Delphi Tabletop Exercise

Purpose: Stress-test board and C-suite decision-making across three governance lenses - Audit / Risk, Technology, and Strategy - when long-duration infrastructure investment, regulatory obligations, cyber resilience, and changing demand assumptions collide.

Format: One scenario, one discussion phase. Each group considers both companies, identifies what is common and what differs by regulatory regime and operating model, and recommends actions to the full board.

Scenario: Long-Duration Infrastructure Under Pressure

Company A - U.S. electric utility: A regulated regional utility is seeking board approval for a $1.8 billion transmission and substation modernization program intended to support data-center load growth, improve resilience, and meet reliability obligations.

Company B - International infrastructure company: A large European integrated electric and water utility is seeking board approval for a multi-year grid, water-treatment, and digital-control modernization program. The investment is intended to accommodate industrial electrification and data-center demand while improving climate resilience and regulatory performance.

At the time of the board decision:

- Large-load growth is less certain than forecast: several customers have delayed or reduced planned demand commitments.
- Regulators and public stakeholders are questioning affordability, customer bill impacts, capital prudence, and whether investment should be re-sequenced.
- Internal assurance work identifies gaps in critical-system documentation, remote vendor access controls, and cyber/physical security practices.
- Both companies rely on legacy operational technology, third-party vendors, increasingly connected systems, and AI-enabled tools that expand the technology and cyber risk surface.
- Management argues that delaying modernization could increase reliability, resilience, compliance, and future capacity risks.

Board / C-Suite Task

For both companies, determine what the board should approve now, what conditions or evidence should be required, and what management actions and reporting should be mandated. Distinguish where the U.S. and international regulatory, technology, and stakeholder contexts require different responses.

Group Assignments

Group 1 - Audit / Risk

- What are the principal financial, regulatory, operational, cyber, physical-security, third-party, and reputational risks? Which are enterprise-level risks requiring full-board visibility?
- What assurance does the board need before approving additional capital - including audit findings, control remediation, compliance status, stress tests, and management attestations?
- What risk appetite limits, escalation thresholds, and dashboard metrics should the board establish?

Group 2 - Technology

- Which technology dependencies are most critical: legacy OT/IoT, remote vendor access, cyber controls, AI-enabled systems, data architecture, or physical-digital interdependencies?
- What should be modernized immediately, what can be sequenced, and what technical debt is no longer acceptable?
- What evidence should management provide on resilience, interoperability, vendor governance, incident readiness, and secure-by-design implementation?

Group 3 - Strategy

- How should uncertain demand, affordability pressures, reliability obligations, and long asset lives change the capital plan?
- What should the board approve, pause, redesign, or re-sequence? What decision triggers would cause the company to accelerate, defer, or cancel investment?
- How should management communicate the strategy to regulators, investors, customers, communities, and other stakeholders - and how should the U.S. and international approaches differ?

Expected Board Outputs

- A conditional capital-allocation decision with explicit milestones and trigger points.
- A prioritized Audit / Risk remediation and assurance plan.
- A technology modernization and cyber-resilience mandate, including vendor and legacy-system controls.
- A stakeholder and regulatory communication framework tailored to each company's jurisdiction.
- A concise board dashboard linking demand, affordability, reliability, compliance, technology risk, and capital execution.