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Infrastructure and finance writing

Christopher Romei is a strategy and finance consultant who writes about data centres, digital infrastructure and the capital structures behind them. He has worked on technical and commercial due diligence and on a large GPU data-centre financing, so he writes about capacity contracts, offtake risk and project economics as someone who has done the analysis rather than read about it.

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What is in this pack

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2	Buying compute like real estate: the three structures, and who carries the risk in each	White paper	1,480	Long-form structure, comparison table, glossary, executive summary
3	Investment committee memo: GPU-backed data centre financing	IC deal memo	1,880	Institutional register, risk section, recommendation under uncertainty
4	Who actually lends against a hyperscaler backstop	Explainer	1,440	Explains a technical credit question to a non-specialist reader
5	Africa's next infrastructure build is a power problem before it is a capital problem	Thought leadership	710	Market-level argument with a point of view, not a survey
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All figures are drawn from primary sources: SEC filings, company results releases and lease announcements. Citations appear inline where a reader would want to check a number.

Rate card

- Blog articles and long-form content: $0.35 per word
- White papers, e-books and guidebooks: $0.50 per word
- Case studies: from $1,400
- Investment committee memos: $1,200 for 2,000 words
- Minimum project: $700

- Rush delivery (under 72 hours): +50%

Your AI capacity contract is a capital decision. Underwrite it like one.

B2B blog post, about 1,200 words. C-suite audience, AP style, sourced from public filings and releases only. Written as a portfolio sample for a cloud and SaaS content agency.

Most finance teams meet AI infrastructure through a line item. A vendor quote arrives, someone in engineering explains that the model needs more compute, and the conversation becomes a negotiation over price per hour.

That framing undersells the decision. The contract in front of you is not a procurement agreement with a monthly meter attached. It is a multi-year capacity commitment with a counterparty whose ability to deliver depends on construction schedules, utility interconnection, and a supply chain it does not control. Those commitments now run long enough, and large enough, to show up in your credit profile rather than your operating budget.

The companies on the other side of the table have started describing the same contracts that way. Oracle reported $664 billion of remaining performance obligations at Aug. 31, 2026, up $209 billion year over year, and said it put 850 MW of additional data-centre capacity into service in the quarter (Oracle Q1 FY27 release, Sept. 10, 2026). On the landlord side, TeraWulf reports about $27 billion of contracted revenue across 839 MW of contracted critical IT capacity, on leases it describes as 10 to 20 years and credit-backed (TeraWulf Q3 2026 investor release, Nov. 6, 2026). Individual commitments are now large enough to matter to a balance sheet rather than a monthly budget.

You do not need to be a lender to borrow their diligence. You need to ask the questions a lender asks before it writes the check.

1. The commitment outlives your depreciation schedule

Your finance team depreciates servers over five or six years. The building they sit in lasts decades, and the lease that pays for the building is increasingly written for 15 to 20 years, often with renewal options tacked on.

That mismatch is not a technicality. It means the contract you sign this quarter constrains capital allocation well past the planning horizon of the strategy that justified it. Before you commit, put the full term on one page: total obligation, annual obligation, the year each escalation lands, and the exit price in each year. If the exit price in year three is larger than the benefit you expect in year three, you have bought a decade of optionality you cannot afford to use.

2. Risk starts when the hall is delivered, not when the contract is signed

Read the commencement clause before you read the price. In TeraWulf's 20-year lease with Anthropic at its Hawesville, Kentucky campus, covering about 401 MW of critical IT load, the tenant's obligation to pay rent begins on delivery of each individual data hall rather than at signing or at financial close. Google's credit support, which stands behind the tenant, only becomes effective at the commencement date of the final data hall under each of the three leases (TeraWulf Form 8-K, Nov. 4, 2026).

Two sentences there matter to a customer as much as to a lender. First, a phased delivery schedule means your capacity arrives in tranches, so your model needs to know which workloads run on tranche one and what happens to the business case if tranche two slips two quarters. Second, the strength of the credit behind your contract can change over the life of the deal. Ask what happens to your pricing if the counterparty's support mechanism steps down.

3. Take-or-pay is a floor for them and a ceiling for you

A take-or-pay clause protects the provider's revenue. It does not protect your ability to use what you have paid for.

The question to ask is not whether you can reduce volume. It is what you can do with capacity you have paid for and cannot fill: resell it, sublease it, burst it to another region, or hand it to an affiliate. In a market where inference pricing moves faster than contract terms, secondary-use rights are worth real money, and they are usually negotiable early and immovable later.

4. Counterparty risk has moved to the contractors

When a provider tells you the campus will be ready in a given quarter, the answer depends on an engineering, procurement and construction contractor, a utility and a supply chain. At Hawesville, Fluor is the EPC contractor, and the contract is described as a guaranteed maximum price basis, with the contractor responsible for cost overruns only up to a percentage of its profit. Past that line, the risk returns to the owner.

You are not underwriting the contractor. You are pricing the probability that a slip becomes your problem. Ask what remedies exist if delivery is late, whether service credits begin on the scheduled date or the actual one, and how much notice you get before a slip is disclosed. A provider that answers those questions with a schedule and a contract clause is a provider worth signing with.

5. The renewal option is a pricing decision you have already made

Renewal options look like flexibility. They are usually a hedge written by the party that expects to need it. Two 5-year options at the tenant's election, in a market where power costs and land costs have both moved, is a valuable right that you should either price or trade away rather than accept as boilerplate.

Model the option at a stress case, not a base case. If power prices move 30%, if the local utility raises capacity charges, if a competitor's capacity comes online next door, what does renewal cost you and who bears it?

What to ask for before you sign

- The delivery schedule by hall, in writing, with the service-credit trigger attached to the scheduled date.
- The full payment schedule including escalators, pass-throughs and any utility-related charges the provider can pass on.
- Secondary-use and resale rights, stated as permissions rather than prohibitions.

- Termination and exit pricing, year by year, for the full term.
- Disclosure of who carries construction risk past the contractor's cap, and what happens to your pricing if it crystallises.

None of these requests is unusual. All of them are cheaper to negotiate before signature than after.

The point is not that AI capacity contracts are dangerous. It is that they have become large enough, long enough and structured enough to deserve the same treatment as any other capital commitment: a term sheet you can defend to your board, a counterparty you have actually diligenced, and an exit you can afford. The companies selling capacity already think this way. The companies buying it should too.

Sources: Oracle Corp., Q1 fiscal 2027 results release (Exhibit 99.1 to Form 8-K), Sept. 10, 2026; TeraWulf Inc., Form 8-K, Nov. 4, 2026, and Q3 2026 investor release (Exhibit 99.1), Nov. 6, 2026; Fluor Corp., contract award release, Nov. 4, 2026. Figures are quoted as published. No estimate in this piece is presented as a reported number.

Buying compute like real estate: the three structures, and who carries the risk in each

White paper excerpt, about 1,500 words. A guide chapter for a B2B technology audience, built with callouts, a comparison table and a glossary: the shape commissioned for gated content.

Executive summary. Enterprise buyers now choose between three ways of securing AI compute: a colocation lease on powered shell, a managed-capacity contract with a provider who owns the hardware, and a reserved-cloud commitment priced per unit of consumption. They are usually presented as pricing options. They are better understood as three different allocations of construction risk, technology risk and counterparty risk. This section sets out what each structure puts on the buyer's side of the ledger, and the six figures a finance team should have in front of it before signing any of them.

Why the comparison is worth making

For twenty years, enterprise compute procurement was a procurement problem. Racks, storage and licences were bought on three-year cycles and depreciated on a schedule the finance team already understood.

AI capacity broke that pattern in three ways at once. The unit of scarcity moved from chips to megawatts, because a GPU order can be placed but an interconnection cannot. The contract term stretched, because the landlord financing a data hall needs a tenant commitment long enough to support the debt. TeraWulf, for example, describes its contracted revenue as sitting on leases of 10 to 20 years (TeraWulf Q3 2026 investor release). And the technology inside the contract now refreshes faster than the contract runs, which means the buyer is committing to a price for a capability that will be superseded inside the term.

Those three shifts are why the structure matters more than the rate card. The rate card tells you what a unit costs today. The structure tells you who pays when something goes wrong in year four.

> **Key takeaway.** Capacity is now a capital commitment with an operating cost attached, not the other way around. Finance should own the structure and engineering should own the specification.

Structure one: the powered shell

In a powered-shell lease, the buyer takes space, power and cooling from a data-centre landlord and installs its own equipment. The landlord builds the building, secures the utility service, and hands over halls on a delivery schedule. The tenant funds the compute.

This is the structure most people misread. When a press release reports a multi-billion-dollar AI data-centre deal, the number is usually rent summed across the full term, not the cost of the building. The two are different orders of magnitude. At TeraWulf's Hawesville campus, the landlord estimated construction of the buildings and site infrastructure at $3.5 billion to $4.0 billion in its state energy filing, while the tenant, Anthropic, was to fund the compute infrastructure itself at a cost of approximately $10 billion.

What the buyer carries: technology risk in full, and delivery risk in phases. Rent usually begins on delivery of each hall rather than at financial close, and the credit support standing behind the tenant may only attach at the final hall of each lease (TeraWulf Form 8-K, Nov. 4, 2026).

What the buyer does not carry: construction cost overruns, provided the EPC contract is structured with a cap. Where the contractor's exposure ends, the owner's begins, and the buyer should know where that line sits because a squeeze there becomes a schedule slip.

Best fit: organisations that intend to run their own clusters, have the engineering bench to specify and operate them, and can absorb a two-quarter delay without losing the business case.

Structure two: managed capacity

Here the provider owns the hardware and sells the buyer a service level over it. The buyer's commitment is usually expressed as reserved capacity - a number of GPU-hours, a throughput floor, a maximum latency - at a contracted price, with the provider responsible for refresh.

What the buyer carries: counterparty concentration, and the risk that the service level is written in a unit that does not match how the workload actually consumes capacity. A commitment denominated in GPU-hours is not the same as one denominated in tokens served or jobs completed, and the difference becomes visible exactly when utilisation is uneven.

What the buyer does not carry: hardware obsolescence and the operational burden of the cluster. That is worth real money, and it is the reason managed capacity usually looks expensive per unit and cheap per unit of risk transferred.

The test to apply: ask what happens at the refresh boundary. If the provider is obliged to deliver the next generation at the same price, the buyer has bought protection. If the contract is silent, the buyer has bought today's hardware at a fixed price and will pay again to stay current.

Structure three: reserved cloud commitment

The buyer commits to a spend level over one to three years in exchange for a discount, and draws against it as needed. The commitment is financial rather than physical: no hall, no racks, no delivery schedule.

What the buyer carries: take-or-pay risk on the committed spend and exposure to the provider's own capacity constraints. A commitment is only worth the discount if the capacity is actually available when the workload arrives, and availability during a supply crunch is a commercial negotiation, not a technical one.

What the buyer does not carry: any of the capital risk of the build. This is the lightest structure on the balance sheet and the least useful for workloads with predictable, sustained, high-utilisation demand for a single hardware generation.

The test to apply: model the commitment against the bottom decile of your own demand forecast, not the middle. Commitments are priced for the average and paid for at the trough.

The three structures side by side

	Powered shell	Managed capacity	Reserved cloud
Buyer funds hardware	Yes	No	No
Term typically	10-20 years	1-5 years	1-3 years
Construction risk	Shared, via delivery schedule	Provider	Provider
Technology refresh	Buyer	Provider, if contracted	Provider
Balance-sheet treatment	Lease / capital commitment	Operating commitment	Operating commitment
Main exposure	Delivery slip and exit price	Counterparty and unit definition	Take-or-pay and availability
Main advantage	Control and long-run cost	Risk transfer	Flexibility

The table is a starting point, not a verdict. The mistake to avoid is choosing a structure because its rate card is lowest. A powered shell at a low rate with an uncapped overrun exposure and a ten-year exit price is a worse commitment than a managed service at a premium with a clean refresh obligation.

Six figures to have before you sign

1. **Total obligation by year**, undiscounted, for the full term including renewal options.
2. **The exit price in each year**, and the notice period attached to it.
3. **Capacity by delivery date**, hall by hall, with the service-credit trigger tied to the scheduled date rather than the actual one.
4. **The pass-through list**: power, utility capacity charges, taxes, maintenance, and anything else the provider can move to the buyer. Pass-throughs are where fixed-price contracts stop being fixed.
5. **The utilisation assumption** behind the business case, and the cost of the commitment at 60% of it.
6. **The refresh obligation**, whoever carries it, with the price mechanism named.

> **Key takeaway.** A capacity contract is only as good as its exit. Price the exit before you price the capacity.

Glossary

Critical IT capacity. The electrical load available to the computing equipment itself, excluding cooling and losses. It is the number providers quote and the number that determines how much work a hall can do.

Commencement date. The date a lease obligation begins. In phased builds it can differ by hall, which means one contract can have several commencement dates and several risk start points.

EPC contract. Engineering, procurement and construction. A single contract under which one contractor delivers a facility to a specification, often on a guaranteed maximum price basis with a defined overrun-sharing mechanism.

Guaranteed maximum price (GMP). A contract form in which the contractor's price cannot exceed an agreed ceiling for a defined scope, with any overrun above the ceiling allocated according to the contract.

Take-or-pay. A commitment to pay for a quantity whether or not it is used.

Remaining performance obligations (RPO). The contracted revenue not yet recognised. It is the number providers use to show the size of their backlog, and it is the closest public proxy for how much capacity has already been sold forward.

Next section: the diligence request list - the eight documents that answer the six questions above, and what a good answer looks like.

Sources: Oracle Corp., Q1 fiscal 2027 results release, Sept. 10, 2026; TeraWulf Inc., Form 8-K, Nov. 4, 2026, and Q3 2026 investor release, Nov. 6, 2026; TeraWulf subsidiary energy plan filed with the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, Aug. and Sept. 2026; Fluor Corp., contract award release, Nov. 4, 2026. All figures are quoted as published; the framework and the comparison table are the author's own.

Investment Committee Memorandum - Project Kestrel

ILLUSTRATIVE SAMPLE. Project Kestrel is a fictional asset and every figure below is a round number used to show the shape of the analysis, not a market statistic. No client, sponsor, lender or counterparty named or implied here is real. This is the format and the reasoning a credit committee reads.

To	Investment Committee
From	Infrastructure Credit, Digital Infrastructure
Subject	Project Kestrel - 180 MW GPU-hosting campus, senior term loan
Request	Approval of a participation in a $1.70bn senior secured term loan facility
Recommendation	**APPROVE**, subject to the conditions in section 9

1. Recommendation

We recommend participating in the senior term loan for Project Kestrel, a 180 MW (critical IT) GPU-hosting campus in three phases, contracted to a single hyperscale tenant under a twelve-year take-or-pay agreement.

The case does not rest on the quality of the campus. It rests on four things, in order of importance:

1. The tenant's contractual obligation runs for the full tenor of our loan, with no termination right that does not also require payment of the outstanding debt.
2. The sponsor funds construction overrun from equity before our facility draws past 70 per cent of committed capital, so the completion risk sits with the party who controls it.
3. The power position is owned, not queued: an executed interconnection agreement, a substation energised on a schedule with liquidated damages, and a fixed-price energy block covering the contracted load.
4. The residual, at the end of the take-or-pay term, is a powered shell with liquid-cooling infrastructure in a constrained market - a defensible value even under a punitive re-contracting assumption.

The case fails on one thing: technology life. Our tenor is seven years; the tenant's GPU fleet will be replaced roughly twice inside it. If the tenant's obligation is written against a specific hardware generation rather than against a capacity specification, we are lending against an asset that becomes obsolete on a schedule the borrower does not control. Section 6 sets out why we think the contract as drafted avoids this, and section 9 makes it a condition.

2. The transaction

Item	Amount (illustrative)
Total project cost, all three phases	$2.90bn
Senior secured term loan (this facility)	$1.70bn
Mezzanine	$250m
Sponsor equity and completion support	$950m
Senior LTV at financial close	59%
Senior tenor	7 years, fully amortising from year 5
All-in coupon	SOFR + 325bp
Cash sweep	75% of distributable cash above a 1.30x DSCR lock-up

The structure is conventional for the asset class, which is the point: we are not being paid for novelty. We are being paid 325 basis points over the risk-free rate to underwrite a contracted cash flow with a technology risk attached to it.

3. What we are actually buying

We are not buying a building. A data-centre shell with power is worth roughly its replacement cost less depreciation, and in a supply-constrained market that is a floor rather than an exit. What we are buying is a twelve-year payment obligation from a counterparty whose credit we can underwrite, secured against an asset whose alternative use is credible.

That ordering matters when the deal is stressed. In a downside where the tenant defaults, our recovery is not the discounted value of the lease. It is the cost of finding a second tenant, less the time it takes, less the capital required to make the asset fit for that tenant's hardware. In a market where capacity is scarce and liquid-cooled halls are scarce absolutely, that gap is smaller than it looks. We have underwritten it at 55 per cent of cost, not the 80 per cent a refinancing model would show.

4. Technical position

Power. 180 MW of contracted capacity delivered in three energisation tranches. The interconnection agreement is executed and assigned to the project company, with the utility's milestone schedule carrying liquidated damages to the project. A fixed-price energy block covers the contracted load for the first eight years; beyond that the tenant bears power price risk under the offtake agreement, not the project. This is the single most important structural point in the deal, because it converts the largest uncontrollable input into a pass-through.

Cooling. The halls are built for direct-to-chip liquid cooling with air as a fallback, at a per-MW capital cost roughly 15 per cent above an air-cooled build (illustrative). We would normally resist paying for optionality. Here it is the reason the residual value argument survives: a liquid-ready hall can serve the next two hardware generations, and an air-only hall cannot.

Delivery. Three tranches, each with its own acceptance schedule and its own rent commencement. The acceptance criteria are technical, measurable and testable by a third party: sustained power density, coolant flow and temperature at the rack, network latency to named exchanges, and a defined period of continuous operation at load. This is the part of a data-centre contract that gets argued about two years after close, and it is the part we read most closely.

The trap we are watching. Tranche delivery slippage. A sponsor who is nine months late on tranche two still has a contracted asset; we have a facility drawing against a rent stream that has not begun. Mitigation is in the structure, not the contract: the tranche-two and tranche-three commitments are unavailable until the prior tranche has passed acceptance.

5. Commercial position (illustrative)

Metric	Base case
Contracted revenue at full ramp	$310m per year
Contracted opex and power pass-through	$95m per year
EBITDA at ramp	$215m per year
Senior DSCR, minimum	1.55x
Senior DSCR, average	1.71x
Break-even contracted revenue for 1.0x DSCR	$150m per year

Two observations. First, the DSCR cushion is real but not generous: a 12 per cent shortfall in rented capacity takes the minimum to the lock-up. Second, single-tenant concentration is total. There is no diversification argument available here, only a counterparty argument, and the credit work on the tenant matters more than the credit work on the asset. That work is in the appendix, not in this memo, and it is a condition of approval that it is re-run at each drawdown.

6. Technology life and tenor

This is the risk that decides the deal.

A GPU campus is not a twenty-year asset with a mid-life refurbishment. The tenant replaces compute on a four-to-five-year cycle, and each replacement changes power density, coolant temperature and rack weight. The building can absorb that if it was designed for it and cannot if it was not.

The contract as drafted obliges the tenant to pay for **contracted capacity**, not for a specified hardware generation, and to fund any tenant-driven fit-out. The tenant's obligation is not reduced by its own decision to refresh, retire or relocate hardware inside the contracted footprint. That is the right structure for us. The version of this contract that would be unacceptable is the one where the tenant's payment is tied to equipment it can remove.

We also price the residual inside the tenor. Even if the tenant renews on terms 20 per cent worse than today's, the loan amortises to a 40 per cent LTV position by maturity (illustrative). We are not depending on a renewal to be repaid.

7. Risk register

Risk	Severity	Why	Mitigant
Tenant credit deterioration	**High**	Single tenant, no diversification	Contracted revenue, security package, drawdown re-underwrite, tenant rating trigger at 50% drawn
Tranche delivery slippage	**High**	Rent does not begin until acceptance	Tranche availability mechanics; sponsor completion guarantee; LDs from EPC and utility
Technology obsolescence	**Medium**	7-year tenor against 4-year hardware cycles	Liquid-ready design; capacity-based obligation; residual underwritten at 55% of cost
Power price exposure post-year 8	**Medium**	Fixed block ends inside the tenor	Pass-through to tenant under offtake; review at year 6
Interconnection delay	**Medium**	Utility milestone risk outside sponsor's control	Executed IA; LDs; sequenced tranche funding
Construction cost overrun	**Medium**	Fixed-price EPC with limited contingency	Sponsor funds overrun before senior draws past 70%
Refinancing risk at maturity	**Low**	Amortising structure	40% LTV at maturity (illustrative)
Counterparty concentration in the tenant's own customer base	**Low**	Not our direct exposure	Reviewed in tenant credit appendix

8. Three-outcome view

Scenario	What happens	Senior outcome (illustrative)
Base	All three tranches deliver within 60 days of schedule, tenant performs, refinanced at maturity	Full repayment, 1.71x average DSCR, IRR at coupon
Downside	Tranche two slips nine months; tenant renews at 80% of current rate at year 12	Full repayment, DSCR troughs at 1.28x, lock-up triggers once, no loss of principal
Severe	Tenant defaults in year 5 after a demand contraction; asset re-let in 18 months at 65% of contracted rate	Recovery 78-85 cents on the dollar after cost to re-let and downtime

The severe case is the one the committee should argue with. Our 78-85 cent range rests on two judgements: that liquid-ready capacity in a constrained market can be re-let inside eighteen months, and that the cost to refit for a new tenant is under $25m (illustrative). Both are assumptions, not evidence, and section 10 says so explicitly.

9. Conditions precedent

We recommend approval subject to five conditions:

1. **The capacity obligation is drafted as specified.** Tenant payment tied to contracted MW, not to identified equipment, with no reduction on hardware refresh or relocation. Legal to confirm before signing.
2. **Tranche availability is sequential.** Tranche two and three commitments unavailable until the prior tranche has passed acceptance, evidenced by the independent test report.
3. **Sponsor completion support is funded, not promised.** Cash in escrow or a letter of credit sized to the full overrun case, not to a percentage of cost.
4. **Tenant credit is re-underwritten at every drawdown** and at any time the tenant's rating falls below investment grade.
5. **A technology review at year 3 and year 5**, commissioned by the agent and paid by the borrower, with the findings circulated to lenders.

10. Assumptions and evidence status

Assumption	Status
Tenant obligated for full tenor with no market-out	**Evidenced** - contract reviewed, clause references in appendix B
Interconnection agreement executed and assigned	**Evidenced** - IA and assignment reviewed
Fixed-price energy block covers 8 years	**Evidenced** - PPA term sheet reviewed; final pricing subject to close
EPC is fixed-price with LDs	**Partially evidenced** - contract in negotiation; LDs provisional
Re-let achievable in 18 months at 65% of rate	**Assumption** - no comparable transaction available to us; based on market enquiry only
Refit cost under $25m	**Assumption** - two contractor estimates, neither binding
Hardware refresh does not reduce tenant payment	**Assumption pending legal** - drafting intent confirmed verbally, clause not final
Utility energisation on schedule	**Partially evidenced** - milestone schedule exists; utility's historical performance not assessed

The committee should read the last four rows as the deal. Everything above them is diligence; the four rows below are where we could be wrong.

11. What would change the recommendation

We would withdraw the recommendation if any of the following were true: the capacity obligation ends up tied to identified equipment; the sponsor's completion support is a guarantee rather than funded; the tenant's credit is below investment grade at close; or the energy block is shorter than six years. Each of those converts a contracted cash flow into a development risk, and development risk is not what this facility is priced for.

Prepared as a sample. Project Kestrel is fictional; all figures are illustrative. Chris Romei writes investment-committee memos, sector primers and lender packs for infrastructure funds, data-centre developers and neoclouds. Portfolio: chris-romei-writing.netlify.app

Who is actually lending against what: a $19 billion lease, a $3.5 to $4.0 billion shell, and a Google backstop that starts late

Portfolio sample. First-person analysis from public documents only: TeraWulf's 8-K and press releases of 4 and 6 November 2026, its July 2026 8-K, its filings with the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, and Fluor's 4 November release. Every figure is attributed. Arithmetic that is mine is labelled as mine.

When a project finance headline says "$19 billion", the first job of a lender's adviser is to ask which of the three or four different pools of money it describes. TeraWulf's announcement on 4 November 2026 is a good case, because the documents are public and they do not describe one deal. They describe a landlord building a shell, a tenant funding its own computers, a contractor sharing some of the construction risk, and a hyperscaler standing behind the tenant from a date that is not the first day of rent.

What the headline number is

TeraWulf announced credit support agreements with Google in connection with debt financing supporting "approximately $19 billion of contracted lease commitments" with Anthropic at its Justified Data Campus in Hawesville, Kentucky (press release, 4 November 2026). Its third-quarter release two days later puts it more precisely: about 401 MW of critical IT capacity, "approximately $19 billion of contracted revenue over the initial term" (6 November 2026). The initial term is 20 years, with two five-year renewal options, and Anthropic's rent starts on delivery of each data hall (8-K, 6 July and 4 November 2026).

So the $19 billion is rent, summed over twenty years, undiscounted, at a stated MW. It is not the size of a loan, it is not the cost of the project, and it does not tell you what the landlord keeps after paying for power and operations. The filings do not say whether it includes escalators or pass-throughs.

What the landlord is paying to build

The second number comes from a different document. In an energy plan filed with the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet in August 2026 (supplemented in September), TeraWulf's subsidiary Justified DataPower estimated its cost to construct the data-centre buildings and permanent site infrastructure at $3.5 to $4.0 billion. The same filing says the compute infrastructure, meaning the server racks, "will be funded by Anthropic at a cost of approximately $10 billion."

That sentence is the one I would underline. The lessee is spending about two and a half times the landlord's construction budget on the equipment that sits inside the shell. The landlord's lenders are not financing GPUs. They are financing a powered building, which is a very different collateral package from the one people picture when they read "AI data-centre debt".

Here is my arithmetic, using only the numbers above. Spread evenly, $19 billion over 20 years is about $0.95 billion a year, or roughly $2.4 million per MW of critical IT per year on 401 MW. Set against $3.5 to $4.0 billion of construction cost, that is about $8.7 to $10.0 million of cost per MW.

An average annual rent of about a quarter of build cost sounds generous, but it is an average of an undiscounted headline. It ignores the ramp from late 2027 to the second quarter of 2028, any escalator, the cost of power and operations the landlord carries, and the cost of the financing itself. I would not publish a yield from it. I would use it for one purpose: to show why a lender regards this as a shell-and-power credit, with the question being how reliably the rent arrives, rather than whether the asset covers the loan.

What the contractor is carrying

Fluor signed a definitive engineering, procurement and construction contract for three data-centre buildings at the campus. TeraWulf describes it as "GMP-basis", a guaranteed maximum price. Fluor's own release says the contract is structured so that Fluor "is responsible for cost overruns up to a percentage of its profit," that it expects to book the award in the fourth quarter "upon finalization of pricing for the first two buildings," and that it began under a limited notice to proceed in March 2026, with early works already under way.

Read together, that means the price is capped, but the contractor's exposure to an overrun is tied to its profit on the job. Past that, the risk returns to the owner. A lender's technical adviser would want to know where that line sits, and the public documents do not say. They also do not say the price for the third building has been finalised, only that the first two are pending.

What Google is actually promising

The Google credit support agreement is the part most coverage compressed. From the 8-K: if Anthropic defaults on rent or becomes insolvent, then after notice from the landlord Google has the option to pay all rent currently due and assume the lease as tenant, or, "under certain circumstances", pay a termination fee and become entitled to acquire an equity interest in the landlord entity, Raylan. Google may also defer that election for a specified period, during which it pays unpaid and additional rent as it falls due. The termination fee amortises over a defined term after the agreement becomes effective.

Three features matter more than the headline.

It starts late. The backstop becomes effective as of the commencement date of the final data hall under each of the three leases (CB-1, CB-2 and CB-3). Delivery is phased from late 2027 to the second quarter of 2028. Until a given lease's last hall is delivered, the rent for that lease is supported by Anthropic's own credit and nothing else. The July 8-K expected that obligation "to be supported by an investment-grade credit", which is an expectation about Anthropic, not an undertaking by Google.

It is an option, not a guarantee of payment. A guarantee pays. This gives Google a choice between taking over the lease and paying a fee to leave and take equity. A lender should read the second route as a negotiated exit with a price, and ask what that price is on day one and how fast it falls, because the filing says only that it amortises.

It can fall away. The backstop terminates on conditions that include Anthropic, or an affiliate guaranteeing its obligations, achieving and maintaining certain investment-grade ratings for at least three months. For the borrower that is a feature, since the support is no longer needed once the tenant is rated. For a lender it means the protection is designed to disappear precisely when the

tenant's credit is strongest, and the structure should be underwritten as if the rating test were a refinancing event.

What I would ask before lending

1. In each of the three leases, how many months pass between first rent and the final-hall commencement date, and how is that window financed?
2. What does the landlord owe if a hall is late: does rent start on delivery, as the filings say, and what remedies does the tenant have for delay?
3. Where does the Fluor overrun protection end, and who funds above it?
4. What is the termination fee at effectiveness, and what is its amortisation profile against the debt balance?
5. Which obligations of Anthropic does the backstop cover? The 8-K says "certain obligations", and that phrase needs to be read against the lease schedule.
6. Power: the energy plan describes an agreement for electric service for a 482 MW data centre with Kenergy and Big Rivers, under which TeraWulf must prepay or provide and maintain credit support for Big Rivers' capacity. That is a second credit-support obligation, to a different counterparty, that sits alongside the Google one.

None of these questions is exotic, and none is answered in the press release. They are the difference between a headline that says a hyperscaler stands behind the deal, and a credit file that says exactly when, for what, and at what price.

Sources: TeraWulf Inc. Form 8-K and exhibits 10.1 and 99.1, 4 November 2026; TeraWulf press release "TeraWulf Reports Third Quarter 2026 Results", 6 November 2026; TeraWulf Form 8-K, 6 July 2026; Energy Plan and Supplemental Energy Plan of Justified DataPower LLC submitted to the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, 14 August and 9 September 2026; Fluor Corporation press release, 4 November 2026. The arithmetic in the section on the landlord's build cost is the author's own simple averaging and is not a figure reported by any party.

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Sample 07 — executive-voice thought leadership (brief: scaling an African business)

Written: 6 Nov 2026, as the Phase I writing assessment for The Next Chapter Global's freelance writer call (Brief A: Finance, Investment & Business). **Genre:** this is the first lane sample written *in a named executive's voice* rather than in Chris's own first person or a neutral analyst voice. That is the ghostwriting service line, so it belongs in the portfolio on its own merits regardless of whether the application is submitted. **Word count:** 295, excluding the source list (brief asked for ~300). **Every figure below is sourced to a primary document; the source list is part of the piece.**

The cheque is not the binding constraint

Every capital conversation in African business opens with the same diagnosis: there is not enough money. Part of that is measurable. The African Development Bank puts unmet demand for trade finance on the continent at US$74-92 billion in 2024, and estimates infrastructure financing needs of US$184-221 billion a year. Capital is scarce, and it is expensive.

Treating access to capital as the primary constraint, though, mistakes a symptom for a cause.

Look at who actually funds the continent's infrastructure. Between 2016 and 2020, African governments and development funders supplied 89% of the US$83 billion in average annual commitments; private capital mobilised through official development finance averaged roughly US$5 billion a year. The market that would price, dilute and recycle risk is thin. A company that raises has borrowed against that weakness, not cured it.

The constraints that bind are structural. The African Development Bank's own diagnosis names commodity-led growth, inadequate infrastructure, a shallow pool of skilled workers and weak institutional governance. No term sheet repairs any of them.

The evidence surfaces in trade. Intra-African trade has averaged about 14% of the continent's total trade, and commercial banks now intermediate roughly 23% of Africa's trade, down from 40% before the pandemic. The AfCFTA supplies the legal architecture for a single market; it does not supply the distribution, the currency hedging or the counterparty confidence that scaling across 54 jurisdictions requires.

What follows is uncomfortable for everyone. Entrepreneurs should treat capital as bought time rather than transferred capability. Investors should diligence governance, distribution and execution as heavily as market size. Policymakers should treat the friction that makes scale expensive - borders, payments, enforcement - as the cheapest growth lever available.

Capital is a constraint. It is not the binding one.

Sources cited (also submitted as the form's question 13)

1. African Development Bank, *Trade Finance Supply in Africa* (2026): unmet demand for trade finance in Africa of US$74-92bn in 2024, equal to 5.4% of Africa's total merchandise trade value; intra-African trade averaging 14% of total African trade, 2020-2024. https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/trade_finance_report_2026_english_highres.pdf

2. African Development Bank, *African Economic Outlook 2025*: Africa's infrastructure financing needs of US$184-221 billion per year. https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/afdb25-01_aeo_main_report_english_.pdf
3. African Development Bank (2026), summary of the trade finance report: commercial banks intermediated an average of 23% of Africa's total trade over 2020-2024, down from 40% in 2011-19; the African Economic Outlook constraint set (commodity-led growth, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient skilled workers, low access to affordable finance, weak institutional governance). https://am.afdb.org/en/news/am2026-afdb-2025-trade-finance-report-highlights-resilience-african-financial-institutions
4. AUC/OECD, *Africa's Development Dynamics 2025*: governments and development funders accounted for 89% of the US$83 billion average annual infrastructure commitments, 2016-2020; almost US$57 billion was mobilised from the private sector by official development finance, averaging US$5.1 billion per year. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/10/africa-s-development-dynamics-2025_d153f2a8/full-report/developing-africa-s-infrastructure-for-productive-transformation_88f75d0c.html
5. UNCTAD (2025), *Unlocking growth: Determinants of supply chain finance in African markets*: supply chain finance grew 14-15% in Africa in 2023-2024 but remains concentrated in construction, retail, pharmaceuticals and manufacturing; implementing the AfCFTA will require far wider adoption of structured supply chain finance. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/aldc2025d3_en.pdf

What this sample is for

- **Ghostwriting credibility:** the lane's published portfolio had four samples, all in Chris's own voice or a neutral analyst voice. A positioning firm's first question is whether the writer can hold an executive's voice while carrying sourced numbers. This is the evidence.
- **A fifth public sample** is ready to add to `portfolio/site/` and the PDF on the next portfolio rebuild (Chris's call, same as the others).
- **No claim is made about Africa from personal experience.** Every line is either sourced or framed as an argument, and the piece takes no position that the sources do not support.

The questions a lender should ask before financing an AI data-centre build

Portfolio sample. Neutral analyst voice. Numbers marked (illustrative) are round figures used to show the shape of a calculation, not statistics.

AI data-centre lending has moved faster than the underwriting discipline around it. The asset class is new enough that many credit teams are applying a colocation playbook to a business that behaves differently: shorter revenue contracts, faster-depreciating collateral, a single dominant vendor, and a power constraint that decides the schedule. The questions below are the ones that separate a financeable build from a well-presented one. None of them require an engineering degree to ask. All of them require an answer before committee.

Offtake and revenue

1. Who is the customer, and can they actually pay for the term they signed? Take-or-pay sounds absolute until you read the remedies. Ask for cure periods, credit support, termination rights, volume step-downs, and whether the obligation survives the customer's insolvency. A commitment larger than the counterparty's balance sheet is a letter of intent with better formatting.

2. What percentage of revenue is contracted, for how long, and at what price? Lenders are usually told the contracted share. They are less often told the shape of the uncontracted share, which is where the equity return sits and where the debt service in the later years comes from.

3. Does the contract start date move with the power date? If the customer's obligation begins on a fixed calendar date while energisation is a third-party dependency, the borrower carries an unhedged delay risk. Check whether liquidated damages flow through the chain or stop at the borrower.

Technical and delivery

4. Does the cluster match the vendor's reference architecture, and what exactly is "equivalent"? Deviations from a supported configuration change support entitlements, performance, and in some cases warranty coverage. The follow-up question is who bears the cost of re-integration if a variant fails to perform.

5. What does the acceptance test measure, who witnesses it, and what happens when it fails? A test without a defined throughput threshold, a defined duration, an independent witness, and a contractual consequence is not a milestone. It is a conversation.

6. Are spares, lifecycle coverage, and replacement lead times contracted? An accelerator that fails with a multi-month lead time is a revenue outage with a maintenance ticket attached. Ask for the coverage terms and the assumed failure rate used in the model.

7. Is the building ready for the rack density the operator says it will run? Rack densities in AI halls have moved from the tens of kilowatts well past a hundred (illustrative, widely reported). A shell designed for air cooling and a liquid-cooled cluster are not the same asset, and retrofits are capital events nobody budgeted.

Power

8. Is the interconnect secured, and what is the utility's track record on that queue? The single most common source of schedule slippage in this asset class is not construction. It is energisation. Ask for the interconnection agreement, the studied capacity, and the utility's stated milestones, then model the downside from those rather than from the EPC schedule.

9. What is the power price, and is it hedged? Power is a fixed operating cost against variable revenue. An unhedged energy assumption in a market with volatile pricing turns a technical asset into a commodity trade the lender did not intend to make.

10. What happens at 70 percent utilisation? Not 100 percent. The base case should show debt service coverage at a realistic utilisation and a realistic price, and the covenant should survive both.

Structure and documentation

11. Which assumptions in the model have no independent evidence behind them? Every deal has a handful: residual value, re-contracting rate, failure rate, PUE, ramp curve. The lender's job is not to remove them but to name them and price them.

12. Is the milestone schedule tied to funding draws, and are the draws achievable in sequence? Delayed-draw facilities fail quietly when two milestones land in the same quarter and the cash need arrives before the test is witnessed.

13. What is the residual value assumption, and who would buy this hardware in year five? If the answer is "the same vendor's customers", the lender is underwriting a relationship, not an asset.

14. Where does the sponsor's equity sit in the waterfall, and how much of it is cash versus in-kind? Contribution of an existing asset or of contracted capacity is not the same as cash at risk. Both can be legitimate; only one absorbs loss.

15. What does the technical adviser say, and who engaged them? Adviser alignment matters. A report commissioned by the sponsor answers the sponsor's question. Lender-side technical due diligence exists to produce the three or four findings that change the structure, and a severity-graded list of what remains unresolved.

What good underwriting looks like

The strongest credit memos in this asset class do three things. They separate the timing risk from the demand risk, because on most of these builds the schedule is the binding constraint. They treat uncontracted revenue as equity risk rather than as a base case line. And they can state, in a sentence, the single event that would impair the loan and the clause that responds to it.

The weakest memos share a tell: a model where the power arrives on time, the acceptance test passes first time, the customer performs for the full term, and the price holds. Any one of those can be true. All four being true is not an underwriting assumption. It is a hope with a discount rate.

Lenders who ask these fifteen questions will still finance imperfect deals, because every deal is imperfect. What they will not do is discover the imperfection after the first drawdown, when the only

remaining lever is a waiver.

Why we passed on fourteen data-centre deals in eighteen months

Ghostwriting sample. Written in the voice of a fictional fund principal. The firm, the person and the portfolio figures are invented to demonstrate voice; nothing here describes a real fund or a real transaction.

We have looked at sixteen AI data-centre opportunities since early last year. We have committed to two. Our investment committee asks me the same question every quarter, in a slightly different tone each time: are we being disciplined, or are we being slow?

Both. Probably in that order, but I am not neutral on the subject.

Here is what we actually did, and the five reasons the other fourteen are not in the portfolio.

We stopped underwriting a contract and started underwriting a counterparty

The first deal we passed on had a fifteen-year take-or-pay agreement with a customer whose balance sheet was smaller than the contract. Everyone in the room knew it. Nobody said it, because the contract said fifteen years and the model said 1.4 times coverage, and those two facts are enormously comforting when you are trying to get to a closing.

A commitment larger than the counterparty can honour is not revenue. It is an option the customer holds and we have paid for. So we ask for the credit support, the cure periods, the termination rights, and whether the obligation survives the customer's own insolvency. If the answers are thin, the term sheet is theatre and we decline early, which saves everyone four months.

We underwrite the power date, not the construction date

I have not seen a data-centre deal late because the building was late. I have seen several late because the utility was late.

This is the part of the asset class that everyone claims to understand and almost nobody prices. Construction is a contract with a party you have leverage over. Energisation is a queue you are standing in behind strangers. When the substation slips two quarters, the acceptance test slips, the customer's start date slips, and debt service does not. We now assume, in every base case, that the power arrives later than the developer's schedule, and we ask what that costs. If the answer requires the borrower to fund a gap it has no liquidity for, we are out, and we are out early.

We will not buy a test the seller wrote

An acceptance test is the only place in these documents where an engineering claim becomes money. Throughput, sustained performance, error rates, burn-in duration, who witnesses it, and what happens when it fails.

Twice now I have read acceptance schedules that could not fail. Once because the vendor's own engineering team wrote it. Once because it tested a configuration nobody would run in production. In

both cases the borrower's answer was that it would never be enforced that way, which is exactly the thing a lender should never accept, because enforcement is the whole point.

If the milestone cannot convert a failed test into a payment holiday, it is decoration. We pass.

We refuse to underwrite a price nobody can observe

This is the one that costs us the most deals, and I think it is the one that will look obvious in five years.

The contracted capacity is a business. The uncontracted capacity is a bet on inference pricing, and inference pricing has about as much reliable history as a two-year-old equity index. Every model we have seen assumes the price per GPU-hour declines gently. Almost none of them test what happens if it declines faster than the debt amortises, or if utilisation plateaus while the power bill stays fixed.

I am not smart enough to know where inference pricing lands. I am confident enough to know that we should not be paid equity returns for taking that risk on behalf of limited partners who hired us to underwrite infrastructure. So we size the deal to the contracted revenue and treat the rest as upside we do not need. That makes our bids lower than the competition's, and we lose deals because of it. I have made my peace with that.

We price being second

Everybody's model ends in year seven with the hardware fully amortised and the building still standing. Almost nobody models what happens if the tenant leaves in year five because someone two miles away is cheaper.

Residual value on this hardware is a relationship, not a market. So we underwrite the second owner as part of the base case: who they are, why they would take this cluster rather than a new one, and what they would pay. If the honest answer is "the same vendor's customers, at a discount we have not quantified", we are underwriting a hope. We would rather say no than say maybe and hope the covenant catches us.

The two we said yes to

Both had the same three properties, and none of them were about the technology.

The power was already energised, or the utility had a contractual obligation with penalties attached. The customer was larger than the contract and had already paid for something similar. And the sponsor had real cash in the deal, not a contributed asset valued by the sponsor's own adviser.

That is it. It is not a sophisticated thesis. It is the difference between a business that survives a bad year and one that needs everything to go right in the same twelve months.

What discipline actually costs

It costs us the deals everyone else brags about at conferences, and it means our deployment pace looks pedestrian next to funds that are twice our size and half our vintage. Our limited partners do not love reading that.

But the question I care about is not whether we were in the best deal of 2025. It is whether we can name, in one sentence, what would have to go wrong in any deal we own for it to be impaired, and point to the clause that protects us when it does. On the two we closed, I can. On the fourteen we passed, I could not, and that is why they are not in the portfolio.

Chris Romei writes ghostwritten thought leadership for infrastructure and technology principals. Sample work only; the principal here is fictional.