

6 Steps to Build an Iterative Data Governance Program

Guide



"When you iterate through your data governance journey, things get a lot less overwhelming."

- Christina Salmi, Managing Director at Analytics8

WHY AN ITERATIVE DATA GOVERNANCE PROGRAM?

Adopting an iterative approach to data governance allows your organization to tailor and scale its initiatives according to size, needs, and capabilities. This approach evolves with your organization, starting with basic governance practices and expanding them as required.

With this practical and proportional approach, you will:

- Assess your current data governance, identify gaps, and prioritize your most pressing use case — then build from there.
- Have the flexibility to adjust governance practices as your organization evolves.
- Incrementally address gaps, aligning initiatives with your data strategy and business objectives.
- Experience quick value with your first use case, providing traction and the motivation to keep going.

6 STEPS TO BUILD AN ITERATIVE DATA GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

1

UNCOVER HIGH-VALUE USE CASES

2

DOCUMENT BUSINESS IMPACT FACTORS

3

DRILL INTO TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY

4

COLLABORATE, VALIDATE, UPDATE, & ITERATE

5

IDENTIFY ROI, DEPENDENCIES, QUICK WINS

6

PILOT A SINGLE USE CASE

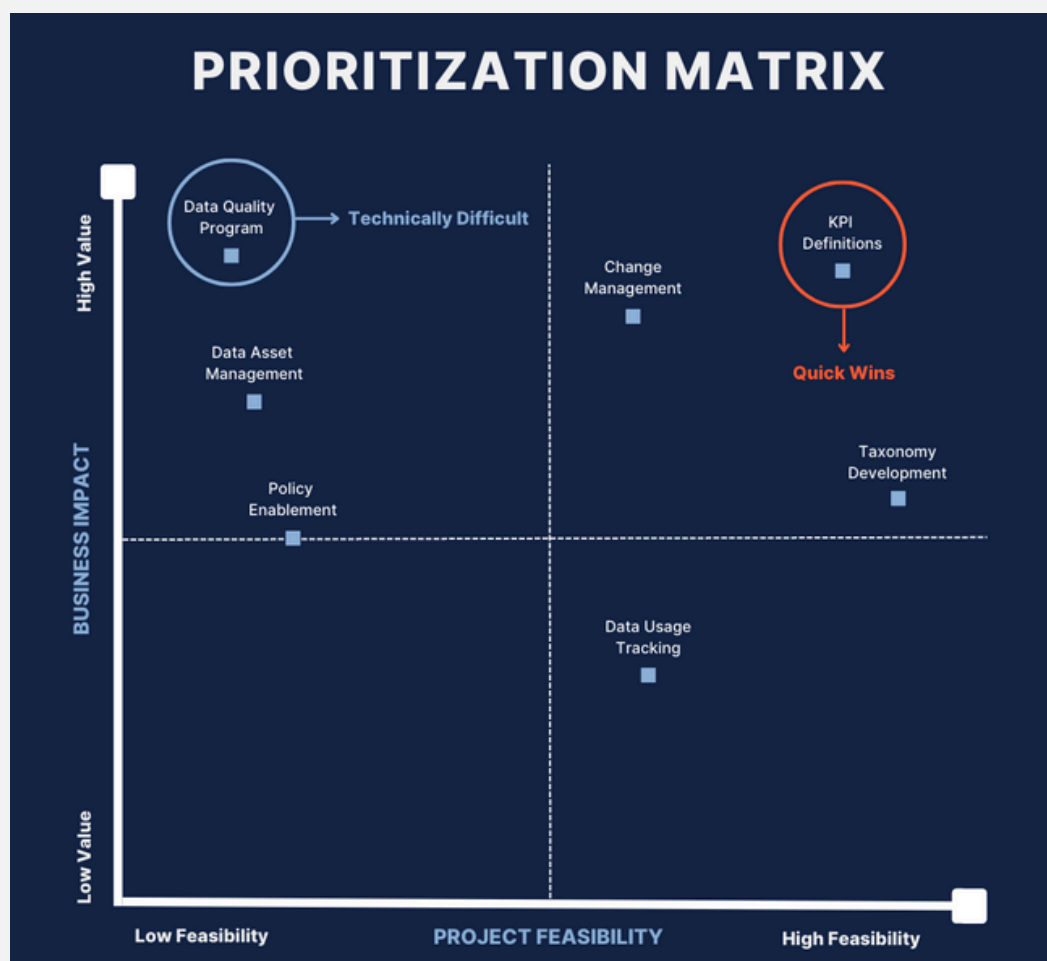
The following six steps outline how to enable an iterative data governance program.

STEP 1:

UNCOVER HIGH-VALUE USE CASES

To identify valuable data governance use cases, align them with your organization's objectives and known challenges.

For each use case, consider the potential advantages such as improved data quality, enhanced decision-making, increased compliance, and optimized processes. Don't forget to assess potential risks like data breaches, compliance violations, or operational disruptions.



Utilize a prioritization matrix to align data governance use cases with organizational objectives and challenges - weighing impact against feasibility.

How to identify and prioritize your data governance use cases:



Pinpoint Challenges

Zone in on issues to unearth impact use cases.



Assess Impact vs. Risks

Balance the potential positives and risks of each case.



Prioritize Efficiently

Rank scenarios to optimize resource distribution.



Engage Stakeholders

Connect with key players to understand data governance-centric hurdles and prospects.



Quantify Benefits

Gauge the advantages of addressing these challenges through data governance strategies

Tip to avoid scope creep: for your first use case, keep it simple and collaborate with a singular business unit.

STEP 2:

DOCUMENT BUSINESS IMPACT FACTORS

When you document the business impact of your data governance initiatives, you provide the tangible evidence needed for organizational buy-in.

DOCUMENT BUSINESS IMPACT FACTORS

This documentation not only helps justify the investment in data governance but also serves as a basis for further improvements and enhancements in your data governance program.

Tips for analyzing business impact and demonstrating ROI of your data governance efforts:

Define Measurable Metrics

Choose specific, quantifiable KPIs that match each use case's objectives.

Do a Baseline Assessment

Perform an initial benchmark assessment to establish the current state of chosen metrics.

Monitor Your KPIs

Regularly assess impact of your data governance initiatives and gauge effectiveness in achieving business outcomes.

Communicate Your Findings

Consistently showcase the value of your data governance program to all stakeholders.

Tip: The most impactful KPIs demonstrate improvements like cost savings, increased efficiency, risk reduction, decision-making enhancement, or customer satisfaction improvement.

STEP 3:

DRILL INTO TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY FACTORS

Things like your data infrastructure, security protocols, and the technical proficiency of your staff will be a big factor in determining the practicality of a use case within your organization.

Before going too far in your planning, do a thorough examination of the following aspects of your technical framework.



Data Access

Determine how readily and conveniently the required data can be accessed. Inspect factors like data sources, quality, integration potential, and extant governance procedures.



Data Infrastructure & Technology

Assess the present data infrastructure and technology suite for their capacity to meet the use case's demands. Focus on aspects such as storage capacity, processing ability, scalability, and software compatibility.



Security & Privacy Considerations

Delve into the security and privacy concerns associated with the use case. Ensure you have robust mechanisms in place to safeguard critical data and comply with pertinent regulations.



Examine Integration Potential

Ascertain the compatibility of the use case with existing systems and workflows. Evaluate how seamlessly it integrates with business software, databases, or data management systems.



Gauge Technical Proficiency

Appraise the availability and aptitude of technical expertise and resources. Reflect on requisite skills, IT resource availability, and the potential to manage infrastructure enhancements or upkeep.

Technology tip: Refrain from creating custom solutions. Technologies in the modern stack offer adequate "out-of-the-box" functionality to help with data governance initiatives.



STEP 4:

COLLABORATE, VALIDATE, UPDATE, AND ITERATE

Involve stakeholders and subject matter experts in the validation and iteration process to ensure the relevance of your use cases. Their feedback can help adjust priorities and determine effective actions. Here's a structured way to drive this engagement:

Validate Use Cases

Tap into the knowledge of those directly immersed in the operations to verify the feasibility, potential impact, and alignment with overarching organizational objectives.

Update Use Cases

Keep use cases timely and pertinent by revising them in response to new data or evolving organizational requirements.

Embrace Iterative Refinement

Foster a dynamic feedback loop with stakeholders and experts. This continuous refinement ensures alignment with changing organizational demands.

Tip

Regularly measure against defined KPIs to ensure accountability. If an aspect falters, act swiftly; adapt, communicate the change, and pivot without waiting for routine check-ins.

STEP 5:

IDENTIFY ROI, DEPENDENCIES, AND QUICK WINS

Evaluating each of these factors gets you closer to selecting the most optimal first use case for data governance — one that brings quick value and provides a solid foundation to iterate from and the traction you need to keep moving forward.

Determine ROI

Weigh the true costs associated with your planned data governance efforts against the anticipated value, such as better data quality (better decisions), heightened efficiency (less waste), and compliance (decreased risk).

Acknowledge Dependencies

Know the ties between your data governance initiatives and the rest of the business. Consider all of your business processes, systems, and technology platforms to minimize disruptions and amplify synergies.

Spot Quick Wins

Identify initiatives that promise prompt advantages and can be rolled out swiftly. Early victories foster enthusiasm, solidify stakeholder commitment, and set the stage for more extensive governance efforts.

Tip: When pinpointing quick wins, ensure they resonate with leadership. Use the "five whys" technique to validate your choice of use case. If you can't answer all five, reconsider your selection.

STEP 6:

PILOT A SINGLE USE CASE

Kickstart your governance initiative by test-driving a crucial use case through a pilot phase.



Focus on a Key Use Case

Concentrating on a single, high-value use case enables a targeted application of resources and increases the likelihood of deriving substantial benefits. This focused approach also facilitates in-depth performance analysis.



Cultivate a Controlled Setting

Establish a controlled environment to unveil and tackle potential obstacles. This ensures the integrity of your pilot and serves as a protective measure before expanding the initiative.



Embrace the Learning Curve

Use the pilot phase as a rich learning ground. Accumulate feedback, assess alignment with business goals, and scrutinize the practicality of your use case. Draw upon this data to adjust your strategies and refine your methods.

Gleaning lessons from the pilot stage paves the way for refining and scaling your governance endeavors with confidence.

Tip: Maintain a manageable and measurable scope for your pilot. Schedule regular check-ins to evaluate progress and adjust as necessary. Communication is key; ensure any alterations to the pilot are thoroughly communicated to all stakeholders.

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