CDO Checklist: Launch Your First Data Governance Project that Drives ROI

You recognize that investing in modern data governance is the only way to help artificial intelligence (AI) flourish. You've decided to launch your first data and AI governance project. What's next? Follow this checklist to cut through the noise and confidently lead your project from kickoff to long-term success.

Select a High-Impact Pilot
Start smart. Target a manageable project tied to critical business functions or high-risk data domains. Select a focused, feasible project that delivers quick, visible value to build momentum and credibility.

Align with Strategic Priorities
Focus your efforts on driving KPIs that matter: revenue growth, risk mitigation, regulatory compliance or operational agility. Tie the initiative to tangible business outcomes.
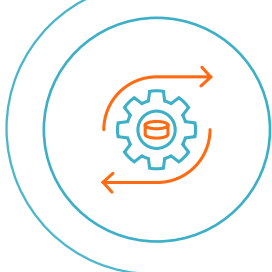
Secure Executive Sponsors
Find executives whose goals align with yours, like your chief risk or information security officer, if you intend to improve data security and compliance. Build broad leadership backing early to ensure momentum and lasting success.

Define Clear Roles and Responsibilities
Clarify who drives, approves, contributes and stays informed (DACI) to avoid confusion and speed up decision-making. Use a framework like DACI.

Nail the Core Processes
Discover your data. Define policies and ownership. Apply rules. Measure impact. Repeat.

Choose Scalable Technology
Pick modular, cloud-native tools designed for growth and AI-driven automation to future-proof your data governance.

Set Clear, Measurable Goals
Define specific objectives – like accelerating AI adoption, boosting data quality or ensuring compliance – and tie them to quantifiable metrics such as data accuracy, audit response time or process efficiency. Measure rigorously, course-correct quickly.

Drive Communication & Culture
Invest in targeted training and ongoing communication to embed governance into daily workflows. Celebrate early wins and amplify leadership endorsement visibly.
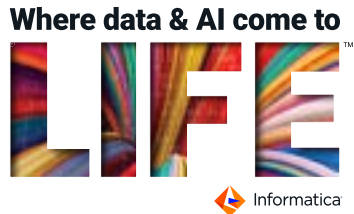
Plan for Growth
Map next steps. Use early wins as stepping stones to enterprise-wide transformation.

Turn data and AI governance into measurable business value.

GET WORKBOOK

Source: Informatica, The Data and AI Governance Program Workbook, 2025

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