

# 6 Steps to Build an Enterprise-Level Data Governance Program

Guide



## Ready to take your data governance program to the next level?

This guide provides a top-down approach to building a program that ensures buy-in and support across the organization.



*The following six steps outline how to enable a full-scale enterprise data governance program.*

### STEP 1:

## ESTABLISH THE VISION & SET OBJECTIVES

This starts by defining a charter. Document the following to establish a clear vision for your data governance program:



## Purpose

Clearly articulate why you are undertaking the data governance initiative. What are you seeking to achieve?



## Scope

Describe what is included (and excluded) in the program, including any constraints or limitations. What are the guard rails?



## Objectives

Outline specific, measurable goals that the program aims to achieve and identify who is involved in the data governance program.



## Authority and Governance

Determine who has the decision-making authority and how the program will be governed.



## Resources and Budget

Provide details on the required resources, including funding, and how they will be allocated.

*Tip: To get the support you need, ensure that the vision is in harmony with your organization's broader objectives.*

## STEP 2:

# ASSESS YOUR DATA GOVERNANCE MATURITY

Start this phase by taking stock of your current situation. This will shed light on your organization's needs for the future and guide your focus toward high-priority areas in data governance. Follow these steps:



### Execute a Current-State Assessment

Within a data governance framework, assess the current state of your organization's data governance. This ensures you prioritize governance over mere data management.



### Spot Existing Governance Efforts

Different departments might already implement some form of data governance. For instance, the marketing team might use master data management for customer data, while the sales team could have a data quality program to ensure data reliability. Recognize these existing efforts and think about how to enhance them for wider organizational benefit.



### Pinpoint Challenges and Gaps

With your data governance framework in hand, identify elements that may hinder your organization from achieving its strategic objectives.

*Tip: Be honest in evaluating your organization's present data governance maturity. Set sights on the level you aspire to reach, ensuring it's a fit for your organization's genuine needs and capabilities.*

## STEP 3:

# DEFINE DATA GOVERNANCE TEAM AND STRUCTURE

While technology helps in data governance, it should not be a driving force in your program. Any successful data program isn't due to technology; it's due to the people and processes.

As your data governance program grows, so will the roles and responsibilities required to successfully implement your planned initiatives. Ensure you are adequately considering and planning for these non-technical aspects of your program.

### Identify Necessary Processes

Recognize the specific processes that support your data governance goals and pinpoint any gaps that might hinder success.

### Determine Organizational Functions

Map out the roles, responsibilities, and organizational structure required to support processes, technical implementation, and other planned initiatives.

### Plan for Ongoing Support

As your program expands, ensure sustained support. Account for people and processes with every new component.

*Tip: Don't reinvent foundational aspects that already work well. Utilize and build upon existing committees and processes. Find champions within your organization who are passionate about data governance roles, and ensure they have the resources and guidance they need.*

## STEP 4:

# IMPLEMENT AND LEVERAGE DATA GOVERNANCE TOOLS

While the necessity of these tools might vary, their benefits to modern businesses are undeniable.

Here are common types of tools utilized to enhance data governance capabilities:

- Data Catalog: Boosts data asset management and visibility
- Data Quality Tech: Facilitates data quality measurement and monitoring
- Data Lineage: Provides insights into data origins, destinations, and transformations
- Business Glossary: Defines common terms, ensuring consistency in understanding
- Specialized Tools: Technologies to help with master data management cater to unique data types, such as customer or product data

[\*The Difference Between a Business Glossary, a Data Dictionary, & a Data Catalog\*](#)



# How to Choose the Right Data Governance Tool

You have options!

**First, see if you can leverage built-in tools in familiar platforms.**

Many of the technologies your organization might already be using come with built-in data governance tools. Recognize and harness them.

For instance:

- [Google's DataPlex](#) offers an automated solution for data quality, lineage capture, and centralized governance policies.
- [Databricks' Unity Catalog](#) centralizes data in a lakehouse, streamlining policy setup, documentation, and auditing.
- Informatica's Cloud IDMC platform offers data quality, data profiling, and a cloud data governance catalog.
- [dbt](#) boasts a lineage feature with embedded metric definitions and auditing capabilities.
- [Azure Synapse](#) incorporates Purview as a data governance tool.

**Harness specialized solutions as needed.**

If your needs extend beyond existing technologies, there are many dedicated data governance platforms, such as Alation, Collibra, and Atlan, that facilitate data catalogs, business glossaries, lineage, classification, and data quality. Be sure to plan for and consider all options before investing in any tools.

*Tip: Before delving into new tech, outline your specific tool requirements. Make the most of tools you already have and ensure you involve the end users throughout the decision-making and implementation processes.*

## STEP 5:

# FORMALIZE A DATA GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE OR GOVERNING BODY

Solidify data governance efforts by forming a committee with individuals already performing such activities within your organization. A formal governing body will ensure engagement across the organization.

### Spot the Influencers

Identify individuals already involved in data governance endeavors, even if informally. Bring them in to enrich an existing committee or to spearhead a new one.

### Craft a Comprehensive Team

This committee is responsible for setting clear data definitions, formulating policies, and overseeing data collection, stewardship, dissemination, and integration. Include data owners and stewards, and ensure representation from different business units.

### Initiate a Data Governance Advisory Committee (DGAC)

This body comprises senior managers with a vested interest in data. Their interaction with the primary Data Governance Unit (DGU) is pivotal:

- The DGU enlightens DGAC members about the governance program, paving the way for imminent changes.
- DGAC provides feedback to the DGU on the program's feasibility, and vital executive decisions.
- DGAC members relay significant data needs from their domains and advise the DGU on priority tasks.



***As the DGU's practices permeate the organization and gain broader comprehension, the frequency of DGAC meetings might diminish. Over time, the committee might even disband once its role is naturally integrated across the enterprise.***

*Tip: To streamline your efforts, consider merging your data governance with an existing committee or council in your organization, if one exists. This can enhance efficiency and reduce redundancy.*

## Example Data Governance Program with Center of Excellence

Executive Sponsor

Executive Steering Committee

Data Governance Council

### Data Governance Center of Excellence

#### Information Technology

Enterprise Data  
Architect

Technical Data  
Steward

#### Data Governance Office

Enterprise Data  
Governance Lead

Enterprise Data  
Governance Analyst

Data Governance  
Program Coordinator

#### Business Unit(s)

Data Owner

Data Steward

## STEP 6:

# MONITOR, EVALUATE, & IMPROVE

As your organization evolves, so should your governance strategies.

**Recognizing data governance as a continuous program, rather than a one-time project, is vital.**

To sustain your data governance's success, you must adopt a fluid approach, evolving as your organization does. This requires consistently measuring performance using key KPIs, like data quality and compliance, and adjusting strategies based on these insights. Such proactive refinement ensures that governance remains effective and relevant.

*Tip: Embrace a mix of both tangible (quantitative) and perceptual (qualitative) metrics to evaluate your efforts. Measure early, measure often, and ensure transparency in results to maintain accountability across the organization.*

**Talk to an expert about your  
data governance needs.**



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