracts

Multy-party contracts

A project delivery model combines interdependent choices



Source: Project delivery models – situational or fixed design (Klakegg 2017).

E39 Mandal–Lyngdal tests one delivery model

THE REAL-WORLD CASE

35 km
new four-lane road

€1.4bn
total investment

3
adjacent subprojects

Lyngdal East–West
recently completed

Mandal–Blørstad
under construction

Blørstad–Lyngdal
earlier phase

One owner organisation · three contractors · different lifecycle phases

18 interviews + documents, observations and workshops

FOUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

01 Which delivery model did Nye Veier choose?

02 How was the model experienced by Nye Veier and its contractors?

03 How can the selected model be improved?

04 Which alternatives are relevant based on national and international experience?

Source: Bedre Megaprosjekter / Nye Veier–NTNU case report, 2026

Four strategic findings favour evolution—not model replacement

STRATEGIC FINDINGS · ENTERPRISE LEVEL

Nye Veier should develop the model through governance, learning and selective experimentation.

01 Experiment within the current model

Pilot selected mechanisms from ECI, partnering and alliances—rather than replacing the model wholesale.

02 Anchor change in enterprise governance

Define what must stay consistent across projects, what may adapt—and assess the system-wide consequences.

03 Pair continuity with institutional learning

Retain valuable people and relationships while turning experience into repeatable organisational capability.

04 Own lifecycle value at governance level

Balance investment, delivery, operations and long-term value through enterprise-level decisions.

CORE MESSAGE · Improve the configuration progressively while protecting the logic that already works.

Source: E39 Mandal–Lyngdal case report, strategic recommendations §6.1, 2026

Eleven tactical moves strengthen the model at project level

TACTICAL FINDINGS · PROJECT LEVEL

Keep the core model—but tune its roles, processes, information and commercial mechanisms.

PROTECT THE CORE

01 Keep a lean owner

Preserve a clear client role and substantial contractor responsibility.

02 Strengthen adviser flexibility

Retain independent expertise, but test more flexible interfaces and roles.

03 Use optimisation fase strategically

Apply early involvement where uncertainty and value potential justify it.

04 Treat time as a constraint

Optimise total value—not simply the shortest delivery period.

STANDARDISE & LEARN

05 Standardise the system

Align processes, information and handovers—not technical solutions.

06 Shift from documents to data

Create information once and reuse it through delivery and operations.

07 Bring operations in earlier

Set lifecycle outcomes and functional needs without detailed prescription.

08 Structure innovation

Give pilots clear ownership, measures and a route to portfolio adoption.

TARGET COMMERCIAL LEVERS

09 Use criteria to differentiate

Apply non-price criteria only when they genuinely affect selection.

10 Differentiate risk

Allocate each risk where it can be handled most efficiently and safely.

11 Use payment as a steering tool

Keep fixed price as the base; target incentives and adjustments selectively.

TACTICAL LOGIC · Stable core. Selective adaptation. Explicit learning.

Source: E39 Mandal–Lyngdal case report, tactical recommendations §6.2, 2026

Governance and enterprise design shape the delivery model

GENERAL PROPOSITIONS DERIVED FROM THE E39 CASE · 1/2

The model reflects owner choices as much as project characteristics.

01 GOVERNANCE CHOICES

Delivery models are often presented as project-level decisions. However, many of the underlying choices are shaped by governance arrangements, organisational priorities and owner strategy.

Choices in project delivery are rarely independent from choices in governance

02 ENTERPRISE CONTEXT

The effectiveness of a delivery model depends not only on project characteristics, but also on how the enterprise is structured, staffed, incentivised and organised to deliver projects as well as accumulated experience.

A delivery model cannot be separated from the organisation that applies it.

OWNER LOGIC · Delivery-model choices express enterprise governance in project form.

Performance comes from configuration—and continuous evolution

GENERAL PROPOSITIONS DERIVED FROM THE E39 CASE · 2/2

The system matters more than isolated practices or model labels.

03

CONFIGURATION DEPENDENCIES

Research and practice often optimise individual elements such as contracts, incentives, collaboration, risk allocation or procurement approaches. Yet these elements operate as part of a larger configuration.

Best practice in each component does not necessarily create best practice in the overall system

04

IMPROVEMENT DILEMMA

Public clients continuously seek better project performance. Rather than replacing one model with another or searching for a one-size-fits-all solution, strong delivery models evolve through learning, refinement and careful adjustment of what already works.

The strongest delivery models are not fixed; they evolve rather than hopping from one predefined model to another.

SYSTEM LOGIC · Improve the configuration—not each mechanism in isolation.

The Owner Behind the Model

A QUESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

How are public client organisations designed, and how do those design choices shape the delivery models they can successfully apply?

Thank you
Questions & discussion

Sebastian Kussl, PhD | Head of Corporate Governance

CONCEPT SYMPOSIUM 2026
Session 1 · Choices and Challenges in Project Delivery

NyeVeier